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Aesthetic Appreciation, Ethics, and 9/11

Emmanouil Aretoulakis

Abstract

There have been numerous critical articles on what really happened on the otherwise beautiful morning of 11 September 2001. Beyond doubt, the bulk of the critical responses to the terrorist attacks focused on the ethical and humanitarian, or rather the unethical and inhumane implications of the atrocious act, leaving no room for any philosophical reflection on the potential assessment or reception of the event from the perspective of art and aesthetics. The few years that have gone by since 2001 have provided us with some a sense of emotional detachment from the horror of that day, a detachment that may have awakened our aesthetic and artistic instincts with regard to the attacks themselves as well as their visual representation. Chronological distance renders an unprejudiced and independent stance more possible now than ever. It also allows us to reconsider our initial politically correct and ethically justified repulsion of the efforts made by a few artists to aestheticize 9/11. Such repulsion, however, was associated with the delusion that by denouncing aesthetics we were really securing the prevalence of politics, morality and ethical responsibility in a terror-afflicted society. My point in this paper is that there is a need for aesthetic appreciation when contemplating a violent event such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks. What is more, appreciation of the beautiful, even in case of a 9/11, seems necessary because it is a key to establishing an ethical stance towards terror, life, and art. It should be stressed that independent aesthetic experience is not important in itself but is a means of cultivating an authentic moral and ethical judgment.

Key Words

9/11, aesthetics, beauty, disinterestedness, ethics, Hirst, Kant, moral judgment, politics, terrorism, terrorist attacks, Stockhausen

1. The Exploration of the Impossible

A number of ambivalent statements were made by eminent artistic figures in the aftermath of 9/11. A year after the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, Damien Hirst, a contemporary artist from Britain, revealed that he considered the September 11 terrorist attacks as a "visually stunning artwork: The thing about 9/11," he told BBC News, "is that it's kind of like an artwork in its own right. It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact. It was devised visually. . . . Of course, it's visually stunning and you've got to hand it to them on some level because they've achieved something which nobody would ever have thought possible. . . . So on one level they kind of need congratulating, which a lot of people shy away from, which is a very dangerous thing.^[1]

This statement looks outrageous at first sight, to say the least. To view this major terrifying incident as a visually stunning achievement is dangerously close to prioritizing its supposed aesthetic value as spectacle over its unquestionable social, political and ethical dimensions. Hirst, however, is going beyond

merely expressing his repugnance by emphasizing the visual potentials of such an event as a work of art. Not only that; he wishes we could congratulate the perpetrators on their ability to make possible an impossibility that, paradoxically, as I will explain later, is an indispensable condition for great art's existence, thus commenting not only on the tele-visual representations of 9/11 but also on 9/11 itself as an artwork whose inherent wickedness is integral to its supposed aesthetic powerfulness or beauty. Is the artist then only interested in such an atrocity as a work of art, a beautiful product? If so, where does all the pain go? Could it be that Hirst's statement, far from erasing pain, constitutes a different, other kind of ethical appreciation that blends artistic pleasure with concern for real pain, and human suffering with concern for aesthetic appreciation? In other words, is a symbiosis of aesthetics and ethics possible in the case at hand?

A week after the attacks, at a press conference for a series of concerts featuring his music, the avant-garde German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen "the greatest work of art ever. That characters can bring about in one act what we in music cannot dream of, that people practice madly for ten years, completely, fanatically, for a concert and then die. That is the greatest work of art for the whole cosmos. I could not do that. Against that, we, composers, are nothing."^[2] Right after these words were blurted out, the composer's concerts were cancelled, as the organizers were convinced that he was in favor of terrorism. It never occurred to them that, like Hirst earlier on, Stockhausen was bypassing the (discussion of the) unquestionably atrocious consequences of the event, showing that he is fascinated or mesmerized by its extremely violent, horrific characteristics, as well as its occurrence as something inconceivable and impossible even to reflect upon: "Artists, too, sometimes try to go beyond the limits of what is feasible and conceivable, so that we wake up, so that we open ourselves to another world."

The exploration of the impossible is, in the composer's view, a defining principle of true art, thus when the impossible, "a jump out of security, the everyday," becomes a reality, it constitutes apparently the greatest work of the entire cosmos. Again, is there any space left for the ethical element once aesthetic appreciation of unprecedented atrocity comes into the picture? The fervent reactions to Stockhausen's ideas insinuate that artistic preoccupations with the humanely impossible as well as the morally inconceivable have so far been unjustifiably (but not unpredictably) overlooked as they belong to a future, dispassionate, analysis of 9/11. Such an analysis would allow for a morally free and thus more *ethical* explication, as it would permit the symbiotic operation of many different faculties — politics, aesthetics, ethics, realism, — without any of them ruling over any other.^[3]

My point in this paper is that there is a need for aesthetic appreciation when contemplating a violent event such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks. What is more, appreciation of the beautiful, even in case of a 9/11, seems necessary because it is a key to establishing an ethical stance towards terror, life, and art. It should be stressed that independent aesthetic experience is not important in itself but as a means to cultivating an authentic moral and ethical judgment.

We can get a glimpse of aesthetic appreciation as exemplified in Hirst's and Stockhausen's thinking by resorting to the concept of *aesthetic* or *reflective* judgment formulated by Immanuel Kant. In the Introduction to *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant posits that there are two kinds of judgment, the determinant and the reflective (or aesthetic), and that they are poles apart from each other insofar as the former takes us from the universal to the particular whereas the latter takes us from the particular to the universal: "If that they are poles apart from each other, insofar as the former takes us from the universal to the particular whereas the latter takes us from the particular to the universal: If the universal (the rule, principle, or law) is given, then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is *determinant*. . . . If, however, only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it, then the judgment is simply *reflective*."^[4] Determinant judgment is based on *a priori* conditions; therefore something beautiful is appreciated as such in accordance with some laws that precede or preempt it. Reflective or aesthetic judgment is based on *a posteriori* assessment; therefore the beautiful is not a matter of prescribed rules but of spontaneous subjective reaction. Aesthetic judgment seems to be more autonomous and less prejudiced since it does not apply ready-made rules to the object of beauty but rather waits for the object to happen and then, after the fact, invents the specific rules that will assess it as beautiful at that particular moment. In other words, real beauty, according to Kant, may be discerned through aesthetic judgment because this kind of judgment remains unaffected by any mental preconceptions or moral inhibitions carried by an individual prior to witnessing a work of art.

Damian Hirst's description of the terrorist attacks as visually stunning mostly bears on their representation or reproduction via television, although it does contain an undertone of admiration for the perpetrators because they allegedly committed an act that far exceeded the artistically and socially possible. Hirst seems to adopt the Kantian conception of aesthetic/reflective judgment in appreciating the representation of the 9/11 horrific deeds, as contrasted to those fiercely criticizing him who assess the event from the perspective of determinant judgment. The visually stunning artwork, as the artist argues, is something that those responsible need to be congratulated on since they have presumably gone where no one has gone before in terms of artistic achievement. They have committed an act transgressing the boundaries of the commonplace and the possible; therefore they have accomplished the true essence of beauty, as Kant defines it, namely as an autonomous entity that defies human measure and conceptual thinking.

But why does Hirst say that it is "a very dangerous thing" to shy away from congratulating them? Why isn't *his* statement dangerous, let alone flagrantly unjust or unethical towards the victims of 9/11? In his view, it would be dangerous and wrong to dwell too long on the immorality of aesthetic appreciation of the entire event as something beautiful because to talk about morality surrounding an event would shift attention away from the event itself. From the point of view of art, to deal with morality and representation in a single breath would probably mean to judge on the basis of what happened before or after the event. In other words, it would mean to assess, for instance, the

motives of the criminals and the consequences of their actions only, instead of focusing with disinterestedness also on the thing called 9/11 in itself as well as its visual representations, however hard and insensitive that may be.

2. Moral Freedom in Relation to Art

Every time we look at the tele-visual representation of the attacks on the World Trade Center, Hirst seems to say, we need to take a minute and appreciate aesthetically the unprecedented spectacle without worrying whether we are being immoral by doing it. If we cannot do that, then we are allegedly both morally unfree and prejudiced and, in the case of an artist, that would be artistic suicide. Kant discusses the problem of moral freedom in relation to beauty and art. He holds that the beautiful is "an object of delight apart from any interest. . . . For, since the delight is not based on any inclination of the Subject, but the Subject feels himself completely *free* in respect of the liking which he accords to the object, he can find as reason for his delight no personal conditions . . . "[5] Kant here connects beauty with objectivity, universality of taste and, more importantly, moral freedom, or rather freedom from morality (as moralism). For him morality constitutes a problematic notion when it comes to an individual's appreciation of an object to the extent that it poses a question of interest or personal condition, that is, a question of a deep-seated prejudice that blurs the subject's view leading her or him to concentrate not on the specific object of beauty but on all the things *around* that object. That, however, represents an unethical stance to the extent that it allows one to think of the object of beauty through the perspective of determinant judgment only, which imposes restrictions on individual taste, thus making human behavior radically unfree. To put it in practical terms, if Kant were to address the 9/11 terrorist acts, he would have regarded the commonly accepted idea that terrorism is evil and immoral as inevitably leading to the misconception that a visual representation of terrorism is evil and immoral, too.

Hirst emphasizes the danger of dismissing art and aesthetic appreciation for the sake of morality and argues that it would be a shame to disregard the visual powerfulness of 9/11 just because it appears morally wrong to deal with the disaster in terms of anything else but the irreversible victimization of three thousand people. These people, however, represent only a horrifying *consequence* of the act and are absolutely irrelevant to the act itself as a phenomenon and a visually defying event. In Section Two of *The Critique of Judgment* Kant provides us with the following example:

If any one asks me whether I consider that the palace I see before me is beautiful I may, perhaps, reply that I do not care for things of that sort that are merely made to be gaped at. . . . All one wants to know is whether the mere representation of the object is to my liking, no matter how indifferent I may be to the real existence of the object of this representation. It is quite plain that in order to say that the object is *beautiful*, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real

existence of the object. Everyone must allow that a judgment of the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest is very partial and not a pure judgment of taste.[\[6\]](#)

To reply that one is not in the least interested in impressive or beautiful things is a moral judgment and beside the point. In this case, if one is uninterested in beauty alone one is surely far from disinterested. A judgment about the purpose that, say, a beautiful building fulfills, instead of tackling the building's pure *form*, reveals a frame of thinking that is partial and dependent upon subjective feelings or conceptual frameworks connected with certain interests. If you are prejudiced against luxury, how can you find a luxurious building beautiful, even if it really is? If you tend to look down on the presence and the very nature of an object, how can you really appreciate the representation of it? Following a similar pattern, to insist that the air crash into the WTC, as it was captured on television, was by no means a mind-capturing or fascinating view because so many human lives were terribly lost is probably to miss the point of fascination as an ineffably disinterested act of appreciating beauty. Of course, it does matter a lot that there were thousands of victims and one could not think of a more brutal, infinitely inhumane and immoral act of violence, but there still remains the question of (not) letting interest interfere with the autonomy of aesthetic powerfulness, in this case, the sheer visual event of the attack. Interest would definitely be extremely confusing in the sense that psychological, moral, emotional involvement, albeit perfectly natural, would affect our judgment and lead us to think that a terrorist act that led to the death of so many people can never be called visually compelling or fascinating.

Kant draws our attention to the fact that there is a deep heterogeneity between visual compulsion, which is interest-free, and reason or morality. Whereas reason has to do with the common laws of understanding that are based on predetermined rules of the should/should not type, visual attraction, because springing directly from human emotion and imagination, bears on more authentic rules grounded on an aesthetic/reflective and independent judgment that judges what it sees at any given moment rather than stops to think rationally before judging. Kant describes the aesthetic idea as "an inexponible representation of the imagination," and the rational idea as "an indemonstrable concept of reason."[\[7\]](#) Elsewhere he says that the aesthetic idea is "the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea," meaning that beauty does not pertain to the realm of reason; in a sense it is *other* than reason.[\[8\]](#) Thus, on the one hand, when we watch a disaster happen live in front of our eyes or through endless re-runs on our television screens, reason dictates that we feel for the victims, even if we or our own are not directly involved in the tragedy, while raging against those who provoked it. It is the natural thing to do. On the other hand, we are unknowingly captivated by an ineffable and forbidden feeling of awe and secret pleasure that we've finally gotten the chance to witness something unprecedented: the terrifying but compelling dimensions of Kantian beauty. And that is neither natural nor reasonable. It signifies, rather, the emergence of the aesthetic deprived of logic or morality.

3. Politics, Ethics and Aesthetic Appreciation

The aesthetic is the key to thinking of the 9/11 disaster as visually captivating or stunning. A passenger plane literally crashing into a WTC skyscraper is something we have never witnessed before. Therefore we cannot associate it with an already established law of reasoning so as to be able to conceptualize it. Its aesthetic power derives from its autonomy, its non-dependence on any known category of perception. The WTC, argues Frank Lentricchia, has been transformed "into a narrative of spectacular images. Terrorism for the camera." This is our fascination."^[9] We are fascinated by the spectacular as an original personal experience, thereby leading ourselves, as spectators, automatically into the terrain of aesthetic appreciation, namely of what is new, previously unknown and, yes, for a single moment, beautiful to us.

In an intriguing article, Ronald Bleiker points out that "the sensibility that aesthetic insight may generate, and that instrumental reason is unable to apprehend, also includes the unknown, the unseen, and the unthought. For Walter Benjamin, this is the very task of art: to generate a demand for which a sense of need has not yet arisen."^[10] Instrumental reason, that is, cannot comprehend the importance that individual taste places on the spectacular or the unknown, and that is why it excludes the aesthetic, as aesthesis or sensibility, from the entire problematic of, for instance, realist politics in relation to terrorism. Bleiker aims to show how closely interrelated reason and the commonplace really are, hence, the non-spectacular and the known, and how limited reason's scope really is insofar as it attempts to conceive of both life and art through already established laws and common thought patterns.

The problem, however, lies in the fact that true aesthetic experience, artistic originality, and the beauty of unprecedented spectacularity are autonomous because, by definition, they are not contingent upon the sphere of what Kant calls concept or the commonplace. If they were, they would not be original, spectacular, or *an experience*. Kant always thought the beautiful to be an object that is radically *other* than reason or concept.^[11] A characteristic example that encapsulates his theory of the beautiful as an object that we may see but may not touch is the one referring to art's inability to explain itself: "[N]o *Homer* or *Wieland* can show how his ideas . . . enter and assemble themselves in his brain, for the good reason that he does not himself know, and so cannot teach others."^[12] The artist does have a vague idea about the thing that s/he says, but absolutely no clue *how* that thing came about. If s/he had some idea, it would mean that her or his work corresponded to certain needs of a given reality, which, in turn, would render the art predictable and its beauty unoriginal. If we are to subscribe to Benjamin's view that art's mission is to create demands where there are no needs, we have to accept that (beautiful) art is in excess of established reality, simultaneously generating, in a way, an excess of reality. To put it in plain terms, true art posits issues that will only be dealt with or appreciated in the future. In this light, what comments like Damian Hirst's contribute today is a platform for tomorrow's artistic as well as political needs.

Aesthetic appreciation and art become imperative when it comes to addressing terrorism. Looking at terror through the lens of *aesthesis* by no means undermines the seriousness of a critical

political situation. Far from it; it yields alternative or additional insights into a terrorist incident that reason, alone, cannot account for and helps retain an ethical and political stance towards terrorism. Those insights have to do with the power of imagination, sensibility, and "a range of other, more sensuous and perhaps more tangible yet equally important forms of insights, from the poetic to the purely visual."^[13] For example, the filmic reproduction of the September 11 attacks, if looked at with a disinterested and not morally involved eye, may be imprinted on the mind in such a way that it allows us to contemplate the event by using alternately imagination and reason, sensibility and logic, and fantasy and memory, without privileging specifically one single faculty. Moreover, in order to continue to do justice to the horrific dimensions of this event, it does not suffice to simply use written or spoken language to convey what happened on that day.^[14] To lay bare the political and social consequences, continuous exposure to, and aesthetic appreciation of the event, its visual representations are necessary not only because the category of the visual is more intense, being much more of a palpable experience, but also because it will help preserve the memory throughout the ages and generations to come, thereby keeping options open as to how such an event should be treated politically.

Aesthetic judgment, as Kant views it, is much more related to politics and ethics than we think. "Art's vivid symbolization of autonomy, despite its unrestrained incomprehensibility, represents the single most powerful motivation for Kant's writing of the third *Critique*," writes Tobin Siebers, adding that "Kant's insistence . . . that the beautiful object possesses a perceptible form requires that it exist on a scale approachable by human beings, and this means that his view of otherness has inherent political value."^[15] Not only does the beautiful object have a perceptible form that shows its compatibility with the human and the political, but also its inherent autonomy is a symbol of moral freedom, individual autonomy and humanity's urge to extricate itself from prejudice and traditional morality. As we have already seen, both aesthetic appreciation of beauty and reflective judgment emphasize the role of disinterestedness in assessing an object. In effect, not only pure and humane (or good) but also ugly or inhumane works of art may be seen as aesthetically beautiful because art is not obliged to always make us feel good. Damian Hirst's acceptance of art's detachment from the morality-immorality binary leads him to state that all the inhumanity and violence encompassing the site of the crash, the so-called "Ground Zero," by no means rule out the possibility of the emergence of art. On the contrary, in this specific case they foreshadow the advent of original art in the form of the ugly and the immoral: It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact.

Artistic representation and the subsequent aesthetic appreciation of ugliness and inhumanity potentially promote the political and consolidate an ethically responsible attitude towards history and the nations. Eugene Delacroix' magnificent 1824 painting *Massacre at Chios* depicts how 20,000 Greeks were butchered by the Turks on the island of Chios in two days. The massacre had taken place only two years before, so it was a very recent incident. Delacroix's use of vivid colors, fervent passion and strong emotion managed to convey accurately the terror on people's faces as well as the ruthlessness of the enemy, thus

helping shift the attention of the European powers to the Greek cause. We might say that the painting, which was bought by the French Government for 6,000 francs, constituted an immediate political statement by spreading the word of the Greek revolution, aside from the fact that it handed down to the next generations the knowledge and awareness of a gory event. Of course, the *Massacre at Chios* is a work of art while the WTC terrorist attacks footage is *not*. Still, in both cases real people and real horror are involved. In both instances there are spectators called upon to appreciate the representation of an atrocious event by judging critically the autonomous *form* of the event, therefore resorting to aesthetics and visual powerfulness for making a political inference.[\[16\]](#)

I need to emphasize here that I have no intention whatsoever of equating the very real atrocity of the terrorist disaster with the artistic representation of a terrorizing incident from the distant past. After all, there was no literal violence involved in the making of the painting, as contrasted to the 9/11 footage which was a direct reporting rather than an artistic representation of an unspeakable atrocity. On the other hand, the *Massacre at Chios* is quite possibly a direct reporting of atrocity, too. It would be wrong to overlook the potential truthfulness and/or historical accuracy of Delacroix's work if we are to take into consideration that, in Delacroix's time, there was no photography or camera that would provide a perfect reproduction of an event. Painting did play the role of a camera; or better, painting constituted a primitive kind of photography. The artistic representation of the *Chios* incident is much closer to reality than we think. Both appraise Delacroix's quasi-photographic illustration *and* adopt the ethically right and moral-free attitude towards images of 9/11 one needs to simultaneously activate one's sensual and intellectual capabilities in order to grasp the political as well as ethical dimensions of the aesthetically powerful, because the object of "beauty" "is both a source of intimate, personal feelings and of an idea of reason present in every human being."[\[17\]](#)

Terrorism cannot and should not be seen as a work of art. It is true that many times we consider a non-art object as if it were artistic in order to discuss its aesthetic value or dimensions. However, something could be visually stunning or aesthetically powerful without being considered a work of art. The important thing is to retrieve the aesthetic quality or aspect of a serious event in order to reveal or, even better, to sense its moral consequences and its ethical and social impact on human psychology and political practice. The September 11 attack, without being itself art, should be seen primarily as an aesthetic experience that we have to dwell on so that we will never risk rationalizing atrocity.

Terrorism is not art, "though the parallels between them are close enough to be disturbing, given" that "after certain acts of terrorism, we are often told, the world will never be the same again. An impact of such magnitude is analogous to the lasting effect of great art," argues Simon Caterson.[\[18\]](#) And while if Hirst is justified, though not unconditionally, for his idea that the images from the 9/11 terrorist attack footage, but not the event itself, resemble works of art, Stockhausen, who was nearly lynched for declaring his admiration for the terrorists themselves as *artists* and the 9/11 atrocity as "the greatest work of art

ever," moves from the representation of the event to the event *itself* as some, perhaps morbid, kind of art. In Stockhausen's astonishing view, the main reason why 9/11 is a crime is that "the people were not agreed. They didn't go to the 'concert.'" [19] The underlying assumption here is that the terrorist attack is, still, a concert, a work of art, regardless of whether the victims were agreed or not. What for Stockhausen gives the event its artistic flavor, though, is supposedly the fact that the jump out of security and the everyday, which, according to the composer, happens sometimes *poco a poco* in art, took place in a single instant in the case at hand, thus turning 9/11 into a grand scale impromptu symphony, the most magnificent art of the whole cosmos.

4. Stockhausen's Romantic Vision: Authenticity and Terrorism

So many years later it remains extremely hard to conceive, let alone accept, Stockhausen's opinion. However, it would be very useful to see why and how he has come to believe 9/11 to be an artistic phenomenon, which would subsequently lead us to unearth ethical or unethical traces in artistic thought and eventually draw our own conclusions as to the contiguity of terror and art and, more importantly, of terrorism and aesthetic experience. Like Hirst, Stockhausen advocates the disengagement of art from conventional morality and the *a priori* laws of reason that hinder an unprejudiced view of autonomous beauty. Instead, he celebrates the potentialities of an aesthetic/reflective judgment that respects the visually powerful object (the object of beauty) for what it is, namely, an incomprehensible otherness independent of pre-given concepts, rather than preempting visual power (or the object-hood of beauty) on the basis of the morality-immorality or concept-imagination binary.

In terms of his particular philosophical viewpoint, it is more than clear that Stockhausen subscribes to a religious concept of art. If art is not related to some kind of revelation that involves life and death, an apocalyptic vision of creation that involves a reconfiguration of human consciousness, indeed, of reality itself, then it is worth nothing. Seen that way, true art treads on forbidden ground where it mingles with reality without being reality's mirror image, that is, a sheer representation of reality any longer. The true target of art, Stockhausen would insist, is to authenticate itself by becoming real, tangible, abandoning the sphere of the false and the artificial forever. In this light, the apocalyptic and aesthetically powerful nature of the 9/11 strikes consists in the fact that the terrorists attained the unattainable, achieved something in one act by eccentrically opting for a hit that was unprecedented and original, and spectacular and inconceivable at the same time, since nobody thought that such a hit was feasible on American territory.

However paradoxical it may sound, Stockhausen's artistic vision is imbued with the romantic spirit and its pervasively anarchist aesthetic. It is romantic because it is aligned with the persistent romantic quest for authenticity and the innovative. It is anarchist because it transgresses the commonly acceptable model of order and harmony, also introducing the destructive presence of evil embodied in the figure of Lucifer. Creation's counterpart is destruction, and art needs to bear witness to

that; otherwise art functions as propaganda in favor of purity and morality. A few days after his initial statement about 9/11 being a great work of art, Stockhausen attempted to clarify his ideas by issuing another statement bringing up the question of Satan:

In my work, I have defined Lucifer as the cosmic spirit of rebellion, of anarchy. He uses his high degree of intelligence to destroy creation. He does not know love. After further questions about the events of America, I said that such a plan appeared to be Lucifer's greatest work of art. Of course, I used the designation "work of art" to mean the work of destruction personified in Lucifer. . . . I cannot find a fitting name for such a "satanic composition."[\[20\]](#)

In other words, the terrorist attacks were a work of art not for Stockhausen but for Lucifer who, being a basic character in the composer's project over a period of twenty-five years, plays the role of a dark power speaking through him but definitely not on his behalf. Lucifer, whose productive spirit could not be anything but destructive, represents anarchy, which is just as important for artistic creativity as is order and harmony.[\[21\]](#) Stockhausen wants to appear only as the disinterested and unprejudiced bearer of a message according to which art expresses rebellion as well as social harmony, ugliness as well as beauty, and inhumanity as well as humanity. He passes no judgment, and if he does, he judges aesthetically by reflecting on the thing-in-itself as the object of appreciation.

The question of authenticity, which is the second issue raised by Stockhausen, pervades the entire problematic of art and the aesthetically powerful in relation to violence and terror. As already implied, art is *really* art when, paradoxically, it stops being art and connects itself more and more with actual life. Art's self-authenticating mechanism of entering reality erases art's fictional character by giving it the opportunity to assume the role and significance of some natural presence acting in the world rather than an artificial representation that simply articulates what is already there. To put it differently, far from articulating the need of personal expression on the artistic level, art becomes fully politicized as an agency that acts on its own in the social sphere, thus enabling it to interact with and affect the world directly. The inconceivable and unimaginable crash into the WTC in New York might be imagination's atrocious way of revealing to us sarcastically, "There is more to me than meets your eye!" It's as if deadly art all of a sudden exercised its destructive, dehumanizing power over society and everyday life, exhibiting an utterly alienating face that transgressed the traditional boundary of art as we know it, namely the category of the aesthetic, expanding to the field of the political. The assumption of a more active role by art is put eloquently by another critic: "If we do not merely settle into thinking of art as personal expression within the canonically bounded domain of the aesthetic, and we ascribe to art an active involvement . . . then we better be ready to come to terms with art as a realm in which humanity exercises its utmost creative/destructive potential, and not in the so-called (since Hegel) world of the spirit but in the world itself."[\[22\]](#)

From the above, we may infer that those artists who think of the September 11 attacks as a great work of art are not necessarily unfeeling or emotionally crippled persons. Artists like Stockhausen and Hirst strive to attain absolute beauty in their works by attempting to reach out to the truly authentic, which only materializes when art exceeds its artificial status and starts to affect reality. One might say that an art that claims to such a version of authenticity is an art that functions like a terrorist for humanity and creativity, insofar as it ruthlessly violates the law that dictates that art remain a representation. On an artistic level, Stockhausen seems envious (!) of the 9/11 terrorists because apparently, however outrageous that sounds, they unknowingly managed to create the greatest work of art in just one act by proving that art is presence rather than representation and, in addition, by creating something new out of ordinary material. For instance, the weapons they used, planes, an apotheosis of technology and materiality, do belong to the realm of the everyday (they fly over our heads all the time). Still, we cannot turn a blind eye to the extraordinary effect the terrorists made out of such ordinariness. Stockhausen, by contrast, allegedly never achieved the extraordinary by getting out of the normal human cycles or attaining the absolutely unfamiliar, the one *thing* that the world has never witnessed before or the music that has never been heard.

To play the music that has never been played before, Stockhausen's greatest desire, and thereby creating unprecedented aesthetic power, one needs to be capable of re-creating or reforming consciousness, and that is exactly what the terrorists did. They became part of a huge artistic project that was to be performed *once* by people about to die precisely *because* of that project. The uncanny (but horrendous) powerfulness of the project is attributable to its instantaneous completion and the termination of everyone involved in it, including the innocent victims. At issue is "the one composition that would signify in all senses the end of composition "because it would exceed all possible points of reception and interpretation, including the point of its creation." [\[23\]](#) Art imbued with such finality relies upon Lucifer for reinforcing its transformative power, even though it knows that Lucifer's destructiveness is very likely to bring its kingdom (art's kingdom) to an end by transforming it into crude and perilous reality.

5. The Familiar and the Unfamiliar

Borrowing a tone of frivolity, we might liken art to an air-born mass (planes?) attacking reality (the Twin Towers?) in a suicidal mood, thus producing a gruesome excess of it (reality) that is subsequently disseminated in an artistic fashion through television, dramatization, narrative, witness accounts, etc. By attacking reality, art *becomes* reality, but the intriguing part herein is that the exact point of art's transformation into reality is the point at which authentic beauty, or rather the attractiveness of the authentic, rises in the form of the one and only terrorizing act during which, as already said, ordinariness is exceeded and the familiar is transformed into something *unfamiliar*.

In *The Critique of Judgment* Kant exemplifies authentic beauty by connecting it with an oscillation between familiarity and

unfamiliarity:

[W]ild, and in its appearance quite irregular beauty, is only pleasing as a change to one whose eyes have become surfeited with regular beauty. . . . [B]eautiful objects have to be distinguished from beautiful views of objects. . . . In the latter case taste appears to fasten, not so much on what the imagination *grasps* in this field, as on the incentive it receives to indulge in poetic fiction, i.e. in the peculiar fancies with which the mind entertains itself as it is being continually stirred by the variety that strikes the eye. It is just as when we watch the changing shapes of the fire or of a rippling brook: neither of which is a thing of beauty, but they convey a charm to the imagination because they sustain its free play.[\[24\]](#)

A brook does not strike the eye as something impressive but a *rippling* brook does spark the imagination because it sustains its free play. It might be argued that the former embodies a regular beauty while the latter an irregular one, given that the mind is in this case stirred by the variety and movement of the brook's ripples. According to Kant, people are quite familiar with regular beauty, and this familiarity leads them to appreciate it much less, having grown tired of it. On the other hand, irregular beauty is rather unfamiliar to them; therefore it is experienced as something that is inherently beautiful because it is original, an authentic experience of newness. How is such an experience of newness attained in the case of the September 11 attacks? A passenger jet is considered a state-of-the-art technological achievement but it does not look different from hundreds of other aircraft screaming across the horizon every day. It constitutes a beauty, but only a regular one insofar as we are far too familiar with images of it to find it striking. However, the impossible view of such a jet swooping in on the Twin Towers that stand in themselves for regular beauty, too, creates an effect of defamiliarization because, to put it in simplistic terms, we have hardly watched a big plane attack a well-known building.[\[25\]](#)

In essence, defamiliarization derives from the fact that although the protagonists of the episode are well-known and thus ordinary (who doesn't know what an airplane looks like or what the World Trade Center is?), the overall effect evoked in the minds of the spectators is unprecedented and extraordinary: two familiar objects combine in an unfamiliar mode thereby yielding an authentic experience of newness, an irregular beauty, as Kant envisions it. Stockhausen's and Hirst's admiration derives partly from the realization of the oscillation between the familiar and the unfamiliar in the Twin Towers crash. The transition from familiarity to unfamiliarity and back conveys a charm to the imagination to the extent that the imagination receives the incentive to indulge in poetic fiction, stirred by fiction, stirred by the variety that strikes the eye.

Such an authentic experience of newness is not disconnected from real life, inhumanity, and horror. In a provocative article Frank Lentricchia maintains that "aesthetic revolutionaries over the past two centuries wage polemical war on behalf of the authentic, which they habitually define as an overcoming of

precisely traditional art's 'once removed' character," adding that Wordsworth's intention to use language that was really spoken by ordinary men was not so innocent after all, since what he aspired to was not the successful conveyance of poetic feeling but, rather, the erasure of the distinction between word and thing; in other words, the erasure of the mediated character of poetry, and by extension, of art.^[26] Unfortunately, to erase the mediated character of poetic language is also to come face-to-face with inhumanity and horror owing to the fact that language, and art, is then deprived of its metaphorical and symbolic characteristics, thus resorting to crude and dangerous literality. Still, that is probably a risk we should take if, following the Kantian model, we are to view art and aesthetic experience in a serious and ethical way, that is, with a disinterested and unprejudiced eye that allows for the emergence of all sides of art, legitimate or illegitimate, humane or dehumanizing.

"To consider the merits of [Stockhausen's idea of the aesthetic character of the extremely violent event called '9/11'] would require that we put aside the virtually unavoidable sentimentality that asks us to believe that art is always somehow humane and humanizing; that artists, however indecent they might be as human beings, become noble when they make art. . . ."^[27] In *Sex, Literature, and Censorship*, Jonathan Dollimore supports the following:

To take art seriously must be to recognize that its dangerous insights and painful beauty often derive from tendencies both disreputable and deeply anti-social. We know that the aesthetic vision has the power to threaten reactionary social agendas. . . . But art can also seduce us into attitudes which threaten progressive, and humanely responsible, social agendas as well. . . . Lovers of art have promulgated well-intentioned lies: they tell us that great art and the high culture it serves can only enhance the lives of those who truly appreciate it; that such art . . . is incapable of damaging or 'corrupting' us.^[28]

In essence, what both Dollimore and Lentricchia are telling us here is that, at times, literature and art, far from confirming human values, actually oppose them. Seen in this way, art is not a utopia of good and pure intentions separated from the murkiness of the outside world. It is rather a realm where multiple creative and destructive forces operate beyond good and evil at the level of the aesthetic. To adopt an ethical stance towards art we have to acquiesce in the fact that serious art produces pleasure as well as pain, and Dollimore's notion of painful beauty as deriving from anti-social tendencies is perfectly aligned with both Hirst's and Stockhausen's reception of the 9/11 attacks as something painful but aesthetically powerful.^[29]

In Hirst's view, there was something utterly surreal about turning a passenger plane into a weapon of destruction, while watching people jump off the Twin Towers was a completely *unreal* spectacle that he, along with other artists, could not but see in an artistic way as an unprecedented and therefore highly authentic moment that only the category of the aesthetic can truly appreciate. "I remember seeing people jumping out the

buildings holding hands. The whole thing was completely unreal."^[30] In Stockhausen's view, the artistic dimension of the atrocity can be put down to the fact that the unreal became, in a single instant, *real* since artistic representation merged into real presence as art uncovered the aesthetic and creative potential of crude reality. An infinitely unrealistic (because beyond any imagination) murderous artwork was transformed into a fully realistic entity, given that art's poco a poco leaps out of security occurred, in the case of the terrorist attacks, on a massive scale.

6. Terrorism, Performance, and its Audience

Nobody could seriously have taken pleasure in an act involving the killing of three thousand people. Nonetheless, from an artistic point of view it is conceivable that one may have secretly been enticed by a perfectly orchestrated hit or performance pulled off successfully without a single "rehearsal." Marvin Carlson, in *Performance*, maintains that performance requires "the physical presence of trained or skilled human beings whose demonstration of their skills is the performance."^[31] The terrorists, indeed, demonstrated their special skills in public, in front of a horrified and speechless nation-audience watching them perform multiple hits at two major symbols of Western power: the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The attacks constituted a performance insofar as there were people to attend them, either in person or through their TV sets. The media played a very important role in the mounting of the performance, as they helped disseminate the unprecedented images of the hits and thus intensify their impact on the global community: As two critics very eloquently put it, "the news media, the terrorism specialists, and the terrorists themselves require one another in order to thrive."^[32]

If the attacks are a performance, is it what Kant would call a beautiful one? Stockhausen presents himself as an admirer of the terrorists' professional efficiency rather than a lover of their horrific deeds. Their atrocious attack (performance) took place in the presence of three thousand unsuspecting minds having a tragically active role in it and was witnessed by millions of others around the world. So technically speaking, it proved a huge success as spectacle. For Hirst and Stockhausen it constituted an out-of-this-world project that beat art at its own game by setting new boundaries for reality and broadening the horizons of conventional art. The project looked aesthetically powerful to them insofar as it single-handedly took reality to an *other* place where art supposedly hasn't reached yet: the place of the inconceivable. Beauty in that *other* place is so insidious that it creeps unconsciously into a number of 9/11 horror narratives initially meant to convey the ugliness of the event.

One critic, for example, has associated the 9/11 images with the chaotic but aesthetically overwhelming paintings of Hieronymus Bosch:

Images of just punishment, of hell and damnation, are deep and recurrent themes in the Western imagination, and images of the New York City crash site were framed by aesthetic archetypes of apocalypse that recalled the late medieval paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. Dust blotted out the sun. Day turned to night. People caught on fire, suffocated, and jumped to their death. Hysteria and wild

screaming were recorded . . . and policemen were brought to their knees, and they died in abject confusion. . . . In the towers above, rich and powerful men and women . . . their sophisticated machines useless, and they died in even greater numbers."[\[33\]](#)

In this account, aesthetic judgment/appreciation proves an ally in representing adequately the atrocity of the attacks and their immediate effects. The narrator resorts to a quasi-literary description to talk about the excruciating moments of real pain and death as he envisaged or saw them on the TV. It is not only the 9/11 footage as such that evokes images of an apocalyptic vision of art; the critical *reception* of the footage, too, emerges virtually as an artistic creation assuming the form of a beautiful literary narrative of panic and real horror. Simultaneously, such narrating constitutes a moral act if we take moral to mean doing justice to the atrocity in its full dimensions.

The aesthetic of beauty naturally materializes also in terrorist mentality. If a 9/11 terrorist could read one of the aforementioned apocalyptic reports on the WTC attacks, he would certainly be exhilarated not only by the psychological impact of the attacks but also by their association with the ultimate Biblical signifier: Judgment Day. Aside from the obvious implications regarding the alleged death of the Christian world, such an association, from a terrorist point of view, would signify the tangible fulfillment of a crazy and forbidden fantasy, namely the destruction and humiliation of a Satanic absolute (Western) power. The perfect harmonization of the concept of absolute terrorism with its actualization and practical exertion on two major symbols of Western capitalism encapsulates terrorist beauty, or beauty in all its terrifying magnificence.

In *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) Kant says that the image is never fully congruent with a concept, maintaining that an idea denotes a totality which can never be given *in concreto*. As he argues, " . . . any knowledge which we can acquire still leaves us in complete uncertainty as to what should be ascribed to the object, and that while we do indeed have a concept sufficient to raise a question, we are entirely lacking in materials or power to answer the same."[\[34\]](#) In short, there is concept but there is no adequate imaginative repository that can do justice to a concept. Still, a momentary concretization of a concept is, I believe, at stake. What if Imagination and Reason (or concept) could be reconciled, the former being able to present accurately the totality of the latter? If that were the case, the Kantian *beautiful* (in its ancient Greek sense as *eumorfos* (εὐμορφος) and in its modern Greek sense as *omorfos* (ὁμορφος), that which has an enticingly harmonious *form* (morfi)) would result from conceiving in imaginative terms, the inconceivable in terms of reason or concept.

Aesthetic judgment, for Kant, involves the harmonization of the faculties of imagination and understanding. In addition, aesthetic pleasure accompanies the common apprehension of an object by the imagination, as the faculty of intuition, in relation to the understanding, as the faculty of concepts. . . ."[\[35\]](#) In effect, to conceive the inconceivable would mean to bridge the gap between the absolute and the mundane, thus letting pure form emerge as the resolution of the aforementioned heterogeneity

between image and totality. When Damian Hirst calls the 9/11 disaster visually stunning, he implies that the gap between (terrorist) conception and (terrorist) implementation was bridged, and wonders whether art could ever do the same, for instance, by uniting the ideal and the feasible. In the context of the WTC attacks, absolute aesthetic power or form was experienced as absolute terror realized on a practical, that is, mundane, level.

If the September 11 terrorists theoretically conceived of an inconceivable attack and subsequently made it happen, thereby satisfying (unknowingly?) the principle of beauty in the form of an unimaginable fantasy, ordinary citizens and viewers of the terrorist hit satisfied this principle, too, simply by watching live an unprecedented event which they had somehow conceived of or fantasized about many times in the past, bringing to a consensus, in a way, the idea of the ultimate disaster and its practical examples in real life.

But how did an innocent audience fantasize about an absolute disaster? Let us make clear that fantasize here does not mean "wish for" but rather "look into the possibility of." How, then, do ordinary people look into the possibility of absolute terror? There have been innumerable Hollywood films of catastrophe with apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios. As spectators, we have become so tragically accustomed to viewing well-orchestrated, albeit fictitious catastrophes on the artistic level on TV or cinema representations that we could almost admit to ourselves that we would die to witness a cinematic catastrophe in real life. Sadly, we are too deeply immersed into the culture of visual violence *not* to appreciate aesthetically, or take secret pleasure in, real violence when it occurs.

Thus, if there lies a Kantian purposiveness in the form or image of two planes crashing into the WTC; if, that is, our idea of beauty is defined by a predetermined taste in viewing spectacular disasters, and we also have the feeling that as spectators we have earned the right to witness catastrophes of this magnitude, then there is a covert selfish feeling of satisfaction whenever we do witness them. The reason is that unconsciously we come really close to erasing the gap between art and reality by reserving for the former some of the latter's space and vice versa, eventually blurring the boundary between reality and fiction. In Kant's terms, absolute Terror is the concept that has found a way to talk about itself through Imagination (the images and horror of 9/11). Such a consensus of imagination and concept might lead to what Kant calls beautiful, which is precisely what artists like Hirst and Stockhausen allude to when referring to the aesthetic nature of the terrorist atrocity.

I do not wish to make a political statement here in connection with the reception of the September 11 attacks, although I can't overlook the fact that critics have often argued that people's fantasy about the destruction of a superpower did present itself in the form of satisfaction in America's humiliation. According to Karl Kroeber, "many people around the world loathe us now: It seems a fair guess that more than half the world's population was not displeased to learn that on 11 September America suffered a bit of what it had been dealing out for decades. . . ."[36] Jean Baudrillard puts it more blatantly: "That the entire

world without exception had dreamed of this event, that nobody could help but dream of the destruction of so powerful a Hegemon, this fact is unacceptable to the moral conscience of the West. And yet it's a fact nevertheless, a fact that resists the emotional violence of all the rhetoric conspiring to cover it up. In the end, it was they who did it, but we who wished it." http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol2_1/kellner.htm - edn6.[37]

Of course Baudrillard does not mean that the terrorist attacks were justified or that America, being a superpower, should be destroyed. What he means is that the West has unnaturally, almost immorally, repressed the natural feeling that any hegemony contains potentially the seeds of its own destruction.[38] As he argues, the moral outrage ignited by the 9/11 footage was a compensation for people's clandestine fascination by the uncanny event and their jubilation at having seen absolute hegemony humiliated. By Western standards, it was definitely immoral to feel exhilarated at such a view, but it turns out to be also immensely unethical to stick to the idea of the eternal invulnerability of the Absolute. On an aesthetic level, the fascination felt refers mostly to a wish-fulfilling process according to which what had so far been imagined or visualized in the world of fantasy was actually *seen*, watched live by millions in the real world, thus turning an ambiguous fantasy of disaster into concrete examples of what such a fantasy would be like.

Kant believes that the harmonization of concept and imagination is bound up with the emergence of *beautiful form* as an aesthetic phenomenon/object, the assessment of which should be independent of any moral laws. From the point of view of *determinant* judgment, to be fascinated by the event, and thus acknowledge pure aesthetic powerfulness, is a crime and an immoral act. Through *aesthetic/reflective* judgment, though, it is not only to recognize, philosophically as well as politically, the vulnerability of absolute power, which is an immensely ethical act, but also to ponder over a spectacular and highly unanticipated scene where a giant is momentarily brought to his knees with a big thump.

7. Conclusion

Stockhausen is telling us that the leap out of security that occurred during the 9/11 attacks is analogous to the smaller safety-defying steps out of the ordinary taken by great art. Still, if great art requires a small degree of insecurity, an aesthetic appreciation of great art presupposes that we feel absolutely safe. To witness representations of 9/11 on the TV is to have the opportunity to safely appreciate aesthetically an unprecedented event and reflect on the danger that something similar or the same thing might have happened to oneself but fortunately did not. When Stockhausen, Hirst and other artists articulate their enthusiasm for the aesthetic (artistic?) dimensions of the terrorist attacks, they do it from the privileged position of sheer spectatorship. In other words, they feel free to be engrossed by that unprecedented event since they were not implicated in the horror either as victims or as perpetrators. I have argued that their fascination can partly be attributed to the recognition that, at times, reality is able to reconfigure itself as the highest form of art and also open up new possibilities for

artistic creativity and vision. However, like all spectators in the twenty-first century, they run the risk not of taking fiction for reality so much as taking reality for fiction, the latter proving a lot more dangerous.

In a world suffused with fictionality and virtual reality, the real is frequently denied representation or even existence. One becomes accustomed to viewing fictitious scenes of raw violence; therefore a real incident would probably make no *real* difference. Schiller, commenting on tragic theater's ability to train spectators in handling staged pain and adjusting to harsh reversals of fortune, argues that "the more often the mind renews [this act of self-sufficiency], the more accomplished the human spirit becomes and it acquires an ever greater advantage over sensuous urges, such that when a serious misfortune finally does arise in the midst of these imagined and artificial ones, that person is in the position to treat it as an artificial one. . . ." [39] Schiller's position entails the deliberate subjugation of an individual to a beautiful fantasy, the fantasy that what one is witnessing is not really happening, like the rest of the misfortunes that one has witnessed through art.

The translation of a horrific event into a beautiful and imaginative representation or fantasy is not unethical to the extent that it blends artistic pleasure with the concern for real pain and tribulation and with the concern for beauty and aesthetic appreciation. What I have shown in this paper is that in discussing terror(ism) it is necessary that we also resort to aesthetics. An aesthetic assessment of history and political and social issues by no means runs counter to a serious and objective description or investigation of real life and human experience. Far from it: aesthetic/reflective judgment, insofar as it is morally disinterested yet ethically involved, could bypass prejudice and avoid censorship, thus offering a just and more sincere view of human activity and its representations. Paradoxically, in the debate on terror, art and beauty assume an even greater importance in the sense that they provide views and sensations that are other than reason (they can hardly be called reasonable in a conventional way), thereby helping analyze events like 9/11 that cannot be analyzed through reason only. After all, what better way to delve into unreasonable facts but through alternative, non-reasonable, non-scientific methods?

Endnotes

[1] Damien Hirst, Interview, *BBC News Online*, 11 September 2002.

[2] "Attacks Called Great Art," *New York Times*, September 19, 2001.

[3] I would like to subscribe to Hillis Miller's distinction between moral law and ethical law. Drawing upon Kant's notion of morality, Miller connects morality with the law and justice with ethics: "In a sense, you could argue that my imposition on the text is the act of identifying moral with a pre-existing existing law or habit or whatever. I call that morality, whereas, for me, ethics is always parallel to justice. . . . The word moral is often used in a condescending and in a denigrating way, to name the unreflective following of a moral rule by someone. Such people behave morally but they are not really just or ethical, precisely

because they do not think of the unique circumstances." See "On Literature and Ethics: An Interview with J. Hillis Miller." *The European English Messenger* 15.1 (2006): 23-34.

[4] Kant, Immanuel, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), p.17.

[5] *Ibid.*, § 4.

[6] *Ibid.*, § 6.

[7] *Ibid.*, § 57.

[8] *Ibid.*, § 57.

[9] Lentricchia, Frank and Jody McAuliffe, "Groundzeroland," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.2 (Spring 2002): 349-59.

[10] Bleiker, Roland, "Aestheticizing Terrorism: Alternative Approaches to 11 September," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 49.3 (2003): 430-45.

[11] Kant never intended to assign the quality of art's incomprehensibility or otherness to the category of the sublime, as postmodernism would have it. Otherness, according to theorists like Paul de Man and Jean-François Lyotard, is linked with the sublime and a deconstruction of aesthetics, whereas the beautiful is rather seen as aesthetics conventionalized. See, Paul de Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant," in Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica, eds., *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 121-44; Jean Francois Lyotard, "Acinema," trans. Paisley N. Livingston, *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

[12] Kant, Immanuel, *The Critique of Judgment*, § 47

[13] Bleiker, p. 442.

[14] In fact, it remains doubtful whether one can really *name* the event itself. As Derrida argues, "the brevity of the appellation — 9/11— stems not only from an economic or rhetorical necessity." It constitutes a metonymy that

points out the unqualifiable. . . .[And] we must repeat it . . . as if to exorcise two times at one go: on the one hand, to conjure away, as if by magic, the thing itself, the fear or the terror it inspires . . . and, on the other hand, to deny . . . our powerlessness to name in an appropriate fashion. . . . Something terrible took place on September 11, and in the end we don't know what."

From Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror. Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 87.

[15] Siebers, Tobin, "Kant and the Politics of Beauty," *Philosophy and Literature* 22.1 (1998): 31-50.

[16] "In a similar fashion, Picasso's *Guernica* is a work of art that has influenced our collective memory more than most, if not all, political analyses . . . together as it forms and re-forms political, social and historical consciousness towards a better

future. *Guernica* is a beautiful work of art that carries within its form a fusion of individual taste and societal judgment passed upon a terrifying political situation (the Spanish civil war)." See Bleiker, p. 443.

[17] Siebers, p. 46.

[18] Simon Caterson, "The Art of Terror," Theage.com.au, October 15, 2005.

[19] *New York Times*, September 19, 2001.

[20] Another statement from Professor Stockhausen.

[21] In *Paradise Lost*, Milton raises destruction as pertaining to Satan's own conception of creativity:

If then his providence Out of our evil seek to bring
forth good, Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil; Which
oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps Shall grieve
him, if I fail not, and disturb His inmost counsels
from their destined aim. (*Paradise Lost*, I.162)

[22] Gourgouris, Stathis, "Transformation, Not Transcendence," *Boundary 2* 31.2 (2004): 55-79.

[23] Gourgouris, p.60.

[24] Kant, § 22.

[25] The defamiliarization effect was posited by Russian Formalism. Viktor Shklovsky, in his essay called "Art As Technique," refers to how Tolstoy "describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, and makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object." According to Shklovsky, "Tolstoy uses this technique of defamiliarization constantly. See Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p.16.

[26] Lentricchia and Mc Auliffe, p. 352.

[27] Lentricchia and Mc Auliffe, p. 353.

[28] Dollimore, Jonathan, *Sex, Literature and Censorship* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. xi.

[29] "Art is increasingly viewed as useless for society today unless it makes one feel good." Siebers, p. 43.

[30] Hirst, *BBC News Online*.

[31] Carlson, Marvin, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 3

[32] Zulaika, Joseba and William A Douglass, *Terror and Taboo, The Follies, Fables and Faces of Terrorism* (Routledge: New York & London, 1996), p. 4.

[33] Alexander, Jeffrey C., "From the Depths of Despair: Performance, Counterperformance, and 'September 11,'" *Sociological Theory* 22.1 (March 2004): 88-105.

[34] An Idea cannot be shown in its absolute totality: "Even if we

suppose the whole of nature to be spread out before us, and that of all that is presented to our intuition nothing is concealed from our senses and consciousness, yet still through no experience of our ideas be known by us *in concreto*." Excerpt from "*Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), § 4.

[35] *Critique of Judgment*, § 39. Such apprehension, I would add, would have to be momentary, so that it would not jeopardize (the elusiveness of) beauty as nonconceptual entity.

[36] "Thoughts on September 11," *Boundary 2* 29.1 (2002): 269-271.

[37] Baudrillard, Jean, cited in Mark Goldblatt, "French Toast: America *Wanted* September 11," *National Review Online*, December 3, 2001:8.

[38] Baudrillard was quick to renounce the attacks: "I do not praise murderous attacks—that would be idiotic. . . . I have endeavored to analyze the process through which the unbounded expansion of globalization creates the conditions for its own destruction." See Jean Baudrillard, "This is the Fourth World War," an interview with *Der Spiegel*, 2002; refer to the translation in *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 1.1 (January 2004).

www.ubishops.ca/ baudrillardstudies/spiegel.htm.

[39] Friedrich von Schiller, "On the Sublime (Toward the Further Development of Some Kantian Ideas)," in *Essays* [1801], ed. Walter Hinderer and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (New York: Continuum Books, 1993), pp. 82-83. See also Charles H. Hinnant, "Schiller and the Political Sublime : Two Perspectives," *Criticism* 44.2 (2002): 121.

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