Complete Correspondence 1928 1940 Theodor Adorno | acf6ffe22ceeb3e6a5607ccc44cf99dc

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The surviving correspondence between Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno. This is the first time all of the surviving correspondence between Adorno and Benjamin has appeared in English. Provides a key to the personalities and projects of these two major intellectual figures. Offers a compelling insight into the cultural politics of the period, at a time of social and political upheaval. An invaluable resource for all students of the work of Adorno and especially of Benjamin, extensively annotated and cross-referenced.

"We must see to it that we put the best of ourselves in our letters; for there is nothing to suggest that we shall see each other again soon." So wrote Walter Benjamin to Gretel Adorno in spring 1940 from the south of France, shortly before he took his own life. The correspondence between Benjamin and Adorno, published here in its complete form for the first time, is the document of a great friendship that existed independently of Benjamin's relationship with Theodor W. Adorno. While Benjamin, alongside his everyday worries, writes especially about projects on which he worked so intensively in the last years of his life, it was Gretel Karpfus-Adorno who did everything in her power to keep Benjamin in the world. She urged him to emigrate and told him about Adorno's plans and Bloch's movements, thus maintaining the connection between the old Berlin friends and acquaintances. She helped him through the most difficult times with regular money transfers, and organized financial support from the Saar region, which was initially still independent from the Third Reich. Once in New York, she attempted to entice Benjamin to America with her descriptions of the city and the new arrivals from Europe though ultimately to no avail. Called "the most important critic of his time" by Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin is perhaps the only intellectual to ever have had such a long-lasting and influential political profile. From the 1920s on, his writings have been studied by students and critics alike, and his ideas have been discussed and debated in various fields of study, ranging from philosophy to literature, art history, and politics. Today, he is considered one of the most important and influential thinkers of the twentieth century.

The correspondence between Adorno and Walter Benjamin, which appears here for the first time in its entirety in English translation, must rank among the most significant to have come down to us from that notable age of barbarism, the 20th century. Each writer had met his match—happily—in the other. This book is the story of an elective affinity.

The essays collected in this volume are interdisciplinary in nature, defying the traditional boundaries that compartmentalise and contain knowledge within particular camps. Heir to the undisciplining legacy of cultural studies, they attempt to transcend the restrictive frameworks of pre-established discourse, engaging in new and fruitful combinations of theories and methodologies. The general aim of the book is to indicate new perspectives for the exercise of cultural criticism on the basis of a confrontation with Benjamin's work. The essays thus share a commen denominator in that they seek to explore the field of current experience through the practice of critique. The result is the creation of a new cultural studies scholarship that brings together a variety of disciplines, including literature, philosophy, history, and social sciences. The collection is intended to be read as a whole, allowing readers to follow the interconnected threads of argument and debate throughout.

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