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Aesthetics And Politics (Radical Thinkers)



Synopsis

No other country and no other period has produced a tradition of major aesthetic debate to compare with that which unfolded in German culture from the 1930s to the 1950s. In *Aesthetics and Politics* the key texts of the great Marxist controversies over literature and art during these years are assembled in a single volume. They do not form a disparate collection but a continuous, interlinked debate between thinkers who have become giants of twentieth-century intellectual history.

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Customer Reviews

This is a well arranged volume of the essays essential to Marxist criticism from the 1930's to the 1950's. The essayists are all critical contributions are summed-up, and their current relevance traced, in a brilliant conclusion by Frederic Jameson, perhaps the most important Marxist critic writing today. I like this volume because the choice of essays is great and the selections are placed in a chronological, point-counterpoint format so that the 'conversation' is easy to follow. The essays are mainly concerned with the realism/modernism dialectic. Lukacs lauds the realism of Balzac and Mann as the exemplary approach to historicism in the novel. Adorno posits that high modernism, though it seems apolitical, provides the most ominous image of capitalism, and that it is thus the more viable revolutionary aesthetic. The other essayists chart the space between these (seemingly) polarized perspectives and provide important insights into the more mystical (Benjamin) and pragmatic (Brecht) applications of Marxist theory. Adorno takes Benjamin to task for not thinking dialectically. And, between Brecht and Adorno, Lukacs takes a beating for his reactionary

attachment to the bourgeois realist novel. But Benjamin and Lukacs are both vindicated in Jameson's balanced conclusion. This is a short but invaluable volume for anyone interested in Marxist aesthetic theory.

An outstanding collection of dialogic essays gathered from the key years of Imperial crisis surrounding the rise of Fascism and leading up to WWII. The great figures collected here exchange disagreements vis-à-vis the status of modern aesthetics in the 20th century. We see here Lukacs' famous critique of the avant-garde movements in literature, which is then rebuked by mordantly brilliant works of criticism from Brecht and Adorno. This is an absolutely vital collection for anyone interested in the history of political aesthetics in the 20th century.

This was the last shuddering crisis in modern philosophy. Fascism was on the rise and those intellectuals who had so much hope in a revolution after the carnage World War I in Western Europe were faced with an aesthetic crisis. This collection of writings by Neo-Marxist cultural critics essentially foretells the insanity of the Holocaust through a careful analysis of bourgeois capital and its effects on society. This is not a light read, but will change your understanding of humanity.

Fruitfully contributes to discussion on the historical role of art and how art relates to the struggle for revolutionary socialism/communism. The kind of revolutionary communism that existed in China when Mao Tse-tung was the primary leader. That China (unlike today's China) was a true socialist society. Maoist China strove to eventually abolish all classes and eliminate all exploitation and oppression.

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