



The Dialectics of Aesthetic Agency: Revaluating German Aesthetics from Kant to Adorno (Bloomsbury Studies in Philosophy)

Ayon Maharaj

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This study examines how key figures in the German aesthetic tradition — Kant, Schelling, Friedrich Schlegel, Hegel, and Adorno — attempted to think through the powers and limits of art in post-Enlightenment modernity. Ayon Maharaj argues that the aesthetic speculations of these thinkers provide the conceptual resources for a timely dialectical defense of “aesthetic agency”— art’s capacity to make available uniquely valuable modes of experience that escape the purview of Enlightenment scientific rationality.

Blending careful philosophical analysis with an intellectual historian’s attention to the broader cultural resonance of philosophical arguments, Maharaj has two interrelated aims. He provides challenging new interpretations of the aesthetic philosophies of Kant, Schelling, Schlegel, Hegel, and Adorno by focusing on aspects of their thought that have been neglected or misunderstood in Anglo-American and German scholarship. He demonstrates that their subtle investigations into the nature and scope of aesthetic agency have far-reaching implications for contemporary discourse on the arts. *The Dialectics of Aesthetic Agency* is an important and original contribution to scholarship on the German aesthetic tradition and to the broader field of aesthetics.

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