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The representation of violence as evil in contemporary art: the power of the image in Kiefer, Richter, and Bin Laden

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ABSTRACT

How can violence as evil be represented in art and what do works of art evoke in the viewer? Two closely related questions on the representation of violence as evil are discussed. The first is whether there is an ethical limit to the representation of evil, that is, the issue posed with respect to the (im)possibility of Holocaust art. Works by Anselm Kiefer are compared to Holocaust art in the exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery / Recent Art* (New York, 2002). The second question concerns the difference between art and life with respect to the representation of evil. Bin Laden's live image of 9/11 is compared to Richter's painting *September*. The former is life as a reality show; Bin Laden's image can petrify the viewer. The latter is art, and Richter's style of blurred realism distances the viewer from the event so that he can arrive at a moral and political position regarding terrorism.

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Pain, suffering, despair, and violence as evil are important themes in Western art. Here the Laocoön Group in the Hellenistic period and the countless depictions of the suffering Christ and the Last Judgment since the Middle Ages spring to mind. Depictions of violence in war often laid the accent on heroism, military honour, and fame. The Alexander Mosaic in Pompeii, for instance (100 BC), shows Alexander the Great in his battle against Darius III. Although the depiction of the heroic side of the violence of war can still be seen in our time, some artists have begun since Francisco Goya's *The Disasters of War*, 1810–1820, to put the emphasis more on the suffering produced by violence in war and to present this violence as destructive in character, as evil.¹ For example, Max Beckmann and Otto Dix have portrayed the hell of the First World War. Art and the media show images of violence as evil as a result of war or terrorist acts.

I will look at how contemporary and recent destructive violence as evil is depicted in the visual arts and in a direct image. I will discuss the works of Anselm Kiefer (1945) and Gerhard Richter (1932) and the live image distributed in the media of Osama Bin Laden's attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York in 2001.² Kiefer is known primarily for his Holocaust art and for his art in the neo-expressionist style in which myth, history, and spirituality are central. Richter experienced the Second World War as a child and was later subjected to the ideology of the DDR (the German

Democratic Republic). As a painter, he applies various techniques in his work, which is sometimes figurative and sometimes abstract. His painting *September* (2005) portrays the Al-Qaeda attack on the Twin Towers 9/11 (2001). Bin Laden (1957–2011) is the founder of the Islamic terrorist organization Al-Qaeda and was responsible for the attacks on 11 September 2001.

How do Kiefer and Richter represent violence as evil in their art and what does their art evoke in the viewer? I pose two closely related questions on the representation of violence as evil. The first, discussed in [Section 1](#), is whether there is an ethical limit to the representation of evil. That is the issue that is posed with respect to the (im) possibility of Holocaust art: How can one represent the unrepresentable in such a way that it respects both the victims and the viewers of the painting? Our discussion will show that how the artist represents evil is important. This leads to my second question, which I will explore in [Section 2](#), on the difference between art and life. I will discuss Bin Laden's live image of 9/11, which was transmitted to the whole world via TV, and Richter's painting *September*.³ Is there a difference between art (Kiefer's painting) and life (Bin Laden's image) and what different responses do works of art and live images evoke in the viewer? In the third section, I will make some conclusions regarding the power of the image with respect to the representation of evil.

1. Is there an ethical limit to the representation of evil in art?

People have been seeking a suitable representation of pain and suffering since Greek antiquity. The Laocoön Group functioned as a pathos formula for the representation of Christ's suffering, for example. Christ's body is modelled on Laocoön in Rubens' painting of Christ's descent from the cross, *The Descent from the Cross* (1613) and various other paintings.⁴ The depiction of violence as evil was all the rage in black romanticism. It was from the portrayals of Christ on the cross that Beckmann borrowed his representation of violence in the First World War. While the constant question is *how* violence can be represented as evil, the question that arises in connection with Holocaust art is, as indicated above, *whether* evil can be represented at all. To want to destroy an entire people – does that not exceed human understanding and our sense of morality? Adorno's statement at the end of his article 'Cultural Criticism and Society' (1949) is well known: 'After Auschwitz, to write poetry is barbaric.'⁵ This statement obtains for art in general. Adorno looks at the limit of representation in an ethical sense. His writings show that he did not mean his statement to be taken literally. He sees Beckett's *Endgame*, which expresses the nothingness of all culture, as a fitting response to Auschwitz.⁶ Adorno acknowledges that we should not forget the excessiveness of much current suffering.⁷ The intention of his statement about art after Auschwitz finds expression in the poetry of Celan who silently indicates the unspeakable horror by an inaudible voice. Thus, in his 'Fugue of Death' he invokes the death camps as follows:

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
 we drink you at midday and morning we drink you at evening
 we drink and we drink
 a man lives in the house your goldenes Haar Margareta
 your ashes Haar Shulamith he plays with his vipers.⁸

In the early 1980s Kiefer portrayed the Jewish and German woman in Celan's poem a number of times: '[Y]our goldenes Haar Margareta....' In Kiefer's *Margarethe* (1981) we see narrow strands of straw, white-pink at the top, standing erect in a landscape. The straw is a metonymic representation of the German woman: the yellow colour of the straw points to the blonde hair of the German woman and to the German landscape at the same time.⁹ The woman's rootedness in the German land refers undeniably to the ideology of Nazism. The strands of straw with the white-pink tops are transformed into candles as a symbol of the Aryan human as a *Lichtmensch*.¹⁰ The way in which the material is palpably brought to canvas almost makes Margareta physically present.

Kiefer's *Sulamith* (1983) is completely different. Here we see a darkly coloured vaulted brick building, a reproduction of Wilhelm Kreis's *Mausoleum for German War Heroes*. At the back of the building we see flames that evoke a menorah. The mausoleum for Nazi war heroes is thus changed into a mausoleum for Jewish victims. '[Y]our ashes Haar Shulamith ...': the name Sulamith, a reference to the dark-haired woman in the Song of Songs, appears – somewhat obscured – in the above left corner, whereas the name Margarethe is placed in a central spot in the painting *Margarethe*. The German woman is portrayed as present, while the Jewish woman is portrayed as absent. The Jewish woman is metonymically represented by the ash-like surface of the canvas.¹¹

In my view, these paintings are impressive examples of memorial art, *ars memoriae*. The dead are honoured, they are mourned, and the attempt is made to give the event – if it is at all possible to do so – a place in history. This is Holocaust art in which the ethical boundary of the representation is respected. Metonymy is the standard representational device in these paintings.¹² They depict the Holocaust through visible symbols that make us think of the German and Jewish woman. The following examples are more controversial.

1.1 *Art that transgresses the limit?*

Kiefer's earlier work on the Holocaust is more controversial because there he did not portray the victims of evil but the perpetrators. The question of where the ethical limit is for such portrayal is brought up more acutely in this context. His books *Heroic Symbols* (1969) and *To Genet* (1969) contain self-portraits in which Kiefer dresses in a Nazi uniform while making the Hitler salute, standing against various backgrounds that refer to German history, such as a landscape, a river, the sea, or a monument. This is alternated with various depictions, such as Nazi soldiers, a domestic family scene, Kiefer's studio, and Nazi art. In *To Genet* he dressed, in conflict with Nazi culture, as a transvestite while also making the Hitler salute.¹³ Is this flirting with evil? Or confronting art with a certain function? To answer this I will compare it to Holocaust art from the exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery /Recent Art* of the Jewish Museum in New York in 2002.

The style here is different: these are works in Pop Art form on the Holocaust by recognized contemporary artists. They use the imagery of the Nazi period to investigate the nature of evil. Toys are used, for instance, as in Zbigniew Libera, *LEGO Concentration Camp Set* (1996); Piotr Uklanski's *The Nazis* (1998) consists of photo portraits of Nazis in uniform in which Nazi banality is connected with Hollywood

glamour; Elke Krystufek's series *Economic Love* (1998) is also included in this exhibition. Krystufek combined Uklanski's Nazi photo portraits with naked portraits of herself which contained texts like this: 'You can't shock us, Damien [Hirst]. That's because you haven't based an entire exhibition on pictures of Nazis.'¹⁴

In his *Heroic Symbols* and *To Genet* Kiefer represented the Nazi past in a performance with himself in the main role as actor. Art historians like Saltzman, Arasse, and Götz argue that these early works do not represent a flirting with Nazism. Nazism had a deep influence on art. Like many other artists in post-war Germany, including Richter, Kiefer struggled with his own identity as an artist. It is within that framework, according to Saltzman, that we are to judge these works by Kiefer:

In these early works by Kiefer, his own embodied subjectivity was absolutely central. He introduced a figure, a self-representation, who was iconoclastic, irreverent, and provocative. He took up the paternal legacy and the role of the father as a means of negotiating his own identity in relation to history. But Kiefer's operations of subjective identification were more complex than they might appear. Kiefer also assumed a subject position that thoroughly undermined the hypermasculine subjectivity of the Nazi. Put simply, he wore dresses.¹⁵

Kiefer's *Heroic Symbols* and *To Genet* can be explained as his struggle with his identity as an artist in post-war Germany. By choosing representation via a performance conducted by himself, it concerns in the first instance a confrontation of the artist with Nazi evil: 'Je voulais juste savoir qui je suis, d'où je viens, le nazisme étant mon antériorité la plus proche.'¹⁶ By making these works public, he challenges the viewer to take a position with respect to Nazi evil. But what is the difference between this and the works in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition?

Saltzman evaluates the works in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition in her article differently than she evaluates Kiefer's early work.¹⁷ She agrees with Clement Greenberg's rejection of kitsch as a political aid for totalitarian regimes and views the Pop-Art-like works of the contemporary artists in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition as dangerous kitsch:

The work [in the exhibition] embraces kitsch, whose lure was exploited to unprecedented ends in fascist aesthetics. And it uses kitsch to frame an encounter with the very history that exploited the aesthetic of kitsch with devastating historical consequences. In so doing, and in so doing with such readily assimilable and recognizable forms, the work in *Mirroring Evil* demonstrates that such a history, despite the ethical presumption of its radically unassimilable nature, has been assimilated, packaged, consumed, over and over again, in cultural form, for decades.¹⁸

Saltzman's case for evaluating Kiefer's early work in such a different way from her evaluation of the works in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition is not very convincing. It is undeniable that there is a difference in style. Whereas Saltzman explains what the images Kiefer uses are intended to show, she neglects to do the same with the works in the exhibition. She considers the representations of the Holocaust 'too easy.'¹⁹ Let me just note that some of these works have a function similar to that of Kiefer's early works: the appeal to the public to determine its own position regarding fascist evil.

Krystufek's series *Economic Love* is shocking because the viewer discovers that he can have erotic fantasies similar to those the Nazis had. With her photo collages, Krystufek forces the viewer into the uncomfortable position of being a voyeur in collusion with

the Nazis depicted there. In what other ways are we like the Nazis? Zbigniew Libera's LEGO *Concentration Camp Set* has a different function. The viewer looks with shock at these toys. Van Alphen sees this as indicating that what happened to the victims of the camps was so extreme that their own 'self' was erased, leaving them without a language to speak about what happened. Here the limit of representation is not ethical but semiotic: there is no language and experience for speaking about what happened. The language (and the experience) fall(s) too short of the mark to represent evil.²⁰ Therapy can help one find the language again by having the person play the camp scenes as a child.²¹ It is this that makes Libera's work important, but the question can be raised as to whether this therapeutic aid can and should be displayed as art.

Kiefer's early works and this art of the exhibition evoke such intense emotions because the viewer becomes implicated in an entirely different, direct way in the event this art represents than in Kiefer's anamnestic works *Margarethe* and *Sulamith*. By focusing on the perpetrators and not on the victims, the viewer is pulled from the safe position that museums usually afford him or her when looking at art. It is a direct confrontation with evil, whereby the viewer is confronted with him- or herself. Such paintings function as an disruption of our daily life and world. The style is realism in that it looks precisely like what it represents.

Kiefer's early work and the works by Libera and Krystufek seek the limits of representing the Nazi past in an ethical sense. That is done via the content and the form chosen. A work of art should be judged not only on moral grounds but also on aesthetic ones, not only on content but also on form.²² Kiefer's early work is, as works of art, interesting because of the deliberately chosen situations of his performances and his mocking of Nazism by sometimes putting on a dress. Libera's and Krystufek's works are works similar to Pop Art, and Pop Art is not necessarily kitsch. The correspondence with Kiefer's early work is that they are realistic. The danger of such art is that neo-Nazis can misuse it. Given the art works' aesthetic value and their moral and political function, I do not consider these works (morally) transgressive. I am less enthusiastic with respect to Uklanski's *The Nazis*. It is difficult to determine what Uklanski's *The Nazis* is supposed to evoke in the viewer. Uklanski selected movie stars playing Nazis for his photo portraits. If Uklanski intended this portrayal of (evil) violence to be ironic, one would expect the element of irony to be clearly present. In contrast, however, it looks like a conflation of Good and Evil, a flirting with evil. The Nazi past is presented here in its glamour in such a way that it becomes something that is part of everyday life. The extraordinary, the abnormal, is viewed as if it is ordinary, normal. With respect to Uklanski's work, I tend to agree with Saltzman's opinion I cited above regarding kitsch.²³ Such art does not have enough of an eye for the seriousness of the evil of the Holocaust and thus too little respect for the victims and the viewer.

The realism found in this art by Libera and the early Kiefer does lead me to ask whether these works do not erase the difference between art and life. Does art not provide some distance from the reality? This issue is important concerning the kind of different responses works of art evoke in the viewer. It is this question precisely that arises in the depiction of violence as evil caused by terrorism.

2. Image and the art of terrorism

Just as the question of the limit of representation of violence as evil arises in the context of the Holocaust, so also, in connection with Bin Laden's attack on the Twin Towers, the question arises as to whether there is a difference between Bin Laden's image of 9/11 and an artistic depiction of it, such as Richter's *September*. Kiefer asked the question from the perspective of art history in his lectures at the Collège de France. Richter painted his *September* about 9/11 and took up this same question in an interview.²⁴ Stated more broadly, the issue is whether art can be distinguished from life. If one holds that art and life converge, then one views life as a work of art, and the distinction between Bin Laden's image of 9/11 and a painting thus evaporates. The composer Karl Heinz Stockhausen calls the perfect image of Bin Laden's act a work of art: it is 'Lucifer's greatest work of art.' Bin Laden's image is still carved into the consciousness of many.²⁵

There is a difference, I think, between Bin Laden's image and a work of art on that image. After a short introduction on Bin Laden's image (Section 2.1), I will argue this point from the perspective of art theory (Section 2.2.). I will then elaborate on that by comparing Richter's painting of 9/11, *September*, and Bin Laden's image of that event (Section 2.3).

2.1 Bin Laden's image of 9/11

On 11 September 2001, at 8:45 am, American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston flew into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York. A second airplane, American Airlines Flight 175 from Boston, ploughed into the south tower at 9:03 am and exploded on impact. The images show the moment of the attack and are instances of direct realism. They were shown repeatedly on TV.

One can view looking at such images on TV or in the paper as a fascination with extreme violence, as a morally inappropriate curiosity as if one was simply watching a reality show. W.J.T. Mitchell, a scholar in image culture, attempts to establish what Bin Laden's image actually intended. He quotes Yamasaki, the designer of the Twin Towers, who viewed the Towers as 'a symbolic monument for a new millennium that was to lead to world peace through global trade.'²⁶ From that perspective, they are, according to Mitchell, the icon of capitalism, including the consumer way of life that belongs to it. From the perspective of Islamists, the towers symbolize decadence and evil. Mitchell does of course recognize the tragedy of the victims, but he also demands that we pay attention to Bin Laden's image as such. He characterizes it as an iconoclastic act aimed at the Western golden calf of the economy. This act creates a new image in the 'war of images,' the destruction of the icon of capitalism:

The real target was a globally recognizable icon, and the aim was not merely to destroy it but to stage its destruction as a media spectacle. Iconoclasm in this instance was rendered as an icon in its own right, an image of horror that has imprinted itself in the memory of the entire world.²⁷

Mitchell incorrectly neglects to draw a distinction between Bin Laden's view (the Twin Towers as an icon of capitalism that he rejects) and his barbaric action of

destroying the towers and killing thousands of people. For that reason, unlike Mitchell, I would put more emphasis on the difference between the images in visual culture and the image in art. Such a distinction is important for seeing the difference in response, also in the moral sense, that images evoke and thus the different purposes images have. Here I will refer to Kiefer's arguments in his lectures at the Collège de France.

2.2. *The difference between art and life*

Kiefer argues that the attack on the Twin Towers was a perfect image – beautiful, unique, and simple. He offers us the possibility of viewing Bin Laden's image as a work of art in his discussion of the question whether art can be distinguished from life.²⁸ The idea of viewing life as art has existed in Western culture since the Romantics. Kierkegaard, for example, held that people should live in a poetic way so that life could become a work of art. With more of a focus on our theme of violence as evil, Jean Genet also converges art and life. His work is an ode to the beauty of evil: Genet's *The Thief's Journal* shows where life changes into art. Kiefer disputes Genet's view. Although Kiefer views Bin Laden's life image as perfect, he does not see it as art. In his view, there is a difference between life and art. Arguing against Genet's view of changing life into art, he makes his point by comparing Bin Laden's image of 9/11 with one of his own early works, *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (1969), that is as destructive as Bin Laden's image. What is the difference between both images?

The Flooding of Heidelberg is a book by Kiefer in which he portrays a fictional flooding of the city of Heidelberg, which is located near the spot where the Neckar and the Rhine merge.²⁹ The book shows edited photos of Heidelberg and the surrounding area and ends with black pages, the colour of mud. According to Kiefer, this is not the same as Bin Laden's image. What Kiefer says in a different context makes this clear. He compares Tibor Gyenis' *Rails, The Ten Superfluous Gestures* (1999), in which a man is cleaning train tracks overrun by vegetation, with a photo he made in India where women were splitting rocks along roads that are being repaired.³⁰ Art and life come close to each other, but some distance remains because the man cleaning the tracks can stop when the photo has been taken, whereas the women are splitting rocks because they need to earn a living. They cannot just stop whenever they want to do it. Art creates a second and fictional world. That is the difference between *The Flooding of Heidelberg* and Bin Laden's image of 9/11, a difference between *fictional and real*. With respect to his (Kiefer's) own work, 'the virtual flooding of Heidelberg ... [t]his *real painting* is ... our consolation for a flood that did not take place except on the sheet of paper ...'³¹ Art contains distance from life. *The Flooding of Heidelberg* differs from Bin Laden's image because the former is the representation of a virtual disaster. *The Flooding of Heidelberg* 'includes the intermediate space – a utopian and transcendental space – between art on the one hand and life on the other.'³²

Art and life do not converge. There is a 'utopian and transcendental space' between art and life. Art creates a second world with a view to life. In that respect, there is a parallel between art and liturgy as a component of religion: both are games that are played with an eye to reality.

2.3 Richter's September

Richter also emphasizes the difference between art and life. Art casts light on life through 'an alternative world or a plan or a model for something different, or a reportage.'³³ He does not think that Bin Laden's image of 9/11 is art either. About 9/11 he says:

Although of course I was very struck by the images in the papers, I didn't think I could paint that moment – and certainly not the way some people did, taking the inane view that this most awful act was some kind of an amazing Happening, and celebrating it as a mega work of art.³⁴

Richter painted *September* in 2005, 4 years after the attack on the Twin Towers. When we look at it, it takes time to recognize the forms on the canvas as the two towers and as the smoke on that morning of 11 September 2001. We see a clear blue sky in the painting with dark grey stripes above, black smoke travelling from left to right. Unlike Bin Laden's image, it portrays the moment after the attack: its style is not that of direct realism but blurred realism. Smoke covers the topmost part of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The tops of the greyish-black towers are partly obscured by the smoke. Below, one can see stripes, as it were, greyish, off-white and sometimes somewhat blue, moving past the towers from right to left. If we look more closely, we can see a black spot by the south tower – the traces of the second airplane that crashed into the south tower. The black smoke coming from the north tower and drifting towards the left is coming from the first plane that flew into the north tower at 8:45 am.

The visual difference from Bin Laden's image of 9/11 is obvious. There are no orange flames from the impact of the planes in the painting. We see the blue and white of the air covered with the greyish-black stripes of the enormous black cloud of smoke and particles as a result of the crash. Richter thus creates distance between the viewer of his painting *September* and the intensity of the moment of impact. He wants to avoid the spectacular. A painting is not an illustration or a spectacle, he holds.³⁵ He creates this distance through his method of blurring, which he often uses in his paintings. To explain this, I will situate *September* in a somewhat broader relation to his work as a whole.

Let us look at Richter's painting *Uncle Rudi* (1965) from his early period. The painting depicts his uncle who was a Nazi officer. Uncle Rudi is laughing in a friendly way, dressed in a Nazi uniform. The work seems to be saying that demonic evil cannot be read from someone's face. The painting is done in the colours of a black and white photo that he took as the basis for his painting. Richter already used the technique of blurring there. He sweeps through the wet paint with a brush so that the image is blurred, thus creating distance between the viewer and the image.³⁶ He used the same technique in an earlier work on terrorism, *18 October 1977* from 1988, which consists of 15 grey, vaguely painted canvasses that show the life, arrest, and death of the hard core of the Red Army Faction (RAF).³⁷ He used photos here as his starting point as well and blurred the striking images by using a squeegee.³⁸ For his painting *September* he used a knife, rather than a brush or a spatula for this.

Both *18 October 1977* and *September* differ from Bin Laden's image. The latter fixes the moment of terrorist violence itself, and Richter avoids doing this in these paintings. His technique of blurring creates distance between the immediate moment that the image shows and the viewer. Why? What does this painting intend? What response does it evoke in the viewer?

What Storr says about *18 Oktober 1977* obtains, in my view, for *September* as well. What Bertold Brecht does in epic theatre happens here as well. Instead of identification with the characters or the action, as in classical theatre, Brechtian plays create a distance between the play and the public. The public is confronted with difficult choices.³⁹ The emotion of horror as a result of the immediate event is postponed by the technique of blurring so that the painting allows the viewer the possibility of ethical and political reflection and action. He is thus given the room to prevent himself from being turned to stone by seeing that direct moment. In this art the viewer is placed at a distance so that he can come to a moral and political position regarding terrorism. That is the gain of the 'utopian and transcendental space' (Kiefer) between art and life.

3. The power of the image

How images appeal to human beings is different from communication via words. Richter points to the power of the image in distinction from that of word. We should not forget, he writes:

that there's another, highly important kind of experience. Whatever we experience non-verbally – by sight, touch, hearing or whatever – gives us a certainty or a knowledge that can lead to better actions and decisions than any theory.⁴⁰

This article on the representation of evil in art differs from the articles on philosophy of religion in this volume. Although it uses the medium of language, it is concerned with how we look at images. In that sense, the difference between the visual arts and the philosophy of religion (and aesthetics) is the difference between image and word. The strength of philosophy of art is that it can provide a good theory or philosophical clarification of evil. The strength of the image is different: images make a stronger appeal to action than any philosophical theory can.

With regard to the representation of violence as evil, we should distinguish between the power of the art image and that of the direct live image of Bin Laden. Richter's *September* intends something other than Bin Laden's image does: the *distinction between art and life*. Richter's blurred realism creates distance. It is not presentation but representation by which room is created for those who view the painting for ethical and political reflection on 9/11. That happens, as stated above, also in Kiefer's *Margarethe* and *Sulamith* with their function of memorialization, of mourning, and of the attempt to give it a place in history. The image of Bin Laden is one of direct realism. It is not a representation but the presence of the event of destruction. From a Western point of view it is the display of death and destruction, with the result that the image can petrify the viewer, like the images of the head of Medusa.

I argued above that the early work of Kiefer (*Heroic Symbols*, *To Genet*, *The Flooding of Heidelberg*) and the work of Libera are also works of realism. I do not reject realism as such – that would depend on the situation and function a work has. Nor am I

denying that art can be realistic. Kiefer's early work and the work of Libera are examples of a realistic representation of violence as evil: their representations strike the viewer in an existential way and affect the viewer's life immediately. Here art touches life, but they are different from Bin Laden's image because they present reality in a fictional way as a *work of art*. Bin Laden's image petrifies the viewer.

Notes

1. The use of violence is not necessarily evil as such. I distinguish between constructive violence, such as violence used in police actions by the United Nations where the goal is to achieve peace, and destructive violence as the consequence of the misuse of power. In the present article I will use the term violence in the sense of destructive violence, violence as evil.
2. For the works discussed in this paper, see Google, Images.
3. In what follows I will speak simply of Bin Laden's image, by which I mean the media image(s) of 9/11. Bin Laden claimed the responsibility of the attack and wanted to turn it into reality show (see also 2.1). See Google, Images 9 11 twin towers attack pictures.
4. Spivey, *Enduring Creation*, 113–135.
5. Adorno, *Prisms*, 34.
6. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 381.
7. Adorno, "Commitment," 188.
8. Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, 30–32.
9. See also Kiefer's painting, *Your Golden Hair, Margarete*, 1981.
10. Bouhours, *Anselm Kiefer*, 166.
11. So also Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer*, 31, 26–35.
12. *Ibid.*, 31.
13. Kiefer, *The Books*, 72–113.
14. Kleebatt, *Mirroring Evil*, 111.
15. Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer*, 60f. For similar assessments, see Götz. In Kiefer and Götz, *The Books*, 10–20; Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*, 34–45.
16. Kiefer and Arasse, *Rencontres pour mémoire*, 38.
17. See note 15 above.
18. Saltzman, "Avant-Garde," 55.
19. *Ibid.*, 56.
20. Van Alphen, *Caught by History*, 41–64.
21. Van Alphen, "Playing the Holocaust," 65–83.
22. I thus reject radical moralism with respect to judging art, that is, the view formulated by Rob van Gerwen as follows: 'a work of art that conveys morally objectionable actions is itself morally objectionable. This view assumes that an events' moral qualities transfer to its representation'; cf. Van Gerwen, "Ethical Autonomism."
23. See note 18 above.
24. See quotation note 34 and note 35 at the bottom.
25. Stockhausen's assessment of Bin Laden's image as 'Lucifer's greatest work of art' was wrongly reported in the media, leading to a huge uproar: 'the greatest work of art that is possible in the whole cosmos' (so, e.g., in Storr, *September*, 35, 44). See Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 19.
26. Quoted by Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 13.
27. *Ibid.*, 13f.
28. Kiefer, *L'art survivra À ses ruines*, 225f.
29. Kiefer and Götz, *The Books*, 114–27, 128–31.
30. Kiefer, *L'art survivra À ses ruines*, 241–44.
31. *Ibid.*, 233–4.

32. *Ibid.*, 228. For Kiefer's depiction of evil on the basis of the kabbala, see Stoker, *Where Heaven and Earth Meet*, 165–186.
33. Richter, In Elger and Obrist, *Gerhard Richter Text*, 232.
34. Richter. In Godfrey and Serota, *Gerhard Richter*, 25.
35. *Ibid.*, 26.
36. *Ibid.*, 26–27.
37. For the events concerning the RAF, see Storr, *Gerhard Richter*, 206–23.
38. *Ibid.*, 199. On blurring, see Henatsch, *Gerhard Richter 18. Oktober 1977*, 32–41. Christian Boltanski also uses this technique in his Holocaust art in the works *Chases High School* (1988) and *Dead Swiss* (1990).
39. Storr, *Gerhard Richter*, 261.
40. Richter. In Elger and Obrist, *Gerhard Richter Text*, 255.

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