

Abstract

This dissertation thesis concerns itself with the problem of the social-critical meaning of art in the aesthetic conception of Theodor W. Adorno. I approach this topic by reconstructing the notion of aesthetic synthesis; while marginal in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* and interpretations of his aesthetics, I argue that it can encompass two lines of Adorno's thinking about the possibilities of the artwork's critical stance towards society. Firstly, Adorno claims that artworks criticize the social system via their reason. Secondly, Adorno believes that works of art can achieve their social meaning only through their formal, aesthetic means. In the final part of the thesis, I explain Adorno's understanding of the utopian and subversive aspects of art from the viewpoint of aesthetic synthesis.

Keywords

Theodor W. Adorno; critical theory; aesthetic synthesis; utopia; art and society