

# Stranger from Abroad: Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Friendship and Forgiveness

Daniel Maier-Katkin

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Two titans of twentieth-century thought: their lives, loves, ideas, and politics.

Shaking up the content and method by which generations of students had studied Western philosophy, Martin Heidegger sought to ennoble man's existence in relation to death. Yet in a time of crisis, he sought personal advancement, becoming the most prominent German intellectual to join the Nazis.

Hannah Arendt, his brilliant, beautiful student and young lover, sought to enable a decent society of human beings in relation to one other. She was courageous in the time of crisis. Years later, she was even able to meet Heidegger once again on common ground and to find in his past behavior an insight into Nazism that would influence her reflections on "the banality of evil"—a concept that remains bitterly controversial and profoundly influential to this day.

But how could Arendt have renewed her friendship with Heidegger? And how has this relationship affected her reputation as a cultural critic? In *Stranger from Abroad*, Daniel Maier-Katkin offers a compassionate portrait that provides much-needed insight into this relationship.

Maier-Katkin creates a detailed and riveting portrait of Arendt's rich intellectual and emotional life, shedding light on the unique bond she shared with her second husband, Heinrich Blücher, and on her friendships with Mary McCarthy, W. H. Auden, Karl Jaspers, and Randall Jarrell—all fascinating figures in their own right. An elegant, accessible introduction to Arendt's life and work, *Stranger from Abroad* makes a powerful and hopeful case for the lasting relevance of Arendt's thought.



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