

Press Release

Nietzsche's correspondence documented in full.

The third section of the *Complete Critical Edition of Nietzsche's Correspondence* concluded with two commentary volumes.

Berlin, 4th May 2005

Edited by Renate Müller-Buck, the two commentary volumes, covering Nietzsche's correspondence between 1887 and 1889, consummate 30 years of work on the complete critical edition. Altogether, Nietzsche's correspondence consists of 24 volumes in 3 sections. The first volume of the letters was published in 1975, the last in 1984. The 6 commentary volumes were published after Montinari's death between 1993 and 2004.

The editorial work, especially for the final years of correspondence (1887 - 1889), was particularly high. Aside from collating and reconstructing the hand-written manuscripts, the focus of the volumes' experienced editor, a former colleague of Montinari, laid in reconstructing the often complicated personal relationships, as well as, the personal and literary allusions within Nietzsche's broad spectrum of correspondence.

The extensive index to the volumes of Nietzsche's correspondence, published in the third section, holds the keys to the final and most complicated phase in Friedrich Nietzsche's life and work. These volumes will become indispensable in the continuing study of Nietzsche. Among other features, the final two commentary volumes present all the reviews of Nietzsche's writing published during 1887 - 1889. This is not only helpful for understanding his letters, in which Nietzsche at times discusses those reviews to a large extent, but also offers new insights into Nietzsche's writing since he occasionally used phrases from those reviews (e.g. the famous dynamite-metaphor used by Widmann).

The two volumes also throw light on a missed treatment of Nietzsche's by Josef Breuer, the friend and mentor of Sigmund Freud in Vienna, and about Nietzsche's reactions to his correspondents' letters - as in *Der Fall Wagner (The Wagner Case)* - which could be so intense that he would often radically alter earlier (already voiced) opinions, even turning some on their head: When *Der Fall Wagner*, with its devastating critique of *Parsifal* was already in print, Nietzsche received a letter from Vienna, written by a Wagner fan (Heinrich Hengster, July 28th, 1888), who could not understand how Nietzsche could value *Carmen* higher than *Parsifal*. Hengster wrote, "Is the music of the magical girl not sunnier, warmer, more precious and in every aspect more beautiful than the duet between Frasquita and Mercedes in *Carmen*? Be more generous, more generous than Siegfried was with the wanderer; the holy spear has been broken already, why would you want to humiliate the defeated? Let us, your followers, who not least through you have turned into followers of Wagner, hear for once that you found good and grandeur in *Parsifal*. Let us hear where he supported and enriched you." Upon receiving this letter, Nietzsche immediately sent an afterword for *Der Fall Wagner* to his publisher. In the afterword, *Parsifal*, even though it received a negative critique at the beginning of the book, is praised as the non plus ultra of seduction, "the music of Circe... His final opus is his greatest masterpiece. *Parsifal* will always keep his place in the art of seduction, as the plan of a genius of

seduction [...] I admire this work, I would have liked to have written it myself; since I did not write it, I understand it [...] Wagner was never as inspired as in the end. The *raffinement* of beauty and illness here goes that far that there is almost a shadow over Wagner's earlier art." Nietzsche valued the love of his fans in Vienna over any sort of critical coherence.

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