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*Form, Appearance, Testimony: Reflections on Adorno's Aesthetics*

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Starting from the theoretical work of Walter Benjamin about the "end of aura" in twentieth-century art, this essay proposes a focus on the most important categories and speculative elements that Theodor W. Adorno deals with in his *Aesthetic Theory*. The Benjaminian idea of a politicisation of art – against the aestheticisation of politics in the culture of totalitarian regimes – establishes a relation between the aesthetic dimension and the ethical dimension. In order to understand the autonomy that characterises the bourgeois conception of art, Adorno interprets the concept of "autonomy" in a necessary relation with "non-autonomy", that is, with art's being also a *fait social*, "social fact". The capacity that art has to allow unexpressed possibilities to emerge is its ethical value, its utopian dimension, and this dimension is always given negatively. Adorno thus thinks that the work of modern art must pose itself as a determinate negation of the existent, meaning that the utopian dimension, essential to the work of art, always has a negative character.