



# Adorno and Art: Aesthetic Theory Contra Critical Theory

*James Hellings*

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If the advancement toward the administered world is nearing completion, if spectacularised societies, industrialised cultures, and reified consciousness have taken control, then, *Adorno and Art* shows how radical and revolutionary Adorno's aesthetic theory of art's double character remains, and how complex, imaginative and oppositional, forms of art offer, perhaps, the best hope for overcoming damaged life. The caricatures of Adorno, his politics and his aesthetics, are well known errors of judgement - widely repeated both by the academy and by the Left. Adorno's aesthetics has been accused of failing to keep pace with progressive artistic practices and for being socio-politically aloof. Despite the persistence of these caricatures, this book shows how significant images and themes in Adorno's theory remain relevant to the current situation of art, aesthetics and politics. The Adorno on show in this volume was no bourgeois mandarin, no arrogant aesthete, no esoteric mystic, no melancholy pessimist, and no academic expert holed up in the proverbial ivory tower.

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