



THEODOR W. ADORNO
SIEGFRIED KRACAUER
CORRESPONDENCE 1923–1966



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Correspondence 1923-1966

Theodor W. Adorno and Siegfried Kracauer

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1 Kracauer to Adorno

Frankfurt am Main, 5.4.1923

Warmest greetings to your aunt and mother, and many, many thanks!

FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG	FRANKFURT A.M., 5 April 1923
UND HANDELSBLATT.	
REDAKTION	Please read when <i>alone!</i>
TELEGRAMM-ADRESSE	
ZEITUNG FRANKFURTMAIN	

My dear Teddie, my dear friend,

I arrived at noon today, all torn up, all in a fog. Now I am going to write without delay. These past two days I have again been feeling such a tormenting love for you that it now seems to me as if I could quite simply not exist on my own. Existence had become stale for me, apart from you; I don't see how it can continue like this. I must tell you, too, that your account of your relationship with Gretel did hurt me deeply - not the fact that you were having it, but that you walked alongside me for so long without my knowing anything about it. Of course, this is not meant as a reproach - after all, discretion has its value - but the simple fact that it was so is hard to bear.

I am in a terrible state. I am so fearful about the transience of what is dearest to me - what to me is the meaning or the fulfilment of my existence. Do you believe in the everlasting nature of our friendship? It would always need to be a presence - a living presence - and yet how could that be? I tremble as I fear for its continuation. You are 19 and I am

34 - you are going your own way, you must strike out into the world - and at 19 nobody can provide any guarantees - not even you. In short, things between us are falling apart, and I am left crushed. Are you not much more resolute than I am? I am an abyss - and as insecure as a boy. I shall never be a mature man - I don't know what to do. If I were to be offered a position which was to all intents and purposes a good one, far away from here, I wouldn't accept it because I should have to get along without your presence. But you are going away! Yes - how am I ever to endure that? I should need a guarantee that the bond will last until death and that we should both continue to exist, equally great and good - until death. You tell me that you experience our relationship as profoundly as I do (in my case it is surely a sin, a burning sin, born equally of loneliness and suffering the sense of transience), you *do* say this to me - but, can it be possible? I should dearly like to believe so - sometimes it even seems like that to me, sometimes not. Believe me, you may perhaps be more sensible than I am, more grounded in yourself - that is fortunate for you - you have more stability - I am a caricature of a human being, an abyss, a gaping abyss - and if I did not have another soul to call my own, someone like you, what should I do? See, my dear, dear Teddie, I am completely serious when I say to you that philosophy and all that stuff isn't worth a damn to me compared with a *present* where loneliness is suspended and love reigns, and we find 'simplicity, stability and meaning' in our existence. For me, our state of being, transient as it is, would suffice to serve as a religion; I would ask for nothing more than for my work to emanate from our fellowship and for us to go on 'walking side by side'. Do you have this fire within you too? You *must* have it, or how could we ever be destined for each other as human beings - for it *is* destiny, is it not, that we came to know each other, sometime and somewhere? And now the terrible thing is: I don't know whether one *may* love like

that. We die alone, after all, and we almost devalue the world if we love like this - one turns into no more than a helpless part. Today, and often, I feel like a part - of 'us'. And if that breaks - I shouldn't want to be forever dying and forever being born anew - it is beyond my strength. Do you understand me? Or how do you feel? Of course, you still expect more from the world than I do, and quite rightly, which is why in the end you don't need me as much as I need you. Forgive me for writing in such a state of confusion and for longing so much for us to be together, but that is how I feel in my heart - inwardly I am all at sea, the weight of the merest feather causes me to collapse, and sweeps me away - so how much more does the fear of our parting do so - the fear that you might not regard our relationship as being as exclusive and eternal as I do.

Dear Teddie - destroy this letter if at all possible, and, in any case, not a word about it - it's a secret; who would be allowed to see me so closely, as I truly am? I spoke briefly with Herrigel today; Simon is said to be back; Forell is taking his doctoral examination in a fortnight and then will probably join the Voss as a full-blown editor - a real career. Just imagine - there had arrived a card from Rosenzweig in which he expresses his pleasure at my 'fine essay'. Isn't that kind and generous of him? No sign of anything other than that. Herrigel understands the work on history, the critique of the times, the facts before principles, and finds these subjects worth writing about. Leo is in the Taunus today, and Erich with him. I am completely lost, like a child which has just had its umbilical cord snipped off. What am I going to do in life? Are you my friend? Oh, I could weep, Teddie - I have wept very often; the rift running through the world is also running through me - especially through me. I shall write something for your aunt - perhaps in the form of a dialogue following on from the end of *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Farewell, Teddie, my dear Teddie, Friedel

Nobody is to see this letter – be careful, Teddie. You are 19 – I am 34 – may it work out, after all?

Original: manuscript with printed letterhead; Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main.

aunt: Agathe Calvelli-Adorno (1868–1935), singer and pianist, living with Adorno’s family in Frankfurt am Main.

mother: Maria Wiesengrund, née Calvelli-Adorno (1864–1952), singer, married to Oscar Wiesengrund (1870–1946) from 1898.

I arrived at noon today: Kracauer returned to Frankfurt am Main on 5 April 1923 after meeting Adorno in Amorbach the previous day on the way back from Nuremberg (see *Marbacher Magazin* 47, p. 39).

account of your relationship with Gretel: probably Margarete (‘Gretel’) Karplus (1902–1993), chemist and physicist, married to Adorno from 1937. Kracauer returns to the constellation described in the letter in a scene in his novel *Georg*: the eponymous protagonist travels with his friend ‘Fred’ (also known as ‘Freddie’) to the Black Forest, where one night the former makes a confession to him about his relationship with a woman named Margot (see Kracauer, W 7, pp. 348–59, esp. p. 358).

‘simplicity, stability and meaning’: ‘and everything, even scientific effort, possesses simplicity, stability and meaning’ (see Adalbert Stifter, *Der Nachsommer*, trans. Wendell Frye. New York, Peter Lang, 1985); Kracauer is quoting the final words of the novel.

‘walking side by side’: the letter inaccurately quotes from the final line (‘noch ein rundgang zu zwein’) of a poem by Stefan George, ‘Es lacht in dem steigenden jahr dir’; third verse: ‘So let us conceal what we miss, then, / And vow to

be happy again, / Though no more be granted but this,
then: / A round to be gone by us twain': Stefan George,
Poems, trans. Carol North Valhøpe and Ernst Morwitz.
London, Kegan Paul, 1944. Adorno composed a setting of
this poem (see *Vier Gedichte von Stefan George für
Singstimme und Klavier*, op. 1, in Adorno, *Kompositionen* 1,
pp. 8-23, esp. 19-23); an early edition of compositions to
words by George was dedicated to Kracauer (Theodor W.
Adorno Archiv). Adorno, for his part, used a quotation from
the poem to sum up Kracauer's character in 1964 (see
letter no. 250).

Herrigel: Hermann Herrigel (1888-1973), journalist and
philosopher, from 1912 archivist and editor of the
Frankfurter Zeitung; he had been known to Kracauer, who
joined the editorial team in 1921, since 1920 (see
Marbacher Magazin 47, p. 34).

Ernst Simon: Ernst Simon (1899-1988), teacher of German
and history, working for the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in
Frankfurt am Main; emigrated to Palestine in 1928; from
1935 professor of pedagogics at the University of
Jerusalem.

Forell: Siegmund Forell (1896-1972) studied law from 1919
to 1922 at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität; there
is no record there of his having gained a doctorate, and his
dissertation has not survived. Kracauer had previously
mentioned his 'friend Forell' in a letter of 30 June 1921 to
Gottfried Salomon-Delatour (Internationaal Instituut voor
Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam); he was on the staff of
the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, with responsibility for regional
economic questions, before joining the city magistrates'
press office for Frankfurt am Main. He was dismissed in
1933 and presumably went into exile in Australia in the late
1930s.

a card from Rosenzweig: Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929), theologian and philosopher, co-founder of the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt am Main.

Rosenzweig's undated postcard is postmarked 31 March 1923; he wrote: 'I should not wish to omit to express my pleasure to you at the fine essay in today's F.Z.' (Kracauer archive, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach). It refers to 'Das zeugende Gespräch' [the generative conversation] in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 30 March 1923 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 121).

work on history: In a letter to Leo Löwenthal of 1 March 1922, Kracauer had mentioned plans for a piece of work 'against constructions relating to the philosophy of history' (see Kracauer/Löwenthal, *Briefwechsel*, p. 38); the 'work on history' which he mentions is not preserved among Kracauer's papers.

Leo: Leo Löwenthal (1900–1993), friends with Adorno and Kracauer; completed his dissertation in 1923 at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität on 'Franz von Baader's philosophy of society: examples and problems of a religious philosophy'. Three letters from this year written jointly by Adorno and Kracauer to Löwenthal survive (see Kracauer/Löwenthal, *Briefwechsel*, letters no. 11, 12, 14).

in the Taunus: Kracauer's family also appreciated the restorative qualities of the central mountains to the north of Frankfurt am Main: his uncle, the teacher and historiographer of the Jews in Frankfurt Isidor Kracauer (1853–1923), published the brochure *Feldbergtouren in älterer und neuerer Zeit* [Mountain rambles, then and now] in 1912.

Erich: Erich Fromm (1900–1980) was, like Leo Löwenthal and Ernst Simon, one of Kracauer's friends from the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus circle.

the rift running through the world is also running through me: Kracauer is paraphrasing Heinrich Heine: 'Ah, dear reader - if you are disposed to complain about this state of laceration, you should rather lament the fact that the world itself is torn apart down the middle. For as the poet's heart is the centre of the world, it cannot help being terribly lacerated at the present time. Whoever boasts that his heart has remained whole merely admits that he has a hole-and-corner, prosaic kind of heart, remote from everything. But the great rift in the world tore through my heart, and precisely for this reason I know that the great gods have favoured me highly above many others and considered me worthy of a poet's martyrdom.' (See Heinrich Heine, *Reisebilder* III, 'Die Bäder von Lucca', chap. V, in his *Sämtliche Schriften* 2, ed. Klaus Briegleb. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1976, p. 405f.)

I shall write something for your aunt: not preserved among Adorno and Kracauer's papers.

Das Lied von der Erde: This composition by Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), shifting between a symphony and an orchestral song cycle, received its first performance under Bruno Walter six months after Mahler's death. In the sixth and last movement, 'Der Abschied' [Farewell], we read: 'I stand here waiting for my friend; I wait to bid him a last farewell. I long to enjoy the beauty of this evening by your side, my friend. Where do you linger? You have left me alone so long! [If only you would come! Oh, if only you would come, my faithless friend!]' He dismounted and proffered him the cup in token of farewell. He asked where he was going and why it had to be. He said, and his voice trembled: 'O my friend, in this world fortune did not smile on me. Where am I going? I go into the mountains. I seek peace for my lonely heart. I am making for home, for my resting-place. I will never roam into strange lands. My heart is still and bides its time. Everywhere the dear earth

blossoms in spring and grows green again. Everywhere, for ever, the distant horizon shines blue and bright. Ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever.' (*The Penguin Book of Lieder*, ed. and trans. S. S. Praver. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, pp. 149-150)

2 Kracauer to Adorno

Frankfurt am Main, 22.9.1924

FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG	FRANKFURT A. M.,
UND HANDELSBLATT.	22 September 1924
REDAKTION	
TELEGRAMM-ADRESSE	
ZEITUNG FRANKFURTMAIN	

My dear Teddie,

Last evening, I took another letter to you to the Munich train, which I would have liked to board again, and this morning there comes a letter from you - of a threatening nature. So Lila wrote to you, saying that you should write to me? And you are afraid that I discussed our relationship with her? And she - or so you imply - feels herself called upon to 'mediate' between us? Teddie, child, how excessive you too are at bottom, and how false are the superficial appearances of our true and essential natures! I naturally told Lila when I saw her the last time that I had not yet had a letter from you, and of course not everything that relates to us could remain unspoken, as talking about you was the main point of our spending time together. I hope that I don't have to assure you that the crucial aspects - spiritual as well as empirical - remained unmentioned; and Lila is as blameless as I am, and I shall emphatically take her under my protection to defend her against your accusation. She probably only gave you the advice because she feels - and how could she do otherwise? - that I am bound to you with

every fibre, and she simply feels in herself a vocation for bearing others' suffering - both yours and mine. This is not overstepping the mark as far as she is concerned, and much less is it an improper intrusion into our relationship - what a fantastically unjust assumption on your part! It is a trait in her nature which she is following, and you - yes, you of all people, who wants to be assured that the boundaries of your way of existing are treated with respect - have no right to misjudge the very different nature of someone who loves you, as you are now doing in calling something crude tactlessness and human brutishness which is the expression of a genuine and unquestionable sentiment (though the form of expression may not seem wholly appropriate to you). That awareness of a limit which you call for in relation to yourself, please apply it in this case too, and offer the same trust which you yourself demand instead of reacting, all by yourself, with indignation when some remark or other seems to you to be questionable. No, Teddie, I have no intention of rebuking Lila, and I think that this means acting more in your sense than you do by flaring up. Leave outrage to the outraged. And as for you - try to be a little more understanding and affectionate and love as you would be loved.

However, the actual reason for your excitation is that you feel abandoned because of my alleged indiscretions. Is this the trust that you demand for yourself? Even assuming that I had said more about us than I could have answered for (which I did not) - even then, it would not have been admissible for you to fall into a frenzy of reproaches and register a vote of no confidence against me. Even then you should still have been mindful of the differences in our natures, and first should have attempted to derive from them the possibility that I could perhaps, while speaking, be here, without, however, abandoning you. You may take issue with me on specific points, but not readily in a

general sense. For the sake of our love I am compelled to understand you, but please don't set yourself up as a judge without taking me into account. But, as I have already said, all this is immaterial; I was not upset by your silence, and Lila has committed no offence against you - against *us*. Don't write anything foolish to her, and - believe me - I am entitled to demand that of you. I beg you to do so.

In addition, if you think that I am only consoling Lila, you are mistaken; Kilia, whose soul-mate (soon, we hope, to be her husband) is away just now, has also chosen me as a comforter in her loneliness. I fulfil the vocation of a *soter* [Greek: 'saviour'] only with an *inner* inclination, and in my few hours of leisure I eye up the prostitutes in the Kaiserstrasse, contemplating acts of my own with which I am just toying.

I know nothing about your mother's indisposition. I visited her immediately after my return and speak to her on the phone quite frequently. We shall probably see each other this week. I shall write to Agathe.

On 1 October I may be with the sociologists in Heidelberg. It will be splendid when we are together.

Please have my letter of yesterday sent on from the Hotel Helvetia, Florence. The final sentence has been confusing, I think (because of tiredness); it ought to read: You are the only person to whom I am afraid to confess my love - or something like that.

Benjamin, from whom I had a card, sends warmest greetings to you.

It is very bad that you can only write to me secretly and not at such length as you would like. After all, we are not having a relationship.

So, Teddie, you too must have faith. Yours, Friedel.

Original: manuscript with printed letterhead; Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main.

another letter: neither of these survives.

Munich train: Munich was one of the stops on the journey to the Dolomites which Kracauer and Adorno began on 28 July 1924 after the end of the latter's defence of his doctoral thesis on 'The transcendence of the objective and noematic in Husserl's phenomenology' (see Adorno, GS 1, pp. 7-77). The last stop was Lake Garda, from which Kracauer began the return journey to Frankfurt am Main alone on 5 September 1924 (see Adorno, *Bildmonographie*, p. 82). He converted his travel impressions into feuilletons: 'Aus den Grödner Dolomiten', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 31 August 1924 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 202); 'Empfang in den Dolomiten', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 11 September 1924 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 203); 'Station', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 14 September 1924 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 205); 'Jenseits des Brenners', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10 September 1924 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 207).

Lila wrote to you: a woman named Lila is repeatedly mentioned in letters from the Viennese period; this probably refers to the journalist and author Lili Körber (1897-1982). Indications suggesting this include a copy in Adorno's library of Franz Werfel's *Der Weltfreund: Erste Gedichte (1908-1910)* bearing the handwritten dedication 'For Teddie from Lila; 18 Nov. 1924, before the examination'. Körber concluded her studies at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in February 1925 with a dissertation on 'The Lyric Poetry of Franz Werfel'; she then moved to Vienna (see Lili Körber, 'Meine Biographie', typescript, Lili Körber papers, Deutsches Exilarchiv Frankfurt am Main). A comparison of the dedication with her handwritten curriculum vitae of 27 January 1925 (in Ute Lemke, *Lili Körber: Von Moskau nach Wien: Eine*

österreichische Autorin in den Wirren der Zeit, 1915-1938, Siegen: Carl Bösch, 1999, p. 191) shows distinct similarities. The letter from Kracauer to Adorno which the latter mentions has not survived.

Kilia ... her husband: MS difficult to decipher; nothing further is known about the individuals mentioned here.

I shall write to Agathe: not preserved.

sociologists in Heidelberg: Kracauer reported on the fourth Deutsche Soziologentag congress which was held in Heidelberg on 28-30 September in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 October 1924 (see Kracauer, W 5, no. 211); the conference focused on social policy and social structures.

Benjamin, from whom I had a card: the card from Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) has not survived.

my letter of yesterday: after Kracauer's return home, Adorno continued his stay in Italy until the end of September 1924 in the company of his aunt Agathe Calvelli-Adorno.

3 Adorno to Kracauer

[Frankfurt am Main, probably 27.9.1924]

Saturday afternoon

Dear Friedel,

It seems that we have had a misunderstanding: because I had things to do at the university I could not go back to the transcript then, but only this morning - and so I can only now return the manuscript to you (which, by the way, has only gained in transcription).

It is not good that we shall not be seeing each other for another two days - and the very days on which I should have had most time.

I wish you plenty of sensational experiences in Heidelberg, and Professor Gundolf a certain degree of enlightenment.

This evening I am at Herr Sekles', and in the afternoon I am going in search of a room, which will take me deep into the Cameroon district.

Original: manuscript; Siegfried Kracauer papers, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar; date and place conjectural, based on the possible context suggested by the notes.

the manuscript: not preserved.

Heidelberg: a reference to Kracauer's visit to the fourth Deutsche Soziologentag (29–30 September 1924 (see the preceding letter); these dates fell on a Monday and Tuesday.

Professor Gundolf a certain degree of enlightenment: Friedrich Gundolf, born Gundelfinger (1880–1931), literary scholar, member of the Stefan George circle, and from 1920 a professor at the University of Heidelberg. Adorno gives specific details of his aversion later, among others in his *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*: 'Neoromantic poets who drank their fill of the precious, like George and Hofmannsthal, by no means wrote their prose in the jargon. However, some of their intermediaries – like Gundolf – did so. Their words become terms of the jargon only through the constellation that they negate, through each one's gesture of uniqueness. The degree of magic that the singular word has lost is being provided nonetheless as if by dictated measures, as a directive. [It is a secondary magic, one that is delivered ready from the factory, a transcendence which is a changeling said to be the lost original.]' See *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 7.

Sekles: The composer Bernhard Sekles (1872–1934) taught composition from 1896 to 1933 at Dr Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt am Main; Adorno took private lessons from him from 1919 to 1924/5.

in search of a room: possibly Adorno's attempt to escape from the parental home on attaining his majority on 11 September 1924; no evidence survives for his renting a room.

Cameroon district: 'Kamerun' was a colloquial name for the Gallus district of Frankfurt, where reasonably priced lodgings could be found on account of the fumes and coal dust from local industry.

4 Adorno to Kracauer

Vienna, 8.3.1925

8 March 1925	Vienna IX, Eisengasse 2, Pension Luisenheim.
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My dear Friedel,

I am writing to you only today because the days up to now have been too chaotic for me to have been able to say anything to you that would make sense, and even now I am not writing you a proper letter but just want to give you some kind of sign so that you will see how things stand with us – if you will believe me. The main thing is: I consider it *out of the question* for Vienna to maintain any lasting hold on me, let alone that any person or business here could ever keep me away from you. Not so much because I was feeling unhappy in Vienna; on the contrary, I am relatively well-off here. I am in comfortable lodgings, believe that I will be able to work profitably, have been cordially welcomed by the friendly people, and even admit the necessity of staying here for educational purposes – but the reason for staying goes no further than that educational

necessity. I feel wholly typical as a young man who must see something of the world and provide for himself; however, the various levels of my nature are not substantially affected by this but remain enclosed in their obstinate privacy. Everything that I see and experience happens to me as if a long way away, and remains curiously unreal. The city and its people seem to me like an imaginary province invented to demonstrate the questionable nature of a purely aesthetic attitude more vividly than a description by an aesthetic person might. Vienna is more Kraus-like than Kraus, more Schnitzler-like than Schnitzler – an astronomically exaggerated Seldwyla whose culture – already worth questioning – has now been cast into a barbarous civilization. With hindsight I must wholly accept your pronouncement on Kraus: he understands himself only in terms of polemics against this milieu and is diminished by that very milieu. More irritating to me was the realization that something similar is also going on here around Schoenberg. Berg is indeed a proper human being, a true heir through and through, and of a naivety which borders on greatness – but a bitterness going back over decades (he has shared Schoenberg's existence for over twenty years, experienced all the attacks with him, and seems to be spiritually dependent on him) has narrowed his horizons to polemics; everything to do with Schoenberg is sacred. Otherwise, of his contemporaries only Mahler is of any account; anyone who opposes him is crushed – in short, he constitutes a 'circle' in the true conclusive George sense, and one cannot challenge the basis of all this because he himself adopts an absolutist stance. However, I had the pleasure of discovering that Berg understood my pieces at once; he acknowledged my talents and skill and (I played him things from the most diverse periods) noted an unusually serious and intense process of development, even harbouring doubts as to whether I could continue this development at such a pace

along those same lines. So at last I have both a response to and a criticism of my music; admittedly, Berg left me in no doubt that I now have to learn everything decisive from myself. But he is too rigidly fixed, located somewhere between Mahler, Kokoschka, Webern and Schoenberg, for any complete rapport to be possible - especially as the way in which his purblind certainty expresses itself actually repels me as a human being. Anyway, he knows Kraus and has written a polemic against Pfitzner *in modo Krausico* (with stylistic analysis!) which is the most striking and intellectually brilliant work that I know of in the whole realm of music. I shall see about getting it sent to you - the only thing is that there is rather too much specialist musical knowledge in it.

Otherwise, the people here are: a curious woman, a Viennese super-Bobi, with whom I travelled here; Willi Zahn, a friend of Lila's, the son of Ernst Zahn, a bookseller à la Niederlechner and in addition a drinker à la Dostoevsky, a despairing, albeit profound man of refined nuances who communicates with such difficulty that one cannot get to know him - the subtle facets are entirely lacking; then Frau von Dolnay, 50, a Hungarian, very lachrymose but very cultured, living in the boarding-house, who acts like a mother to me; her only son, a communist, is a close friend of Lukács, who is said to be lurking somewhere in Berlin at present; it is said that he only carries on philosophical discussions with young people. I am going to meet the son, and probably Lukács too, perhaps through Balabanova, about whom the Russians here are talking a lot: she is a friend of Lenin and was in charge of the 'Avanti' for many years. But I am not in any hurry and am not bothered about anything; at present I am far away though actually living in the present, and for the last six months have been feeling like a general pause with a fermata on top of it. That is *true*, not just meant as

consolation. See? Do you understand?! So, faithfulness is not an empty delusion, 'so let me appear, until I shall be ...' coming back to Frankfurt

as yours alone - Teddie.

Original: MS, Siegfried Kracauer papers, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar. Handwritten note by Kracauer: '1. Brief von T. aus Wien; beantwortet 13. März' ['First letter from T. from Vienna; answered on 13 March']; the reply has not been preserved.

Eisengasse: now Wilhelm-Exner-Gasse (see Heinz Steinert, *Adorno in Wien*, Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1989, p. 15).

writing to you only today because the days up to now have been too chaotic: Adorno wrote this letter three days after his arrival in Vienna, on 5 March 1925 (see Adorno/Berg, *Correspondence*, p. 5).

Schnitzler: Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931); the novelist, dramatist and lyric poet was born and died in Vienna.

Seldwyla: Seldwyla means, in the language of former times, a blissful, sunny place - and, indeed, that is just what the little town of that name, somewhere in Switzerland, is. It is still tucked away among the same encircling walls and towers as it was three hundred years ago, and so it is still the same provincial backwater. (See Gottfried Keller, *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, ed. Thomas Böning, Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989, p. 11.)

your pronouncement on Kraus: not preserved in a review or anywhere else.

with Schoenberg: Adorno describes his problems with the circle around Arnold Schoenberg in a letter to Alban Berg of 23 November 1925: 'Attempt to draw a clear line between the work and Schönberg, in a manner to which

Schönberg himself must consent; namely by deducing the impossibility of forming a “school” from his own stance (my aim: this prattling on about the “Schönberg pupil” must stop)’ (*Correspondence*, p. 28).

Berg is indeed a proper human being: Adorno in his ‘Memoir’ of the composer Alban Berg (1885–1935): ‘I made his acquaintance at the festival of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein in Frankfurt in 1924, in spring or early summer, on the evening of the première of the *Three Fragments from Wozzeck*. Captivated by this work, I asked Scherchen, with whom I was in touch, to introduce me to Berg. In a few minutes it was agreed that I should come to Vienna as his pupil; I had to wait for my graduation in July. The move to Vienna dragged on until the beginning of January 1925. My first impression of Berg, on that occasion in Frankfurt, was one of the greatest kindness, but also of his shyness, which in its turn dispelled the anxiety which this man whom I admired immensely would otherwise have aroused in me.’ See Adorno, GS 13, p. 340.

A polemic against Pfitzner: Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949), composer and conductor; Berg’s ‘polemic’: ‘The Musical Impotence of the “New Aesthetic” of Hans Pfitzner’, in Willi Reich, *Alban Berg: Leben und Werk* (Munich: Piper 1985), pp. 194–206.

Bobi: also Bobbi, nickname of Maria Proelss (1892–1962), pianist, founder of the Frankfurter Kammermusikgemeinde (see Adorno’s obituary of her, Adorno, GS 19, pp. 465–7).

bookseller à la Niederlechner: not attested in Vienna; possibly Emil Niederlechner, originally from southern Germany, who in 1922 took over his wife’s parents’ bookshop in Fehmarn; however, to date only journeys by the Wiesengrund family to Sylt and Rügen have been recorded.

Willi Zahn: (1899-?); no further information is available about the son of Ernst Zahn.

Ernst Zahn: (1867-1952), an author from Zurich, previously a restaurateur and local politician.

Frau von Dolnay: Adorno wrote 'Dolnay', but the information about her son which follows confirms that this refers to Anna von Tolnay (no dates available).

a son ... friend of Lukács: Karl von Tolnay (1899-1981), known after emigrating as Charles de Tolnay, an art historian from Budapest, where he was a member of Georg Lukács's circle. From 1929 to 1933 he was a lecturer at the University of Hamburg; then an exile in France and from 1939 in the USA.

Balabanova: Angelica Balabanova (1878-1965), Russian revolutionary. In the early 1920s she distanced herself from the Bolsheviks and emigrated to Vienna, fled to Paris from the National Socialists, and went into exile in the USA.

Avanti: the journal of the Partito Socialista Italiano which appeared from 1896 to 1993.

companion of Lenin: Angelica Balabanoff (this is the spelling of the author's name) knew Lenin (1870-1924) 'at first hand' (according to the blurb) from his period of exile in Switzerland - to such an extent that she recorded her experiences in *Lenin: Psychologische Beobachtungen und Betrachtungen* [Lenin: psychological observations and reflections] (Hanover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1961).

faithfulness: 'Und die Treue, sie ist doch kein leerer Wahn' ['Yet faithfulness is no empty delusion']; see Friedrich Schiller, 'Die Bürgerschaft', in *Gedichte*, ed. Georg Kurscheidt (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), p. 30.

So let me appear...: 'Let me appear an angel till I become one! / Do not take my white robe from me. / I am hurrying from the lovely earth / to the solid dwelling you know of.' Mignon's song, first verse, from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*; the song was set to music by Franz Schubert. See *The Penguin Book of Lieder*, ed. and trans. S. S. Praver (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 115.

5 Adorno to Kracauer

Vienna, 14.3.1925

Vienna IX, Eisengasse 2, Pension Luisenheim
14 March 1925.

My dear Friedel,

If, in Bloch's words, the one who leaves is like an arrow and the one who stays behind like an egg, it follows, neologically, that *you* must have left, for indeed your letter is more like a sharpened arrow than mine, shot from the stretched bow by irony and its tip poisoned with the toxin, so to speak, of definitive hopelessness, unless one impolitely and deliberately overlooks the metaphysical determinacy of that irony and feels as if one had simply been pelted with rotten eggs, which might just about restore the relationship that I originally expected. I don't mean that that was exactly what happened to me, especially since I groped my way through the layers of irony and penetrated to the basic tenderness underlying it; but I didn't feel happy on reading this letter - not happy about what it contained, and still less so about what it failed to say. To take the first point first and attempt an apology: the reproach of excessive haste, which you are constantly levelling at me - overtly, covertly and masochistically - makes no sense to me. The astoundingly sure judgement for which you so punitively blame me, as if you had just read the *Wanderjahre* and wanted to drum the

category of tact into me (that category, indeed!), is not some dubious merit of mine, but the essence of Viennese life assails one with such monstrous and yet grim vehemence, everywhere, every step of the way, that while registering the *soi-disant* facts one falls, through no fault of one's own, into the attitude of the paraenetic, while in reality it is nothing but the facts themselves - and the louder these speak, the less they can be called facts. If I, being more obliging than Else (the Hamburg one, not the Viennese), were prepared to concede this point either to you or to myself, and let myself become a mouthpiece for these facts, you would certainly attribute this willingness to my creative imagination, for which Vienna can never be Viennese enough, although it is even more Viennese than that. I also have the liveliest doubts as to whether you would adopt a very different attitude in my situation and not add something of your own. However, your correction was not aimed at Vienna in itself, which you might have wanted to protect from my subjectivistic distortion. Rather, you feared that my vehement and, in your eyes, frosty rejection of this city, which Berg alleges is nothing more nor less than a printer's error - that my rejection of this printer's error was based on illusion, that I had had no experiences here - not even of myself, as yet - and was at present heartily cursing Vienna to comfort you, to reassure you, and to make the phenomenon of absence as innocuous as possible. *N'est-ce pas?* Your letter betrays a deep mistrust: you believe that I am lost and interpret every remark I make to you as a sentimental masquerade. Even the tone of wisdom, in which only the uncertainty with which it constantly teeters between the old Goethe and Polonius affords me any pleasure, is part of this (apart from the deliberate accentuations!). Or do you think - so far away and all too near - I would not have noticed the reproach, couched in such masculine terms, in the introductory words: 'I hardly expected news from you any

earlier, as I believed to some degree (!) that you would have preferred to write something that made sense' (! a polemical quotation from my letter!). In the background there are those Gröden disjunctions which forget, in communication by letter, how false they are. O Friedelein, o Friedelein, how green they are, your branches!

For I really don't feel at home here; I really am full of longing, and I was quite serious in what I said about the *grande pause*. It isn't external things that depress me; I have settled in well here, found my bearings, and am in good accommodation, so good that I should like to find some way of staying in the boarding-house permanently. But the atmosphere - I don't want to say any more to you about it just now, because you simply wouldn't believe me! I am still getting on very well with Berg; yesterday I went with him to a workers' concert which Webern was conducting - he conducted excellently, with a grim fanaticism that I know of in no other conductor, and with incredible musicality. Schoenberg was also there; it was the first time that I saw him, but I didn't speak to him; he does indeed have a powerful countenance. Today I am going with Berg to Universal Edition for a rehearsal by the Kolisch Quartet; they are playing Rathaus, Szymanowski, Casella and Wellesz, so we shall be among friends, though not in the best company. As for the other people whom I have seen: Lila's parents, the mother very pleasant, the father quite meshuggah; Frau Berg, an archetypal eccentric - beautiful, an intimate friend of Alma Mahler, from whom she had just had a card from Jerusalem; her Kokoschka legends alone could fill volumes. On Monday my travelling companion invited me to a nightclub where she was a habituée; she is very witty but goes around with two revolvers and cocaine, something which naturally arouses concern. I am still not quite sure whether she is a literary lady, the madam of a brothel, or simply has a talent for

hysterics - perhaps a synthesis. Anyway, she claims to be married and to go by the name of Lu.

My life goes something like this: I get up at eight or eight-thirty and spend the morning composing, work on my trio, whose first movement is developing slowly but well, and on a difficult set of variations for string quartet, something like a school exercise for Berg, which, however, I can shape to my own liking (I no longer have to write tonally, as I did with Herr Sekles). The afternoon is for other things; first and foremost, I have polished off all the outstanding discussions of scores - a longish essay on the Bartók pieces, one on the folksongs which Holl gave me, and a little one on a trio by Jemnitz. Now I am sticking with Bloch, and also find time to compose in the afternoons. I spend the evenings with Lila and read Kierkegaard with her; at least I don't get bored doing this, whereas there are plenty of opportunities to do so in other ways. Yesterday we went out to Schönbrunn, which is on the way to Hi[e]tzing (to Berg). I drink lots of coffee with whipped cream and study the creations of the expert Viennese confectioners.

Why are you writing nothing about yourself? I know that you scorn to discuss your intellectual projects in letters, but there are other things of a Marianne-like nature which find their way even to Vienna in the local newspaper; a new way of life (Parisian, I hope), new cafés, new ways of being bored - new people too, perhaps? You will see Walter [Benjamin] with mixed feelings; I expect, too, that you will be going to Kronberg; give the people there my best wishes. Leo, too, will make the most of my absence and have the opportunity to carry the holy flame (of the apocalypse) in the church candelabra through the corridors of the F.Z., which is his transcendental location; I shall write to him. Even Salomon would be glad of a telephone call from you. Are you still implacable as regards your aunt? Or are you back on good terms again? *Tant pis pour*

moi. I am not Papa Krull, but I do speak a lot of French. Ah, well.

I didn't care for Fred's essay; he is pretty enough when he is being playful, but when he tries to make some positive pronouncement he becomes crassly banal. How can one *continually* go on speaking of 'exemplariness'? I am always open to enlightenment. Teddie.

Original: MS; Siegfried Kracauer papers, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar. Handwritten note by Kracauer: '2. Brief. Beantwortet 17.-18. März.' ['Second letter. Answered on 17-18 March.'] The reply has not been preserved.

in Bloch's words, the one who leaves is like an arrow and the one who stays behind like an egg: this motif from Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), compressed by Adorno, comes from the essay 'Eine hellere Symbolintention' [A clearer symbolic idea], in *Der neue Merkur*, 1921/2. Bloch included it under the title 'Kleine Ausfahrt' [A little excursion] in *Spuren*, published in 1930: 'Already the obvious inability of all human beings, including the friendliest and inwardly richest persons, to converse from the car down to the platform on leaving, or the other way around, is due to the fact that the one staying back looks like an egg, the one leaving on the other hand like an arrow; that both already inhabit different spaces.' (See *Traces*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006, p. 99.)

Wanderjahre ... the category of tact: 'Here we have to be tactful, otherwise we are in danger of losing quite unexpectedly the goodwill we may already have gained from people. This is something we take for granted as life goes on, but not until we have paid dearly for the experience; unfortunately, we cannot pay in advance on behalf of our successors.' See Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*,

trans. H. M. Waidson. Richmond, Surrey: Alma Classics, 2013, p. 695.

Else: Probably Else Herzberger (1877–1962), a friend of the Wiesengrund family; she met Adorno and Kracauer during their travels in the Dolomites in 1924.

Gröden disjunctions: This location in the Dolomites was one of the stages on the journey which they undertook together in 1924 and the subject of a travel feuilleton by Kracauer (see letter no. 2, note).

workers' concert: The Workers' Symphony Concerts were founded in 1904 by David Josef Bach (1874–1947), later the director of the Social Democratic *Kunststelle* [art centre]; the event attended by Adorno and conducted by Anton Webern was the 'Märzfeier' [March festival] at the Großer Konzerthausaal on 13 and 14 March 1925, with performances of Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, Weber and Mendelssohn (according to its billboard; see Henriette Kotlan-Werner, 'Sinfonie für Arbeiter', *AZ Journal*, 19 March 1977).

Universal Edition: music publishing company, founded in 1901 and since 1914 headquartered on Karlsplatz. Its catalogue lists works written by the most important composers of New Music.

Kolisch Quartet: The 'Viennese String Quartet' around the violinist Rudolf Kolisch (1896–1978), from 1939 in exile in the USA. Adorno dedicated to him both 'Der getreue Korrepetitor' ('Rudolf Kolisch / Eduard Steuermann / den Freunden seit der Jugend'; see Adorno, GS 15, p. 158) and 'Die Funktion des Kontrapunkts in der neuen Musik' ('Für Rudolf Kolisch / in treuer Freundschaft'; see Adorno, GS 16, p. 145).

Rathaus ... Wellesz: Karol Rathaus (1895–1954), from 1921, Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), from 1912, Alfredo