

## **ABSTRACT**

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Title of Thesis: Aesthetics, Technology and the Self: Tracing the Theoretical Shift

From the Frankfurt School to Postmodernism

Chapter 1: In its first chapter, the research focuses on laying down the basis for the conception of the Idea, and on uncovering the role the sense of sight plays in this. The first chapter of the research thus deals with the writings of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom assert the nobility of sight, and it also deals with Aristotle's writings on optics. The key findings associate the writings of Aristotle with the founding moment of metaphysics.

Chapter 2: The research proceeds in the second chapter to take up two key figures in modern philosophy, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant; these thinkers, it is shown, keep the duality of the body and the mind intact and make room for it in their respective philosophies. The important findings of this chapter, keeping the body and mind are an exploration of their writings, and more than Descartes, it is Kant the research adduces, who conjures up the more elaborate structure to support the sanctity of mind or of logic over aesthetics.

Chapter 3: The third chapter, after a detailed analysis of the first and third critiques of Kant and a critique of representative thinking, shifts its focus on to the writings of Adorno and Marcuse. It is these writers who offer an elaborate critique of metaphysical thinking. A critique is also offered by them of the metaphysical conception of the self, as is the inadequacy of any belief in metaphysical thought or of ever having consciousness determine life along any rational principles pointed out by them. This chapter of the research discovers that it is they, who following Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, fully come to terms with the problem of mediation and the need to understand the object as a network of connections.

Chapter 4: In the fourth chapter the research advances to bring out the shortcomings in the concepts of reification as possible excuse for dualism and negation as means of resistance as well. What Foucault proceeds to add to reification through the concept of a 'double unhooking' or differentiation (*decrochage*), it is found, is that it is in the nature of things to be split. Nothing can be realized, without this distribution along the lines of the visible and the invisible.

These then, are the key findings of the research; its central preoccupation is to trace the motivation behind the body/mind dualism, or the subject/object divide. The key finding of the research is to build a case for aesthetics in the role of production of the self and to undermine any preoccupation with the purity of the intellect, and to explicate how none of the technologies involved in the production of the self can possibly afford to overlook the contributions of the role that the body plays in it and moreover to show how inadequate ocular or representational thinking has been in attempting to build the edifice of the pure I/eye.