



Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History

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Walter Benjamin (1896-1940) has been called by Hannah Arendt the "greatest critic of the century." While an increasing number of Anglo-American literary critics draw upon Benjamin's writings in their own works, their colleagues in the philosophical community remain relatively unacquainted with his legacy. In the European intellectual world, by contrast, Benjamin's critical epistemological program, his philosophies of history and language, and his aesthetics have long since become part of philosophical discourse. The present collection of articles, many of which were contained in earlier versions in the Winter 1983 special issue of the journal *The Philosophical Forum*, initiates the project of establishing Benjamin's importance to philosophy.

A balance of original work by Benjamin and important commentary on his works, this volume includes the crucial chapter from Benjamin's magnum opus *The Arcades Project*, his "Program of the Coming Philosophy," and "Central Park," as well as essays by leading scholars (including Theodor W. Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, and Rolf Tiedemann) that treat single philosophical themes and relate his ideas to those of other thinkers such as Gadamer, Goodmann, and Rosenzweig. Gary Smith's introduction to the volume provides an extremely useful and sophisticated entrée for readers unaccustomed to the breadth of Benjamin's philosophical allusions, as well as an informative summation of the contents of the volume. This book will be of interest to philosophers, literary theorists, art historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists.

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