



Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 2: Part 1: 1927-1930

By Walter Benjamin

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In the frenzied final years of the Weimar Republic, amid economic collapse and mounting political catastrophe, Walter Benjamin emerged as the most original practicing literary critic and public intellectual in the German-speaking world. Volume 2 of the *Selected Writings* is now available in paperback in two parts.

In Part 1, Benjamin is represented by two of his greatest literary essays, "Surrealism" and "On the Image of Proust," as well as by a long article on Goethe and a generous selection of his wide-ranging commentary for Weimar Germany's newspapers.

Part 2 contains, in addition to the important longer essays, "Franz Kafka," "Karl Kraus," and "The Author as Producer," the extended autobiographical meditation "A Berlin Chronicle," and extended discussions of the history of photography and the social situation of the French writer, previously untranslated shorter pieces on such subjects as language and memory, theological criticism and literary history, astrology and the newspaper, and on such influential figures as Paul Valéry, Stefan George, Hitler, and Mickey Mouse.

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Editorial Review

Review

[Praise for the one-volume hardcover edition]

For those who know only the small selection of essays and longer texts previously translated into English, this book may be a revelation. *Selected Writings: Volume 2* spanning the period from his abandonment of academia and his emergence as an important literary journalist in 1927 to his near silencing after the Nazis seized power and his exile in 1934, shows the writer at his sparkling best.

(Paul Mattick *New York Times Book Review*)

[Praise for the one-volume hardcover edition]

The period from 1927 to 1934 spanned in this volume was for Walter Benjamin both grievous and fertile...The range of topics and perspectives is immense. It extends from considerations on kitsch and pornography to repeated encounters, personal or indirect, with Gide, Kierkegaard and surrealism. The cultural history of toys fascinates Benjamin as he records his own Berlin childhood. Insights into 'Left-Wing Melancholy' alternate with thoughts on Mickey Mouse, on Chaplin, and on graphology.

(George Steiner *The Observer*)

About the Author

Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was the author of many works of literary and cultural analysis.

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Gary Smith is an editor at work on the Einstein Papers project.

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