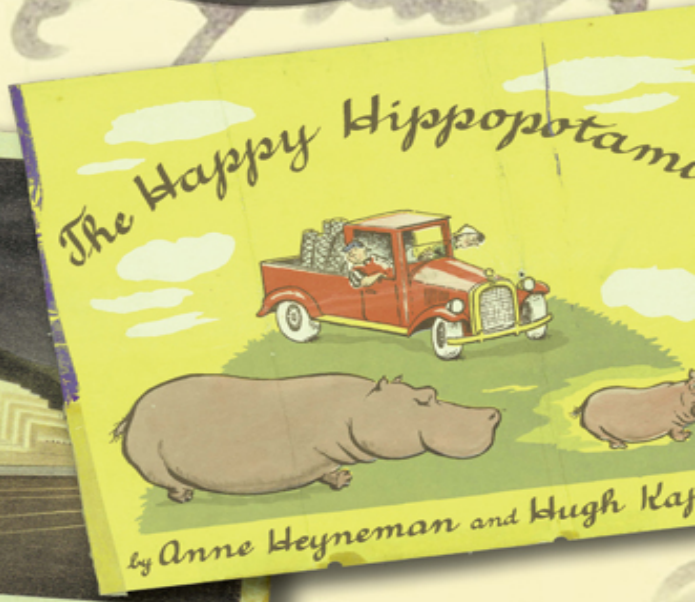


Theodor W. ADORNO

Letters to his parents



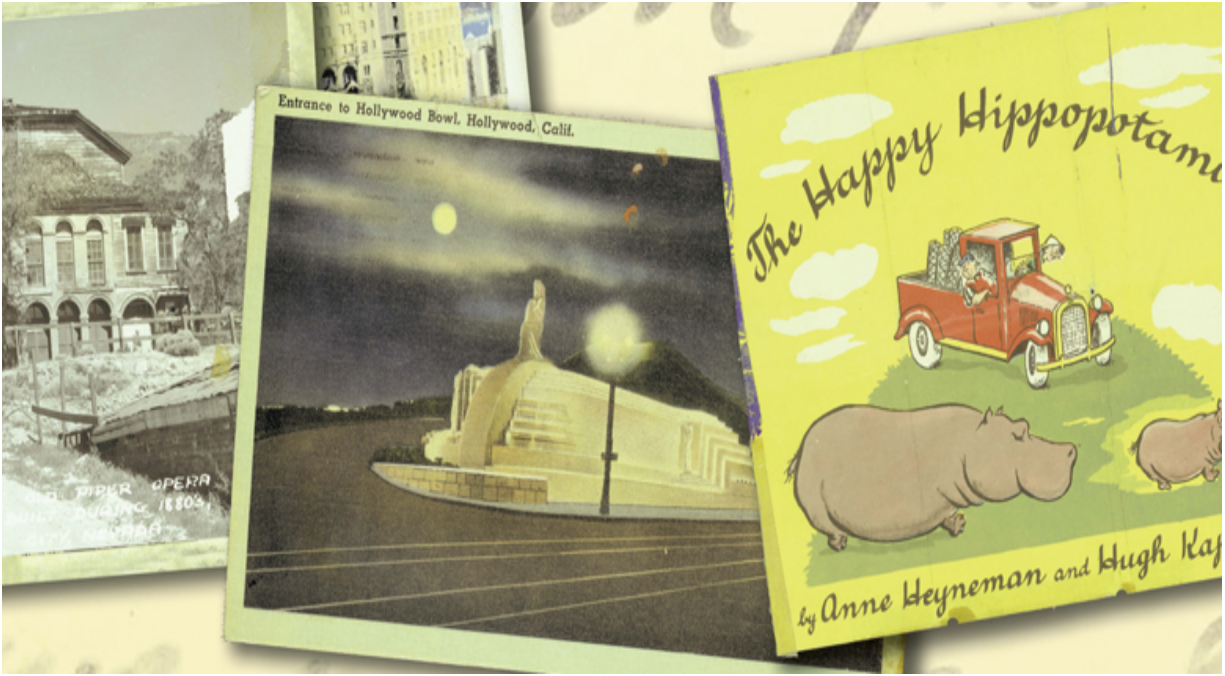
Entrance to Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Calif.



Theodor W.
ADORNO

*Letters to his
parents*





Entrance to Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Calif.

G. WIPER OPERA BUILDING 1880s
1877-1880

The Happy Hippopotamus



by Anne Heyneman and Hugh Kay

Letters to his Parents

THEODOR W. ADORNO

Letters to his Parents
1939-1951

Edited by Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz
Translated by Wieland Hoban

polity

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Editors' Foreword

When Adorno saw his parents again in June 1939 in Havana, they had only been in Cuba for a few weeks. Oscar and Maria Wiesengrund had managed to escape from Nazi Germany at the last minute. At the end of 1939 they moved first to Florida, then to New York, where they lived from August 1940 until the end of their lives. It is only with his move to California at the end of 1941 that Adorno's letters resume once more, coming almost consistently once every two weeks, reporting on work and living conditions as well as friends, acquaintances and the Hollywood stars of his time. One finds reports of his collaborations with Max Horkheimer, Thomas Mann and Hanns Eisler alongside accounts of parties, clowning around with Charlie Chaplin, and ill-fated love affairs. But the letters also show his constant longing for Europe: Adorno already began to think about his return as soon as the USA entered the war.

The *Letters to his Parents* – surely the most open and direct ones he ever wrote – not only afford the reader a glimpse of the experiences that gave rise to the famous *Minima Moralia*, but also show Adorno from a previously unknown, extremely personal side. They end with the first reports from the ravaged Frankfurt to his mother, who remained in New York – and from Amorbach, his childhood paradise.

The occasional harsh comments about the family of his uncle Louis – *the brood* – can be attributed to a strong spleen on Adorno's part, which was well known and indeed criticized in the Wiesengrund family, and which he only

seems to have been able to control in the immediate presence of his relatives.

Unfortunately, of the equally numerous letters sent by his parents during their emigration in Cuba and America, only two from his father, from 1945 and 1946, were found among Adorno's belongings; of his mother's letters, those written from March 1948 onwards have survived. Excerpts from these have been cited where it assists the reader in understanding Adorno's letters.

The letters written by Theodor and Gretel Adorno are reproduced with diplomatic faithfulness; words written unclearly are marked with a question mark in square brackets. This also applies to any additions or alterations made by the editors.

The notes serve to explain events and names found in the letters. The editors have sought to supply information also about those friends and acquaintances, both from Frankfurt and then America, whose names never became well known. Unfortunately this was not always possible; in some cases the notes could not ultimately be as comprehensive as intended, or the editors were even forced to give up entirely.

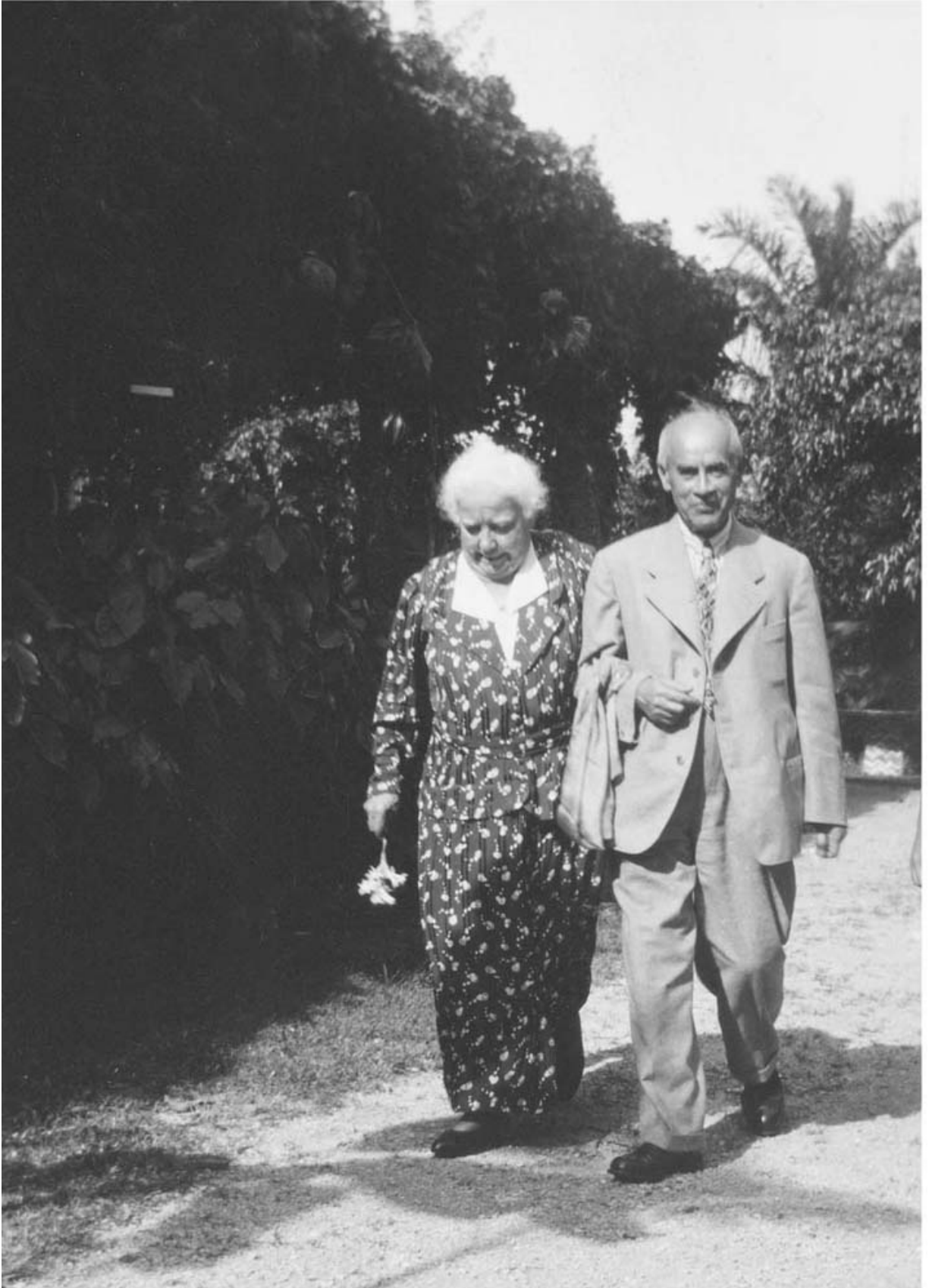
The following collected editions are referred to in abbreviated form:

Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann in collaboration with Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz, vols. 1-20 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970-86): *GS* [1-20].

Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Alfred Schmidt and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, vols. 1-19 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1988-96): Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* [1-19].

Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17: *Briefwechsel 1941-1948*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995): Horkheimer, *Briefwechsel 1941-48*.

The editors would like to thank the following persons for assisting them in their research: Wolfram von Boxberg (Meckenheim), Volker Harms-Ziegler (Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main), Joachim Heimannsberg (Munich), Rüdiger Koschnitzki (Deutsches Filminstitut), Ingrid Kummels and Gundram Kunz (Amorbach), Fritz-Bernd Leopold (Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar), Michael Maaser (Universitätsarchiv der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main), Susanne Neis (Stadtarchiv Neunkirchen), Frau Neugebauer (Amorbach), Reinhard Pabst (Bad Camberg), Elisabeth Reinhuber-Adorno (Oberursel), Klaus Rhein-furth (Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main), Manfred Schäfer (Amorbach), Joachim Seng (Hofmannsthal-Archiv, Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt am Main) and Jochen Stollberg (Stadt und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt am Main).



Oscar and Maria Wiesengrund, c. 1939





Theodor W. Adorno, c. 1939

1939

1 NEW YORK, 12.5.1939

12 May 1939

My dears:

this is but a brief note to welcome you to the new world, where you are now no longer all too far away from us. Our anxiety will not cease until we know that you have arrived safely, and we are putting off everything else until the moment we receive your telegram. I only wish to add that it is my firm intention to visit you as soon as possible. I cannot name a date at present, as this depends not on my wishes, but partly on the radio project.¹ But I shall not wait a day longer than absolutely necessary.

We received your letter from Antwerp,² to our greatest joy, and are relieved to know that everything has gone smoothly so far. I hope with all my heart that you will now truly have a peaceful time, and that you will experience your emigration, now that it has become inevitable, somewhat in the manner of an extended Amorbach.

We will discuss the matter of how to get you over here as soon as I am with you.

Otherwise, I would only like to give you two pieces of advice today: 1.) do not eat any *uncooked* pork, as the risk of trichinosis is very high throughout America, 2.) take great care from the start to protect yourselves against the sun,

which must be considerable now in Cuba, 3.) be very careful in your dealings with other emigrants. Frenkel's business partner³ will soon be looking after you, and the brother of Frau Dr Herbert Graf⁴ will also be turning up in Cuba soon; going on what his sister told me, he should be pleasant company. Furthermore, Carry Sinn⁵ will recommend some American families, whom I would at least prefer to someone like the Wendriners.⁶ But I hope that the whole Cuban expedition will be no more than a brief transitional episode. I need hardly tell you how happy we shall both be when we know that you are nearby and have escaped the horror. Or rather: I hardly dare say so, out of superstition, until your telegram is brought here. Gretel and I are already envisioning how it will be when I tell you all the stories about the hippos, giraffes and hyenas that have meanwhile dissolved into a mirage in the American desert.

A Frankfurt acquaintance of ours by the name of Ganz,⁷ who had to spend a few months in Cuba before his immigration here, told us a few things we would like to pass on to you, as they will perhaps be useful. I would particularly like to draw your attention to the possibility of Viennese food, as I do not know whether our tummies⁸ are up to Cuban food. During the summer months, however, one can perhaps recommend *North American* food, which is relatively rich in vegetables.

Heartiest kisses from your now audibly whinnying horses
Hottlein and Rosslein⁹

Warmest regards to Julie.¹⁰

Hotel Abos Mundos (roof garden)

Obispro good, c. \$ 60 per month, good food, but not cheap.
The addresses of the German guesthouses can be obtained
from the Joint Relief Committee.

Restaurant Orbe Chinese, good, c. 35-40 cts.

Very much worth seeing: Tropical Garden

Nice: Playa (bus number 32).

Elegant restaurant, very good food: Petit Miami.

Nice: Veradero blue beach, c. 31½ hours by bus from Prado.

Non-German guesthouse in Havana: Paseo de Mart 104 Hotel Trocha, very good, pretty garden.

Original: typewritten letter signed by Theodor W. and Gretel Adorno.

1 The project, which concerned 'The Essential Value of Radio to All Types of Listeners' (mostly referred to as the Princeton Radio Research Project), was under the direction of Paul F. Lazarsfeld, who taught at Princeton, and was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. In autumn 1937, Max Horkheimer had suggested Adorno as musical advisor, thus making it financially possible for Adorno to emigrate to the USA.

2 This letter, written during the forced exit from Germany, before boarding the ship bound for Cuba, has not survived; only three letters from Adorno's parents have been preserved from the period between 1939 and 1948. Maria Wiesengrund's letters to her son from March 1948 onwards have mostly survived.

3 It was impossible to gain further information about either Leo Frenkel, who seems to have lived in New York as an insurance salesman and was on friendly terms with Oscar Wiesengrund, or his business partner.

4 The brother-in-law of the Vienna-born director and music writer Herbert Graf (1903-73), who was head of the Städtische Oper in Frankfurt from 1929 to 1932 and worked as director at the Metropolitan Opera in New York from 1936 onwards, could not be traced.

5 Née Frenkel; her name is also spelt 'Carrie' elsewhere.

6 A married couple created by Kurt Tucholsky, who devoted a number of satirical tales to them in the 1920s.

7 Difficult to trace; possibly the actor and writer Rudolf Hermann Graf (1901-1965).

8 Translator's note: in English in the original (henceforth: EO).

9 The pet names of Theodor and Gretel Adorno. Translator's note: both names are generic (albeit doubly diminutive, and thus especially 'cutesy') names for horses, rather like 'Fido' or 'Rex' for dogs. They have therefore been left untranslated.

10 This is Julie Rautenberg (1882-1960), a senior employee of Oscar Wiesengrund and signing clerk of the wine shop 'Bernhard Wiesengrund', who emigrated with them. Julie Rautenberg was a relative of the Frenkels.

2 NEW YORK, 21.5.1939

New York, 21 May 1939. My dears, faithful Wondrous Hippo Cow,¹ here a few words of welcome – may you continue to live with the same contentment, the same security, and the same stubborn superiority as the hippo cow overleaf. I shall be visiting you in the first days of June; the precise date will depend on my work, I will inform you in good time, only tell me how I can best avoid delay in this quarantine, i.e. as a visitor with American first papers.² I am happy that everything has gone smoothly now. Meanwhile had great success at Columbia University.³

Heartiest kisses – fond regards to you both Your old Archibald

Fond regards Giraffe Gazelle wearing negligee

Original: photo postcard: Rose the Hippopotamus, Central Park Zoo, N.Y.C.; stamp: NEW YORK, MAY 2, 1939 (see fig. 1). Manuscript.

¹ Translator's note: the original pet name is *Wundernilstute*. It should be noted that, while in English the male and female hippopotamus are termed 'bull' and 'cow' respectively, they are referred to in German as *Hengst* and *Stute*, i.e. 'stallion' and 'mare'. In the light of the Adorno family's clear penchant for horses, this can be seen as connected to the various other horse-related pet names that appear in the correspondence.

² This refers to the 'Declaration of Intention' to become a citizen of the United States of North America, i.e. the application for naturalization.

³ Adorno had given a lecture entitled 'Husserl and the Problem of Idealism' (see Theodor W. Adorno, *GS 20.1*, pp. 119–34).

3 NEW YORK, 11.6.1939

11 June 1939

My dears Wondrous Hippo Cow,
dear Willibald:

a thousand thanks for the delightful red waistcoat, which fits me perfectly; Giraffe Gazelle is very happy with her new

saddlecloth - dear Archibald rolled up here in good health and spirits, albeit a little tired at present. New York had just put on a gentle cooling shower to welcome him. - I am glad you are so well, and that you have some peace and are comfortable there. I would so love to get dear Marinumba a few light clothes here, but I need to have her measurements first. Perhaps it would even be possible to find out the exact American size (I am size 16, for example) in a shop there. I have not yet seen any wild silk here at all, people wear artificial silk (rayon) or cotton (even for evening dresses). What sort of colours were you thinking of: grey, blue and black with white?

Do send us more news soon, with kisses from your
Gretel-horse

My dears, having arrived in good shape after a somewhat adventurous ride, I still see the terribly brave and yet terribly sad face of the Hippo Cow on the pier before me - and I felt no different, but was merely less heroic! And yet I am so happy about those 6 days. More soon, for today just fond and hearty greetings from your Archibald.

Original: handwritten letter.

4 NEW YORK, 8.7.1939

8 July 1939

My dears:

we are anxious at not having had any reply to our lengthy letter of 21 June,¹ nor any confirmation that you received the book packets we sent you around the same time. We hope you are well, and that the Cuban postal service has simply treated itself to a feast - although I can scarcely imagine that those robber-chieftains had much fun with

Stifter's studies and Beethoven's sonatas, to say nothing of my own utterances.

There is an altogether inhuman heat here, and I do not know whether I should fear that it might be even hotter where you are, or console myself with the assumption that it cannot get any hotter. At any rate, we decided yesterday to go on holiday after all, to Bar Harbor once again at the end of the month, for 4 or 5 weeks. Max and Maidon² originally wanted to come too. But Dée's condition is such that Fritz was unable to decide on the westward journey she had so dearly wished for, and he will also go to Maine, which means that Max and Maidon cannot leave Fritz and Dée³ and come with us. But we shall certainly meet. Lazarsfeld⁴ proved most friendly and accommodating with regard to the holiday. We have been invited, either on the way there or the way back, to go to Maine to visit Professor Lynd,⁵ the world-famous author of *Middle Town*, whom you have probably also heard of, on his property in New Hampshire. I have known him for a long time and am on good terms with him; he has meanwhile read a substantial amount of my work and is, as Lazarsfeld told me yesterday, most impressed by it. I tell you this not for the sake of prestige, as the worth of my efforts is not to be measured by the opinions of some celebrities, but only to show you that, for all the accusations of Jewish-Hegelian dialectics⁶ directed at me, I am clearly coping well with Americans of even the most Aryan blood.

Aside from this, I am in such an exhausted and overworked state as I have perhaps never before experienced. The holidays are truly not a luxury. I cannot refrain from telling you in brief all the things I have done since my return from Cuba:

- 1) a 20-page essay⁷ for the journal that brings my jazz theory up to date with the current American discourse, in the form of an examination of two newly published books.

2) a long, 40-page memorandum⁸ for the radio project on pop songs and monopolistic propaganda with suggestions for research I have worked out, and which are now to be carried out - by Lazarsfeld's very pleasant wife, among others.

3) two further reviews⁹ for the journal, among them one whose length is equivalent to around 8 columns in the *FZ* features section.

4) completely revised, i.e. rewrote, a long essay by Max¹⁰ on the Jewish question together with him and Gretel. We spent the last week working literally day and night on this most interesting piece of work, at such a pace that Max broke down immediately after its conclusion and went to bed with a fever.

5) briefed all the employees for the radio project, who are now fully available for the music study,¹¹ about their new tasks.

6) carried out the 'drive'¹² for the research project on anti-Semitism¹³ with Max.

If that's not American! I hope to send you some of my English output soon. I daresay you will understand that I am a little drowsy after all this. The peaceful calm of the noise of Havana lies behind me like a lost paradise.

On Wednesday evening we had an official institute do at our place, which went extremely well, with Rudi and Josie.¹⁴ Yesterday evening we were invited to Max and Maidon's place together with the Frenkels, as well as Fritz and Dée, and it was very pleasant. Only I think that dear Leo was a little taken aback at the names we use for each other. For we have now adopted the names of Indian chiefs: Max is called 'Soft head', Gretel, in keeping with an older tradition: 'Three Lambvultures', and I am simply 'Big Ox'. As you see, I shall soon have lost my wits, and if I carry on like this I will surely soon be given the professorship in Oxford for which I was previously too highbrow.¹⁵ Gsh.

Do write soon, and in particular also tell me – as is fitting in a letter to a dialectical materialist – whether you are really getting enough to eat from Miss Laidlaw,¹⁶ which I doubt somewhat, as I ate like a pig for a few days after my return here, and whether you are coping with the climate.

Heartiest kisses from your old and somewhat America-weary child,¹⁷ also from Mrs Hippo King Archibald, the dear Giraffe Gazelle with the little horns.

Your faithful Teddie.

Original: typewritten letter.

1 As the next letter reveals, it never reached Adorno's parents.

2 Max (1895–1973) and Maidon (1887–1969) Horkheimer.

3 Friedrich Pollock (1894–1970) and his first wife Andrée.

4 The Vienna-born sociologist Paul Felix Lazarsfeld (1901–1976) had gone to America in 1933, and decided to remain there in 1935. From 1937 to 1939 he was director of the Office of Radio Research, which was initially resident at Princeton and moved to Columbia University in New York in 1939. Adorno had been an employee of this research institution – also known as the Princeton Radio Research Project – since 1938. In 1936, Lazarsfeld had married his second wife, also born in Vienna, the social scientist Herta Herzog (1910–1999).

5 The sociologists Robert S. Lynd (1892–1970) and his wife Helen Merrell Lynd (1896–1982) had published the study *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* in 1929, and in 1937 the follow-up *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*. Robert S. Lynd taught at Columbia University in New York.

6 See also Horkheimer's essay 'Die Juden und Europa' [The Jews and Europe], which begins: 'The "Jewish-Hegelian jargon", which once began in London and made its way into the German Left, and which even then had to be translated into the full-bodied rhetoric of trade unionists, is now considered well and truly worn out' (Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 4, p. 308).

7 Adorno's review of Wilder Hobson's *American Jazz Music* (New York, 1939) and Winthrop Sargeant's *Jazz, Hot & Hybrid* (New York, 1938) appeared only in 1941, in the ninth volume of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (henceforth: *Zfs*); see *GS* 19, pp. 382–99.

8 There is a memorandum headed 'Plugging, Likes and Dislikes in the Field of Light Popular Music' among Adorno's belongings in the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv (Ts 51499–51537).

9 The three unpublished reviews, all from 1939, deal with the collective introduction to philosophy *Knowledge and Society* (New York, 1938), Maximilian

Beck's *Psychologie. Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Seele* [Psychology: Essence and Reality of the Soul] (Leiden, 1939), and Richard Laurin Hawkins's *Positivism in the United States 1853-61* (Cambridge, MA, 1938) respectively. It is not clear which two are meant here. See *GS* 20.1, pp. 238-43.

10 See Max Horkheimer, 'Die Juden und Europa', in *Zfs* 8 (1939-40), pp. 115-36; now in Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 4, pp. 308-31.

11 *music study*: EO.

12 '*drive*': EO.

13 This was originally published in English in 1941, in vol. 4 of the *Zfs*, which at that time bore the name *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*. For the German translation see Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* 4, pp. 373-418.

14 The violinist and leader of the Kolisch String Quartet, Rudolf Kolisch (1896-1978), who had been Adorno's friend since 1925, and his first wife, the pianist Josefa Rosanska (1904-1986).

15 *highbrow*: EO.

16 The landlady of the Havana guesthouse in which Oscar and Maria Wiesengrund resided, Miss Estella Laidlaw.

17 An allusion to Ferdinand Kürberger's novel *Der Amerikamüde* [The America-weary One], first published in 1855.

5 NEW YORK, 15.7.1939

15 July 1939

My dears:

a thousand thanks for your telegram, letter and card. The telegram came just as Gretel was copying my letter from the shorthand. To answer the question from the card: the exact words of the Jack Smith¹ record should be: '*are you sorry, really sorry?*' I hope this is sufficient to win the bet.

As you did not receive my dramatic travel report: during the night of my crossing to Miami, my cabin neighbours sought to infiltrate my room through the connecting door, and even continued their attempts after I had begun to protest vigorously, until I finally called the nightsteward to my aid. It is unclear whether they were simply drunk or entertained the vain hope of robbing me; to be truthful,

however, I suspect the former. Then I almost missed my train, as the Americans kept me on board for hours: for they had lost my papers, and therefore sent me to the back of the queue. It was only because I smelled a rat, and, generally hostile towards authority, did not 'comply' (as Annachen² would say), that I managed to catch my train after all. On the return journey I was freezing like a dog, especially while passing through Florida, as the train was so thoroughly air-conditioned that my tropical clothing offered entirely inadequate protection against Western civilization. My subsequent cold took me a fortnight to recover from.

You should never worry if our letters fail to arrive. If anything were the matter, we would wire you *immediately*; and, on the other hand, one should constantly expect surprises from the Cuban postal service.

And dear WK³ should not be anxious about Regius⁴ - he has now long been in safety.

It is now fairly certain that we shall go on holiday at the end of July, once again to the Hotel de Gregoire, Bar Harbor, Maine.

We had arranged with the Wondrous Hippo Cow to get her a few clothes here, and now she writes that she does not want any. But why not? What are her measurements?

We are now taking things at a much slower pace until the holidays - having a semi-holiday, so to speak - and I have already recovered somewhat; unfortunately, however, my poor Giraffe Gazelle has had another migraine.

Aside from these matters, I can think of nothing special to report: I shall send our dear Hippo Cow a few songs. It has cooled off slightly here, and it is very pleasant in our apartment. Fond regards to you both, and to Julie; we had Bea⁵ over here a few days ago, together with the Pollocks and a big-shot Jew who is in charge of the Alaska project⁶ (which, by the way, is very interesting and sensible).

Please give my best to Miss Laidlaw, and tell her, as the old Pachulke⁷ joke goes: 'carry on like that, and you'll go far

in life’.

Kisses from

your old child
Teddie.

The money will be wired to the old whore on Monday by
Tratte: no simple matter.

Enclosed: 1 Archibald with trap wide open.

Original: typewritten letter with handwritten postscript.

1 The singer and film actor ‘Whispering’ Jack Smith, born in 1919 in Seattle.

2 A maidservant of the Wiesengrunds in Frankfurt.

3 Translator’s note: This is the abbreviation for *Wildschweinkönig* (Wild Boar King), the pet name for Oscar Wiesengrund.

4 This refers to the collection of aphorisms entitled *Dämmerung. Notizen in Deutschland* [Twilight: Notes in Germany] published by Max Horkheimer in 1934 under the pseudonym Heinrich Regius.

5 Presumably the wife of the architect Ferdinand Kramer (see letter 13 and the corresponding note).

6 The name could not be ascertained; Alaska, together with the Virgin Islands, was one of the places vaguely mentioned as a new location for Jews forced to flee from Germany. The Roosevelt administration’s intention was presumably to reduce the strain on the USA resulting from Jewish immigrants.

7 Pachulke (in Polish: *pacholek*) refers to a peasant, farm hand, or generally rough type. The figure Pachulke came from a Berlin joke.

6 NEW YORK, 25.7.1939
429 WEST 117th STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.

25 July 1939

My dears!

A thousand thanks for your letter. I am sending you these words today by air mail, so that you might still receive a line or two from New York, and above all to convey to WK the

very heartiest of birthday greetings.¹ May the first in exile at once be the first in a long line of agreeable ones - on holiday, so to speak. And may you both continue to cope with fate as bravely, naturally and free of bitterness as you have until now. Beyond this, my hope for us all today is simply that we can soon see each other again, and in calmer circumstances than those days in June, as rewarding as they were.

We have little to report. Work is progressing slowly - in recent weeks mainly the project once more, now that the long essay by Max and various smaller matters have been completed. But I am still only working at half-speed, so to speak, and will interrupt my work completely and absolutely in August. Gretel has had a whole series of migraine attacks, I am afraid, with ever-increasing frequency; though she is feeling better today, a holiday is very much overdue, and for this reason I am dictating at the institute today. We are labouring under a truly infernal heat here, with 60 per cent air humidity - I swear, it is scarcely bearable. We are leaving on Sunday, and will spend the whole of August at the Hotel de Gregoire, Bar Harbor, Maine. It is quite possible that Max and Maidon will visit us there, and the Pollocks are also considering Maine, though in the case of Frau Pollock there are some doubts on account of the sea climate.

Regarding Alaska, my dear WK, you are as mistaken as all of us here were until recently. Alaska is an entire continent. The northern parts are arctic, while the climate in the southern and south-western regions - due to what is known as the Japan Current - is considerably milder than most of the American Midwest, or indeed Chicago. The temperature does not drop more than a few degrees below zero, and in the summer it is apparently as warm and agreeable as southern Norway, for example. If I am not much mistaken, Alaska - which is after all part of the USA, and economically still entirely untapped - genuinely looks to become the main refuge for exiled Jews. Our source on the matter,²

incidentally, is a charming man who has proven especially friendly towards us, and is involved in the project together with Max Warburg (Anita's father).³ Economically speaking, the aim of the project is to develop a lumber industry that would make American newspaper production largely independent of raw materials from Germany, Canada and Scandinavia. The whole of Alaska is inhabited by no more than 60,000 people - 30,000 of them white, the rest a mixture of Eskimos, Japanese, Chinese and negroes. The southern, fertile parts of Alaska are very easy to reach from Seattle. On the whole, the project seems to me incomparably more solid and healthy than the Guyana project, for example, to say nothing of Shanghai.⁴

The things one hears about that are truly horrendous.

As far as Kreisler⁵ is concerned, I agree entirely. He has long since gone to the dogs and lost all sense of good measure. This whole sort of music-making should be liquidated, and one often wonders whether the current German barbarism contributing to that liquidation is not perhaps involuntarily serving a most just purpose.

I was deeply touched by the correspondence between Hofmannsthal and George, which I shall review in detail for the journal.⁶ In the next two weeks you will be receiving two manuscripts in English: Radio Voice,⁷ the completed second part of my theoretical book about the radio project, and the extensive project of a scientific study of anti-Semitism; Max had the idea to begin with, and then the two of us wrote it together with Gretel and my old American secretary. I would ask that you return both manuscripts to me once you have read them: the anti-Semitism project should be treated absolutely confidentially - that means that no one other than you, my mother and Julie should under any circumstances lay eyes upon it. I am most eager to know what you both make of it. The matter of carrying out the anti-Semitism project, that is to say of carrying out the investigations planned for it, will preoccupy us in the next

few months to the same extent as the practical basis of the study. We are absolutely convinced, however, that the only meaningful way to counteract the persecution of Jews is to get to the heart of the matter, rather than simply reeling off the customary phrases. Admittedly such attempts will not always meet with approval – least of all from those in whose interests it is being undertaken.

Please forgive the remarkable stupidity of this letter, but I am melting away in this heat, and am no more than a shadow, albeit a well-nourished one.

Heartiest kisses
from

your old
Teddie

P.S. Please convey my warmest greetings to Miss Laidlaw, and a particular expression of sympathy to the new cook. Does Ophelia still cry out ‘ai’, and can Julie still imitate her so wonderfully?

Original: typewritten letter with printed letterhead.

1 Oscar Wiesengrund’s birthday was 30 July.

2 Unknown.

3 The Hamburg banker Max Warburg (1867–1946), who was chairman of the supervisory board of I.G. Farben for some time, had insisted until his emigration to the USA in 1938 that the German Jews should continue to defend their economic positions under the Nazi regime. From 1929 onwards he had supported Jewish aid organizations. No further information was found on his involvement in the Alaska plan. Anita Warburg (b. 1908) studied violin in Berlin after completing school in Salem, and later began to work as a sculptress. She moved to London in 1935, and worked in an aid organization for Jewish refugees. In 1940 she married the Swiss journalist Max Wolf; they both emigrated to the USA.

4 After the foundation in January 1939 of the Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung [National Centre for Jewish Emigration], which Heydrich directed, the idea of creating Jewish settlements outside of Europe and Palestine was popular for a while. Shanghai was an option because of its loose regulations on visas and passports. And Dutch Guyana had been recommended by the Dutch fascist Anton A. Mussert (1894–1946). ‘Thus, for example, Mussert thought that

the Jewish question should be resolved “properly”, as “the Dutch despised vandalism and injustice”. He developed a Guyana plan as an alternative to the Madagascar plan. Surinam, as well as British and French Guyana, would be handed over by their respective mother countries (the Netherlands, England and France) for the foundation of a national Jewish homeland. In this arrangement, England and France would not be allocated any other regions as compensation, as they still had enough other colonies left over’ (Hans Jansen, *Der Madagaskar-Plan. Die beabsichtigte Deportation der Europäischen Juden nach Madagaskar* [Munich, 1997], p. 257).

5 The Vienna-born violinist Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962), who also composed and had received tuition from Anton Bruckner as a boy, was one of the most famous virtuosos of the first half of the twentieth century. Kreisler, who had lived in Berlin between 1925 and 1932, emigrated to France in 1933 and became a French citizen; in 1939 he left France for America.

6 The correspondence, published in Berlin in 1938, induced Adorno to write a substantial essay that first appeared in 1942, in the mimeographed volume *Walter Benjamin zum Gedächtnis* [In Memoriam Walter Benjamin], published by the Institute of Social Research; see *GS* 10.1, pp. 195–237.

7 A chapter of the unfinished book *Current of Music*, which is to appear in the series *Nachgelassene Schriften* [Posthumous Works].

7 BAR HARBOR, 1.8.1939

Bar Harbor, 1 August 1939.

My dears, after travelling and arriving well, being received as old friends, and settling in superbly, we are finding it more beautiful than ever here, and are recovering with all our energy, utterly abstaining from work. Today we spent the whole day outside – aside from a long siesta – and are both already looking quite different. The last two weeks in N.Y. were unbearably hot and exhausting, and we have truly earned our rest. Gretel is wearing the red waistcoat with great zeal. Fondest regards to you both and to Julie from the old child Teddie

There is an old lady here who has been coming to B.H. for the last 60 years.

Fond regards from your Gretel

it is much busier here than it was last year, maybe this indicates a boom.

Original: photo postcard: Hotel de Gregoire, Bar Harbor, Maine. 'ONLY HOTEL ON THE SHORE'; stamp: AUG 2, 1939. Manuscript.

8 BAR HARBOR, 7.8.1939

Bar Harbor
7 August 1939.

My dears, we are *seriously* concerned at not having heard from you for so long once again, despite writing to you fervently. Is everything all right? Leo F. also wrote to you at my request. We are increasingly recovering – quite literally – spending the whole day outside, with at least 10 hours of sleep and good seafood.¹ Utter peace and quiet, and nothing, absolutely nothing new: that is the best news we have to report. Kisses from your old child Teddie

We have already had an adventure too: the tide came in more quickly than we expected, and we were beginning to become uneasy, but a friendly seaman saved us just in time for lunch.² Warmest regards Gretel

Original: picture postcard: Cliff at Great Head Bar Harbor, Me.; stamp: AUG 8, 1939. Manuscript.

¹ seafood: EO ('sea food').

² lunch: EO.

9 BAR HARBOR, 14.8.1939

Bar Harbor, 14 August 1939.