

The Correspondence Of Walter Benjamin 19101940

A beautiful collection of the legendary thinker's short stories *The Storyteller* gathers for the first time the fiction of the legendary critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin, best known for his groundbreaking studies of culture and literature, including *Illuminations*, *One-Way Street* and *The Arcades Project*. His stories revel in the erotic tensions of city life, cross the threshold between rational and hallucinatory realms, celebrate the importance of games, and delve into the peculiar relationship between gambling and fortune-telling, and explore the themes that defined Benjamin. The novellas, fables, histories, aphorisms, parables and riddles in this collection are brought to life by the playful imagery of the modernist artist and Bauhaus figure Paul Klee.

"This book is just that: reflections of a highly polished mind that uncannily approximate the century's fragments of shattered traditions." — *Time* A companion volume to *Illuminations*, the first collection of Walter Benjamin's writings, *Reflections* presents a further sampling of his wide-ranging work. Here Benjamin evolves a theory of language as the medium of all creation, discusses theater and surrealism, reminisces about Berlin in the 1920s, recalls conversations with Bertolt Brecht, and provides travelogues of various cities, including Moscow under Stalin. Benjamin moves seamlessly from literary criticism to autobiography to philosophical-theological speculations, cementing his reputation as one of the greatest and most versatile writers of the twentieth century. In *Transcendence and Sensoriness*, scholars of theology, philosophy, art, music, and architecture, discuss questions of transcendence, the human senses, and the arts through case studies considered in a broad theological framework of religious aesthetics of the arts.

This work provides an intimate look at the personal libraries of 14 of the world's leading architects, alongside conversations about the significance of books to their careers and lives.

At first glance, Theodor W. Adorno's critical social theory and Gershom Scholem's scholarship of Jewish mysticism could not seem farther removed from one another. To begin with, they also harbored a mutual hostility. But their first conversations in 1938 New York were the impetus for a profound intellectual friendship that lasted thirty years and produced more than 220 letters.

These letters discuss the broadest range of topics in philosophy, religion, history, politics, literature, and the arts – as well as the life and the work of Adorno and Scholem's mutual friend Walter Benjamin. Unfolding with the dramatic tension of a historic novel, the correspondence tells the story of these two intellectuals who faced tragedy, destruction, and loss, but also participated in the efforts to reestablish a just and dignified society after World War II. Scholem immigrated to Palestine before the war and developed his pioneering scholarship of Jewish mysticism before and during the problematic establishment of a Jewish state. Adorno escaped Germany to England, and then to America, returning to Germany in 1949 to participate in the efforts to rebuild and democratize German society. Despite the differences in the lifepaths and worldviews of Adorno and Scholem, their letters are evidence of mutual concern for intellectual truth and hope for a more just society in the wake of historical disaster. The letters reveal for the first time the close philosophical proximity between Adorno's critical theory and Scholem's scholarship of mysticism and messianism. Their correspondence touches on questions of reason and myth, progress and regression, heresy and authority, and the social dimensions of redemption. Above all, their dialogue sheds light on the power of critical, materialistic analysis of history to bring about social change and prevent repetition of the disasters of the past.

Goethe and His Publishers organizes for the first time the myriad details of Goethe's career in print. Himself one of Germany's most eminent publishers, Siegfried Unseld brings a singular perspective to this biography, focusing our attention on an essential component of Goethe's literary endeavors: his relationship to his publishers. Carefully examining each work, Unseld covers the range of Goethe's oeuvre, from first anonymous publications to eventual monumental editions brought out by Johann Friedrich Cotta, the most renowned publisher of his day. Unseld sifts through the rich correspondence between Goethe and his publishers, as well as letters to and from friends, colleagues, and contemporaries. Analyzing publishing contracts, draft contracts, and historical documents, Unseld reveals the tremendous energy Goethe exerted on behalf of his manuscripts. During negotiations he was sometimes circumspect and reserved, at other times demanding and assertive. These exchanges not only shed new light on Goethe's complex character but also show how he changed the author's role in the publishing process. Thus, this work offers a penetrating study of the intricate and many-tiered relations between author and publisher, then and today.

This book provides readers with the opportunity to survey the facts surrounding Benjamin's life and assess the interpretations of his texts.

This book gives us our first clear look at how the man and his moment met to create "critical theory." An intimate picture of the quintessential twentieth-century transatlantic intellectual, the book is also a window on the cultural ferment of Adorno's day—and its ongoing importance in our own.

Erdmut Wizisla's groundbreaking work explores for the first time the important friendship between Walter Benjamin, the acclaimed critic and literary theorist, and Bertolt Brecht, one of the twentieth century's most influential theater artists and poets, during the crucial interwar years in Berlin. From the first meeting between Benjamin and Brecht to their experiences in exile, the events in this friendship are illuminated by personal correspondence, journal entries, and notes—including previously unpublished materials—from the friends' electric discussions of shared projects. In addition to exploring correspondence between the two, Wizisla presents documents by colleagues who shaped and shaded their relationship, including Margarete Steffin, Theodor Adorno, and Hannah Arendt. Wizisla shows us the fascinating ideological exchanges between Benjamin and Brecht, including the first account of Berlin Marxist journal planned for 1931. The Minutes of its meetings record the involvement of Benjamin and Brecht, and offer a window onto the discussions on literature and politics that took place under the increasing threat of the German left's political defeat. Wizisla's examination of the friendship between Benjamin and Brecht, two artists at the height of their creative powers during a time of great political crisis, throws light on nearly two decades of European intellectual life.

Few twentieth-century thinkers have proven as influential as Walter Benjamin, the German-Jewish philosopher and cultural and literary critic. Richard Wolin's book remains among the clearest and most insightful introductions to Benjamin's writings, offering a philosophically rich exposition of his complex relationship to Adorno, Brecht, Jewish Messianism, and Western Marxism. Wolin provides nuanced interpretations of Benjamin's widely studied writings on Baudelaire, historiography, and art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In a new Introduction written especially for this edition, Wolin discusses the unfinished *Arcades Project*, as well as recent tendencies in the reception of Benjamin's work and the relevance of his ideas to contemporary debates about modernity and postmodernity.

Drawing upon a wealth of journal writings and personal correspondence, Esther Leslie presents a uniquely intimate portrait of one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century, Walter Benjamin. She sets his life in the context of his middle-class upbringing; explores the social, political, and economic upheaval in Germany during and after World War I; and recounts Benjamin's eccentric love of toys, trick-books, travel, and ships. From the Frankfurt School and his influential friendships with Theodore Adorno, Gershom Scholem, and Bertolt Brecht, to

his travels across Europe, Walter Benjamin traces out the roots of Benjamin's groundbreaking writings and their far-reaching impact in his own time. Leslie argues that Benjamin's life challenges the stereotypical narrative of the tragic and lonely intellectual figure—instead positioning him as a man who relished the fierce combat of competing theories and ideas. Closing with his death at the Spanish-French border in a desperate flight from the Nazis and Stalin, Walter Benjamin is a concise and concentrated account of a capacious intellect trapped by hostile circumstances.

The last decade has seen a new wave of interest in philosophical and theoretical circles in the writings of Walter Benjamin. In *Body-and Image-Space* Sigrig Weigel, one of Germany's leading feminist theorists and a renowned commentator on the work of Walter Benjamin, argues that the reception of his work has so far overlooked a crucial aspect of his thought - his use of images. Weigel shows that it is precisely his practice of thinking in images that holds the key to understanding the full complexity, richness and topicality of Benjamin's theory.

Marking the centenary of Walter Benjamin's immensely influential essay, "Toward the Critique of Violence," this critical edition presents readers with an altogether new, fully annotated translation of a work that is widely recognized as a classic of modern political theory. The volume includes twenty-one notes and fragments by Benjamin along with passages from all of the contemporaneous texts to which his essay refers. Readers thus encounter for the first time in English provocative arguments about law and violence advanced by Hermann Cohen, Kurt Hiller, Erich Unger, and Emil Lederer. A new translation of selections from Georges Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* further illuminates Benjamin's critical program. The volume also includes, for the first time in any language, a bibliography Benjamin drafted for the expansion of the essay and the development of a corresponding philosophy of law. An extensive introduction and afterword provide additional context. With its challenging argument concerning violence, law, and justice—which addresses such topical matters as police violence, the death penalty, and the ambiguous force of religion—Benjamin's work is as important today as it was upon its publication in Weimar Germany a century ago.

Seven decades after his death, German Jewish writer, philosopher, and literary critic Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) continues to fascinate and influence. Here Uwe Steiner offers a comprehensive and sophisticated introduction to the oeuvre of this intriguing theorist. Acknowledged only by a small circle of intellectuals during his lifetime, Benjamin is now a major figure whose work is essential to an understanding of modernity. Steiner traces the development of Benjamin's thought chronologically through his writings on philosophy, literature, history, politics, the media, art, photography, cinema, technology, and theology. Walter Benjamin reveals the essential coherence of its subject's thinking while also analyzing the controversial or puzzling facets of Benjamin's work. That coherence, Steiner contends, can best be appreciated by placing Benjamin in his proper context as a member of the German philosophical tradition and a participant in contemporary intellectual debates. As Benjamin's writing attracts more and more readers in the English-speaking world, Walter Benjamin will be a valuable guide to this fascinating body of work.

Georg Forster (1754-94) was in many ways self-taught and rarely had two cents to rub together, but he became one of the most dynamic figures of the Enlightenment: a brilliant writer, naturalist, explorer, illustrator, translator--and a revolutionary. Granted the extraordinary opportunity to sail around the world as part of Captain James Cook's fabled crew, Forster touched icebergs, walked the beaches of Tahiti, visited far-flung foreign nations, lived with purported cannibals, and crossed oceans and the equator. Forster recounted the journey in his 1777 book *A Voyage Round the World*, a work of travel and science that not only established Forster as one of the most accomplished stylists of the time--and led some to credit him as the inventor of the literary travel narrative--but also influenced other German trailblazers of scientific and literary writing, most notably Alexander von Humboldt. A superb essayist, Forster made lasting contributions to our scientific--and especially botanical and ornithological--knowledge of the South Seas. Having witnessed more egalitarian societies in the southern hemisphere, Forster returned after more than three years at sea to a monarchist Europe entering the era of revolution. When, following the French Revolution of 1789, French forces occupied the German city of Mainz, Forster became a leading political actor in the founding of the Republic of Mainz--the first democratic state on German soil. In an age of Kantian reason, Forster privileged experience. He claimed a deep connection between nature and reason, nature and politics, nature and revolution. His politics was radical in its understanding of revolution as a natural phenomenon, and in this often overlooked way his many facets--as voyager, naturalist, and revolutionary--were intertwined. Yet, in the constellation of the Enlightenment's trailblazing naturalists, scientists, political thinkers, and writers, Forster's star remains relatively dim today: the Republic of Mainz was crushed, and Forster died in exile in Paris. This book is the source of illumination that Forster's journey so greatly deserves. Tracing the arc of this unheralded polymath's short life, Georg Forster explores both his contributions to literature and science and the enduring relationship between nature and politics that threaded through his extraordinary four decades. Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno were intellectual giants of the first half of the twentieth century. The drama *Foreplay* explores their deeply human and psychologically intriguing private lives, focusing on professional and personal jealousies, the mutual dislike of Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt, the association between Walter Benjamin and Georges Bataille, and the border between erotica and pornography. Djerassi's extensive biographical research brings to light many fascinating details revealed in the dialogues among the characters, including Adorno's obsession with his dreams, Benjamin's admiration for Franz Kafka, and the intimate correspondence between Gretel Adorno and Walter Benjamin. The introduction of a fictitious character, Fräulein X, intensifies the complex interplay among the four lead protagonists and allows for a comparison of Adorno's philandering and the similar behavior of Martin Heidegger, whose affair with Hannah Arendt is well known. *Foreplay* brims with intrigue and the friction created when strong personalities clash.

This Companion offers a comprehensive introduction to the thought of the highly influential twentieth-century critic and theorist Walter Benjamin. The volume provides examinations of the different aspects of Benjamin's work that have had a significant effect on contemporary critical and historical thought. Topics discussed by experts in the field include Benjamin's relation to the avant-garde movements of his time, his theories on language and mimesis, modernity, his significance and relevance to modern cultural studies, and his autobiographical writings. Additional material includes a guide to further reading and a chronology.

The legendary correspondence between the critic Walter Benjamin and the historian Gershom Scholem bears indispensable witness to the inner lives of two remarkable and enigmatic personalities. Benjamin, acknowledged today as one of the leading literary and social critics of his day, was known during his lifetime by only a small circle of his friends and intellectual confreres. Scholem recognized the genius of his friend and mentor during their student days in Berlin, and the two began to correspond after Scholem's emigration to Palestine. Their impassioned exchange draws the reader into the very heart of their complex relationship during the anguished years from 1932 until Benjamin's death in 1940.

Hannah Arendt and Theodor W. Adorno, two of the most influential political philosophers and theorists of the twentieth century, were contemporaries with similar interests, backgrounds, and a shared experience of exile. Yet until now, no book has brought them together. In this first comparative study of their work, leading scholars discuss divergences, disclose surprising affinities, and find common ground between the two thinkers. This pioneering work recovers the relevance of Arendt and Adorno for contemporary political theory and philosophy and lays the foundation for a critical understanding of political modernity: from universalistic claims for political freedom to the abyss of genocidal politics.

The acclaimed and now-classic biographical novel of Walter Benjamin's last days--adapted into screenplay by Jay Parini. It is 1940. For the past decade, Walter Benjamin--the German-Jewish critic and philosopher--has been writing his masterpiece in a library in Paris, a city he loves. Now Nazi tanks have overrun the suburbs, and Benjamin is forced to flee. With a battered briefcase that contains his precious manuscript of a thousand handwritten pages, he sets off for the border and is led by chance to a young anti-Nazi who is taking Jews and other refugees over the Pyrenees into Spain, where they may (with luck) make their way to freedom in Portugal or South America. Beloved biographical novelist Jay Parini's thrilling tale of escape is beautifully interwoven with vignettes of Benjamin's complex, cosmopolitan past: his privileged childhood in Berlin, his years with the German Youth Movement, his university days. His close friendship with Gershom Scholem, the eminent scholar of Jewish mysticism, and many other well-known artists and intellectuals who were part of Benjamin's intimate circle between the two world wars. Part tragedy, part dark comedy, this sharply realized historical novel tells one of the great and most moving peripheral stories of the Holocaust. Selections from the canon of Walter Benjamin focus on history, technology, and the nature of modernism, in essays on Charles Baudelaire, the crisis of meaning in the modern world, the value of the written word, and other topics. (Philosophy)

Jameson's first full-length engagement with Walter Benjamin's work. The Benjamin Files offers a comprehensive new reading of all of Benjamin's major works and a great number of his shorter book reviews, notes and letters. Its premise is that Benjamin was an anti-philosophical, anti-systematic thinker whose conceptual interests also felt the gravitational pull of his vocation as a writer. What resulted was a coexistence or variety of language fields and thematic codes which overlapped and often seemed to contradict each other: a view which will allow us to clarify the much-debated tension in his works between the mystical or theological side of Benjamin and his political or historical inclination. The three-way tug of war over his heritage between adherents of his friends Scholem, Adorno and Brecht, can also be better grasped from this position, which gives the Brechtian standpoint more due than most influential academic studies. Benjamin's corpus is an anticipation of contemporary theory in the priority it gives language and representation over philosophical or conceptual unity; and its political motivations are clarified by attention to the omnipresence of History throughout his writing, from the shortest articles to the most ambitious projects. His explicit program -- "to transfer the crisis into the heart of language" or, in other words, to detect class struggle at work in the most minute literary phenomena -- requires the reader to translate the linguistic or representational literary issues that concerned him back into the omnipresent but often only implicitly political ones. But the latter are those of another era, to which we must gain access, to use one of Benjamin's favorite expressions.

While there is a tacit appreciation that freedom from violence will lead to more prosperous relations among peoples, violence continues to be deployed for various political and social ends. Yet the problem of violence still defies neat description, subject to many competing interpretations. *Histories of Violence* offers an accessible yet compelling examination of the problem of violence as it appears in the corpus of canonical figures -- from Hannah Arendt to Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault to Slavoj Žižek -- who continue to influence and inform contemporary political, philosophical, sociological, cultural, and anthropological study. Written by a team of internationally renowned experts, this is an essential interrogation of post-war critical thought as it relates to violence. This collection features original essays that examine Walter Benjamin's and Theodor Adorno's essays and correspondence on literature. Taken together, the essays present the view that these two monumental figures of 20th-century philosophy were not simply philosophers who wrote about literature, but that they developed their philosophies in and through their encounters with literature. Benjamin, Adorno, and the Experience of Literature is divided into three thematic sections. The first section contains essays that directly demonstrate the ways in which literature enriched the thinking of Benjamin and Adorno. It explores themes that are recognized to be central to their thinking--mimesis, the critique of historical progress, and the loss and recovery of experience--through their readings of literary authors such as Baudelaire, Beckett, and Proust. The second section continues the trajectory of the first by bringing together four essays on Benjamin's and Adorno's reading of Kafka, whose work helped them develop a distinctive critique of and response to capitalism. The third and final section focuses more intently on the question of what it means to gain authentically critical insight into a literary work. The essays examine Benjamin's response to specific figures, including Georg Büchner, Robert Walser, and Julien Green, whose work he sees as neglected, undigested, or misunderstood. This book offers a unique examination of two pivotal 20th-century philosophers through the lens of their shared experiences with literature. It will appeal to a wide range of scholars across philosophy, literature, and German studies.

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 Gretel Adorno and Walter Benjamin, 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 those projects on which he worked so intensively in the last years of his life, it was Gretel Karplus-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.

Walter Benjamin was perhaps the twentieth century's most elusive intellectual. His writings defy categorization, and his improvised existence has proven irresistible to mythologizers. In a major new biography, Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings present a comprehensive portrait of the man and his times, as well as extensive commentary on his work. This edited collection of original essays explores the irreducible role of aesthetic forms of experience and activity in the philosophies of Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno.

A fascinating account of the friendship between two of the most brilliant minds of the twentieth century Germany in the mid 1920s, a place and time of looming turmoil, brought together Walter Benjamin--acclaimed critic and extraordinary literary theorist--and Bertolt Brecht, one of the twentieth century's most influential playwrights. It was a friendship that would shape their writing for the rest of their lives. In this groundbreaking work, Erdmut Wizisla explores what this relationship meant for them personally and professionally, as well as the effect it had on those around them. From the

first meeting between Benjamin and Brecht to their experiences in exile, these eventful lives are illuminated by personal correspondence, journal entries and private miscellany—including previously unpublished materials—detailing the friends' electric discussions of their collaboration. Wzislá delves into the archives of other luminaries in the distinguished constellation of writers and artists in Weimar Germany, which included Margarete Steffin, Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch and Hannah Arendt. Wzislá's account of this friendship opens a window on nearly two decades of European intellectual life.

A classic collection of Walter Benjamin's essays, including some of his most celebrated writing Walter Benjamin is one of the most fascinating and enigmatic intellectual figures of this century. Not only was he a thinker who made an enormous impact with his critical and philosophical writings, he shattered disciplinary and stylistic conventions. This collection, introduced by Susan Sontag, contains the most representative and illuminating selection of his work over a twenty-year period, and thus does full justice to the richness and the multi-dimensional nature of his thought. Included in these pages are aphorisms and townscapes, esoteric meditation and reminiscences of childhood, and reflections on language, psychology, aesthetics and politics.

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 essence of the correspondence between Arendt and Scholem can be said to lie in three things. Above all it provides an intimate account of how two great intellectuals try to come to terms with being both German and Jewish, and how to think about Germany before, during, and after the Holocaust. They also debate the issue of what it means to be Jewish in the post-Holocaust world whether in New York or in Jerusalem. Finally, the specter of Benjamin haunts the work and in a sense the letters are as much about Benjamin as the other two questions since his life and tragic death epitomize them both. Arendt and Scholem's letters on these weighty questions are lightened by more routine exchanges: on travel itineraries, lunch or dinner parties where important people were present, and so forth. These daily details are woven throughout the correspondence and provide vivid biographical information about Arendt and Scholem that is unavailable in any other source.

An exposition of the relationship between tradition and modernity reflected in the writings of three Jewish scholars

Views from one of the most original cultural critics of the twentieth century, Walter Benjamin

Critiquing the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris--glass-roofed rows of shops that served as early malls--the author, who wrote the work in the 1920s and 1930s, covers thirty-six still-trenchant topics, including fashion, boredom, photography, advertising, and prostitution, among others.

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.

Not an autobiography in the customary sense, Benjamin's recollection of his childhood in an upper-middle-class Jewish home in Berlin's West End at the turn of the century is translated into English for the first time in book form.

Called "the most important critic of his time" by Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin has only become more influential over the years, as his work has assumed a crucial place in current debates over the interactions of art, culture, and meaning. A "natural and extraordinary talent for letter writing was one of the most captivating facets of his nature," writes Gershom Scholem in his Foreword to this volume; and Benjamin's correspondence reveals the evolution of some of his most powerful ideas, while also offering an intimate picture of Benjamin himself and the times in which he lived. Writing at length to Scholem and Theodor Adorno, and exchanging letters with Rainer Maria Rilke, Hannah Arendt, Max Brod, and Bertolt Brecht, Benjamin elaborates on his ideas about metaphor and language. He reflects on literary figures from Kafka to Karl Kraus, and expounds his personal attitudes toward such subjects as Marxism and French national character. Providing an indispensable tool for any scholar wrestling with Benjamin's work, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940* is a revelatory look at the man behind much of the twentieth century's most significant criticism.

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