# **Contents**

Preface to the English	ı Edition	X
Acknowledgements	XIV	
Translator's Preface	xv	

### Introduction: How to Read Adorno

- 1 Relevant Secondary Literature 6
- 2 On Adorno's Style and Terminology 16

## 1 Adorno, Scholem & Co.: An Historical Constellation 20

- 1 How Central is the Kabbalah to Benjamin's Philosophy? 22
- 2 From the Defence of Metaphysics to the Salvage of a Heretical Theology 26
- 3 The Absolute as Process: Kabbalah and Dialectical Idealism in Frankfurt 34
- 4 Moving Everything by Just a Smidgen to Its Rightful Place: A Metaphor of Redemption in Adorno, Scholem, Benjamin, Bloch and Buber 40
- 5 The Drastic Guilt of Having Been Spared 45

# 2 Adorno's Comments on Scholem's Zohar Translation (1939) 54

- Critiquing Symbolic Language: Nonintentionality, Nature, Myth 59
  - 1.1 Nonintentionality 57
  - 1.2 *Nature* 59
  - 1.3 Immanence as Myth 62
- The "Decay" of Occidental Gnosticism or Primordial Religious Experience? 64
  - 2.1 The Decay of the Neoplatonic-Gnostic Tradition 65
  - 2.2 Primordial Experience and Reified Consciousness 66
  - 2.3 Truth's Temporal Nucleus 68
  - 2.4 The Remarkable Trait of All Sensible Forms of Mysticism 69

# 3 From Sabbatai Zevi to Kafka: The Assay of Migrating into the Profane 71

- Antinomian Mysticism: Adorno's Sabbatianism 75
  - 1.1 Redemption through Sin 76
  - 1.2 Three Levels of Profanation, or the Art of Making the Lifeboat Capsize 79



VIII CONTENTS

1.3	Anything but an Atheist 83
1.4	Religious Nihilism and the Radical Transformation of All Human
	Affairs 85
Kafk	ca: The Emptying of the World to a Meaningless Void 88
2.1	An Infinite Amount of Hope—Just Not for Us 91
2.2	Adorno's Inverse Theology 92
2.3	Parting Ways on the Issue of Revelation 95
2.4	The Problem of Gnosticism 97
2.5	Odradek or the Salvage of Useless Things 106
	v v
aditio	n and Experience: Kabbalah and Negative Dialectics 112

### Tra 4

- Kabbalah Means Tradition: On the Inner Historicity of Knowledge 113
  - Philosophy and Tradition 113
  - Revelation, Tradition, Commentary 115 1.2
  - Dialectics of Tradition 117 1.3

2

- 1.4 Profane and Sacred Texts in Walter Benjamin
- Dubious Genealogies: The Concept of Recollection (Eingedenken)
- Does Metaphysical Experience Foreshadow Reconciliation?
  - 2.1 The Joy and Hazard of Embracing Experience
  - 2.2 The Interpretive Immersion in Traditional Texts 130
  - 2.3 What Dawned on Proust in Illiers 134
  - 2.4 A Form of What is within Objects That Simultaneously Exists outside of Them 136
  - Sparks of the Messianic End of History 2.5
  - 2.6 Waiting in Vain: On the Negativity of Metaphysical Experience

#### **Kabbalah and Aesthetics** 5

- Mysticism and Aesthetics in Adorno 150
- The Language of the Angels: The Paradoxes of Negativism and Hope in Music 155
  - The Purely Symphonic Movement as Divine Lament 2.1
  - Grass Angels: The Representation of Transience and 2.2 Reconciliation 157
  - 2.3 The Formal Law of Shrinkage 162
  - 2.4 Tied-on Wings 163

CONTENTS

3	Kabbalistic Motifs and Aesthetic In	terpretation	165
-			

- 3.1 Whether Goethe Intended Them to or Not 166
- 3.2 Not Abraham but Abram 167
- 3.3 The Rending Asunder of the Veil 169
- 3.4 Evil as Scattered Manifestations of Shattered Divine Power 171
- 3.5 An Attempt to Name the Name 173
- 4 Scholem Responds to Adorno's "Sacred Fragment" 176
  - 4.1 Has the Creation of Sacred Music Become Impossible? 177
  - 4.2 A Subterranean Mystical Tradition? 179

# Conclusion: Something Is Missing 186

# Bibliography 191

Acronyms 191

Cited Writings by Theodor W. Adorno 191

Cited Writings by Gershom Scholem 194

Other Literature 196

References to Adorno's Published Texts 215

References to Scholem's Published Texts 217

General Index 218