Walter Benjamin  
(1892-1940)  
Jewish-German theorist, linked to the Frankfurt School, but much more optimistic than Adorno. Famously noted that in the age of mechanical reproduction, an artwork is no longer unique, can be viewed from anywhere, and so loses its 'aura' — however, Benjamin was not upset by this, and saw films and photography as potentially liberating, opening horizons and understandings. He dabbled in many things, a modern intellectual consumer.

Selected Works:  
Reflections (Schocken, 1986) Illuminations (Schocken, 1985)