



# Forbidden Aesthetics, Ethical Justice, and Terror in Modern Western Culture

*Emmanouil Aretoulakis*

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**Forbidden Aesthetics, Ethical Justice, and Terror in Modern Western Culture** Emmanouil Aretoulakis  
*Forbidden Aesthetics, Ethical Justice, and Terror in Modern Western Culture* explores the subjective experience of the beautiful in the face of terror and human tragedy. Emmanouil Aretoulakis proposes that behind the horror, repulsion, and outrage felt by humanity before images of natural or man-made catastrophes/acts of terror(ism) throughout the centuries lurks a kind of inexplicable individual fascination which is closely connected to the Kantian idea of the disinterested judgement of the beautiful as well as the Burkean concept of delight before real catastrophe. At stake is an aesthetic experience of the beautiful, that most of us, eye witnesses or other, would not be willing to acknowledge due to the immorality of such a concession. That feeling which goes unacknowledged because improper is a *forbidden* feeling and the aesthetics connected with it is a forbidden *aesthetics*.

The forbidden aesthetics Aretoulakis proposes is naturally dominant in representations of the *par excellence* terrorist event of the twenty-first century, 11 September 2001, but shows itself also in other catastrophic landmarks in history. For instance, the Hiroshima/Nagasaki nuclear bombing in 1945, or the 1755 Lisbon tsunami, both of which could be characterized, radically, as terrorist manifestations too, regardless of whether the former event took place in the context of a generalized war while the latter emerged as a symptom of *natural* terrorism, the terrorism of nature.

This book will be of interest to philosophers who work on aesthetics and ethics and students in literary studies and psychology.

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