

walter benjamin angel of history

Walter Benjamin Angel of History: Exploring the Iconic Image and Its Profound Meaning

walter benjamin angel of history is a phrase that immediately conjures a vivid and haunting image—one that has captivated philosophers, historians, and cultural critics for decades. This concept stems from Walter Benjamin's influential essay, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," where he introduces the metaphor of the "Angel of History." Far from a mere poetic flourish, this angel encapsulates a deeply reflective and critical perspective on history, progress, and the human condition.

In this article, we'll delve into the origins, meaning, and enduring significance of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History. Along the way, we'll explore its philosophical underpinnings, how it critiques traditional views of history, and why it remains relevant in contemporary discussions about memory, trauma, and societal progress.

The Origins of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History

To understand Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, it's essential to situate it within the context of his broader intellectual project. Benjamin, a German-Jewish philosopher and cultural critic active in the early 20th century, was deeply concerned with the way history is narrated and remembered. His essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," written in 1940 shortly before his untimely death, offers a critical counterpoint to the dominant narratives of historical progress.

The Historical Backdrop

Benjamin wrote during a period fraught with political upheaval, marked by the rise of Nazism, the devastation of World War II, and the collapse of traditional European orders. Against this backdrop, his

reflections on history were necessarily urgent and somber. The Angel of History metaphor emerges from his meditation on Paul Klee's painting "Angelus Novus," which he owned and described in his theses.

Paul Klee's "Angelus Novus" and Its Inspiration

Benjamin saw in Klee's painting a figure with eyes wide open, wings spread, and face turned towards the past. The angel seems propelled by a storm from paradise, unable to resist the force that drives it backward. This visual served as the foundation for Benjamin's profound metaphor: the angel looks at the wreckage of history, witnessing the continuous pileup of catastrophes, yet is powerless to intervene.

Decoding the Meaning of the Angel of History

The image of the Angel of History is a powerful critique of the conventional notion that history is a linear, progressive march toward improvement. Instead, Benjamin presents a vision of history as a series of disasters and ruptures, piling ruin upon ruin, with humanity often blind to the true cost of "progress."

The Storm That Propels the Angel

Benjamin famously writes that the angel is pushed forward by a storm called "progress." However, this progress is not the triumphant advance often celebrated by historians or politicians. Rather, it is a relentless force that drives the angel away from the past, even as it desperately wants to stay and make sense of the accumulated damage.

History as Catastrophe and Memory

One of the critical insights of the Angel of History is the tension between memory and oblivion. The angel's gaze is fixed on the past's catastrophes—wars, oppression, social injustices—that mainstream historical narratives might overlook or sanitize. Benjamin urges us to remember these ruptures honestly, to resist the temptation to view history as a smooth, inevitable path.

The Angel of History and the Critique of Progress

Walter Benjamin's metaphor challenges the Enlightenment ideal that human history is a story of continuous improvement. Instead, he asks us to reconsider what progress means in the face of suffering and destruction.

Modernity and Its Discontents

Benjamin's Angel of History can be seen as a response to modernity's promises and failures. While technological and social advancements have transformed societies, they have also unleashed unprecedented violence and alienation. The angel's sorrowful gaze reminds us that progress often comes at a grave human cost.

Lessons for Contemporary Society

In a world still grappling with wars, environmental crises, and social inequalities, Benjamin's Angel of History remains strikingly relevant. It invites us to critically assess narratives of development and to remember the victims of history whose stories might otherwise be forgotten.

Interpreting the Angel of History in Philosophy and Culture

Beyond its historical critique, the Angel of History has inspired diverse interpretations across philosophy, literature, and cultural studies.

Benjamin's Influence on Critical Theory

The Angel of History is central to Benjamin's contributions to critical theory, a field that questions dominant ideologies and power structures. His emphasis on memory, trauma, and the non-linear nature of history challenges us to rethink how knowledge and power intertwine.

The Angel as a Symbol in Art and Literature

Artists and writers have drawn upon Benjamin's metaphor to explore themes of loss, memory, and resistance. The angel's image evokes a poignant tension between helplessness and the desire for justice, making it a potent symbol in postmodern and postcolonial discourse.

Applying Walter Benjamin's Angel of History Today

Understanding the Angel of History can enrich our approach to education, activism, and cultural engagement.

Reconsidering History Education

Educators can incorporate Benjamin's insights to foster critical thinking about history. Instead of

presenting history as a straightforward narrative, teaching the complexities and contradictions—the “wreckage” Benjamin describes—helps students develop a nuanced understanding of the past.

Memory and Social Justice Movements

Activists often invoke the Angel of History’s focus on remembering forgotten or suppressed narratives. By acknowledging historical injustices, movements for racial, gender, and economic justice align with Benjamin’s call to confront the past honestly to build a more equitable future.

Navigating the Present with Historical Awareness

In everyday life, embracing the spirit of the Angel of History encourages mindfulness about the legacies of history in shaping current realities. Whether in discussions about migration, conflict, or cultural identity, this perspective promotes empathy and critical reflection.

Final Reflections on the Angel of History

Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History is more than a philosophical concept; it is a vivid image that challenges us to rethink how we understand time, memory, and progress. By recognizing the storm of “progress” as a force that propels us forward even as it leaves destruction behind, Benjamin invites a more ethical engagement with history—one that honors the past’s tragedies instead of glossing over them.

The enduring power of the Angel of History lies in its ability to provoke thought and inspire action. It reminds us that history is not just a record of what has been but a living dialogue between past and present, urging vigilance, compassion, and critical awareness in the way we move forward. Whether you are a student of philosophy, a history enthusiast, or simply curious about how we relate to our

collective past, Walter Benjamin's Angel of History offers a profound lens through which to view the complexities of human experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the Angel of History according to Walter Benjamin?

The Angel of History is a concept introduced by Walter Benjamin in his essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History." It represents a figure who looks back at the past and sees it as a single catastrophe piling wreckage upon wreckage, symbolizing the relentless accumulation of historical suffering and destruction.

What is the significance of the Angel of History in Walter Benjamin's philosophy?

The Angel of History symbolizes the way history is perceived as a continuous series of disasters and losses. Benjamin uses this figure to critique traditional historicism and to emphasize the need for a revolutionary break from the past rather than a mere chronological progression.

How does Walter Benjamin describe the Angel of History's perspective on time?

Benjamin describes the Angel of History as being propelled into the future by a storm (which he identifies as progress), while its face is turned backward, witnessing the past's catastrophes. This reflects a tension between the idea of progress and the reality of historical destruction.

What role does the concept of the Angel of History play in contemporary historical and cultural studies?

The Angel of History is widely used in contemporary thought to critique linear narratives of progress

and to highlight the importance of memory, trauma, and the unfinished nature of history. It encourages scholars to reconsider how history is told and to acknowledge the suffering often marginalized in dominant historical accounts.

Where does the image of the Angel of History originate in Walter Benjamin's work?

The image of the Angel of History originates from Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," written in 1940. It is inspired by a painting called "Angelus Novus" by Paul Klee, which Benjamin owned and used as a visual metaphor for his ideas about history and progress.

Additional Resources

Walter Benjamin Angel of History: Unpacking a Complex Metaphor

walter benjamin angel of history is a phrase that immediately evokes the profound and often unsettling reflections of the German-Jewish philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin. Central to his philosophical oeuvre, the "Angel of History" metaphor encapsulates Benjamin's meditation on history, progress, and catastrophe, particularly as articulated in his famed 1940 essay, "Theses on the Philosophy of History." This concept has resonated deeply within academic circles, cultural studies, and critical theory, inviting ongoing interpretation and debate. Understanding the layers behind Benjamin's Angel of History is essential for anyone engaging with 20th-century philosophy, historiography, or critical theory.

The Origins of the Angel of History Metaphor

Walter Benjamin's Angel of History is rooted in a vivid image inspired by Paul Klee's 1920 painting, "Angelus Novus." Benjamin described the angel as looking back at the past, witnessing an accumulation of wreckage and catastrophe. Instead of moving forward, the angel is propelled into the

future by a storm called “progress,” which Benjamin interprets with a skeptical eye.

This metaphor fundamentally challenges traditional notions of historical progress as a linear, inevitable improvement over time. Instead, Benjamin’s angel sees history as a series of disruptions, disasters, and unresolved tragedies, urging a reconsideration of what it means to “move forward.”

Historical Context and Philosophical Grounding

Benjamin wrote "Theses on the Philosophy of History" during a period of intense political upheaval and personal crisis—on the eve of World War II and amidst the rise of fascism in Europe. His reflections are shaped by Marxist theory, Jewish mysticism, and his critique of historicism—the idea that history unfolds according to universal laws.

The Angel of History stands as a counterpoint to historicism’s sanitized narratives. Benjamin’s critique centers on how traditional historiography tends to erase the suffering of marginalized groups and obscures the violence underpinning so-called progress. The angel’s gaze exposes the “wreckage” left behind by historical “advancements,” emphasizing rupture rather than continuity.

Deconstructing the Angel of History: Key Themes and Interpretations

The metaphor of the Angel of History is rich with thematic complexity, inviting multiple lines of analysis. Several core themes emerge prominently:

1. Catastrophe and Progress

Contrary to optimistic narratives, Benjamin’s angel perceives progress as a destructive force. The

“storm” of progress drives the angel forward, but his eyes remain fixed on the accumulating debris of history’s catastrophes. This inversion critiques Enlightenment and modernist ideals which equate technological advancement and political change with moral improvement.

This perspective aligns with later postmodern skepticism toward grand narratives. Benjamin’s insight prefigures contemporary concerns about the costs of progress, including environmental degradation, social inequality, and cultural erasure.

2. Memory and Historical Materialism

Benjamin’s Angel of History also raises questions about memory and the selective nature of historical remembrance. He advocates for a historical materialism that rescues forgotten or suppressed events from oblivion, thereby challenging dominant power structures that shape official history.

This aspect of his philosophy underscores the political potential of history: by remembering the past’s traumas and struggles, societies can resist repeating injustices and work toward emancipation.

3. The Dialectics of Time

Benjamin’s conception of time diverges sharply from chronological or linear models. The Angel of History inhabits a dialectical time, where past, present, and future collide. This “now-time” or “Jetztzeit” emphasizes the revolutionary potential inherent in moments of historical rupture.

This nonlinear temporality suggests that the past is not fixed but can be reactivated and reinterpreted to inspire change—a powerful tool for social critique and activism.

Implications and Influence of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History

The Angel of History metaphor has had a profound impact across disciplines, from philosophy and historiography to literature and art criticism. Its implications continue to reverberate in contemporary thought.

Influence on Critical Theory and Cultural Studies

Benjamin's critique of progress and historicism has deeply influenced the Frankfurt School and critical theory at large. Scholars like Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt expanded on his ideas, especially regarding modernity's paradoxes and the dangers of totalitarianism.

In cultural studies, the Angel of History encourages a critical engagement with cultural memory and trauma, inspiring works that interrogate colonial histories, genocide, and systemic oppression.

Relevance to Contemporary Debates on Progress and Memory

In today's politically charged environment, Walter Benjamin's Angel of History remains strikingly relevant. Debates on technological innovation, climate change, and social justice echo his warnings about uncritical faith in progress.

Moreover, movements to reclaim marginalized histories—such as indigenous rights campaigns and postcolonial critiques—embody Benjamin's call to confront the “wreckage” left by dominant historical narratives.

Comparing Benjamin's Angel of History with Other Historical Philosophies

To fully appreciate the uniqueness of the Angel of History, it is useful to contrast it with other conceptions of history and progress.

- **Hegelian Historicism:** Hegel viewed history as the unfolding of the World Spirit toward greater freedom and self-awareness. Progress was teleological and rational.
- **Marxist Historical Materialism:** Marx emphasized class struggle as the engine of historical change, ultimately leading to a communist society.
- **Benjamin's Critique:** While influenced by Marxism, Benjamin rejected deterministic interpretations and emphasized discontinuity, catastrophe, and the need to remember the oppressed.

Benjamin's Angel of History complicates these views by refusing to see history as a smooth, inevitable march toward improvement, instead revealing the dark undercurrents and unresolved conflicts beneath surface narratives.

Strengths and Limitations of the Angel of History

The metaphor's strengths lie in its evocative power and its capacity to inspire critical reflection on history's complexities. It challenges complacency and invites a more ethical approach to the past.

However, some critics argue that Benjamin's image risks fatalism—the idea that humanity is doomed to witness endless catastrophe without agency. Others suggest that the metaphor's abstractness can

obscure practical historical analysis.

Despite these debates, the Angel of History remains a vital intellectual tool for grappling with the paradoxes of history and memory.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Walter Benjamin's Angel of History

Walter Benjamin's Angel of History continues to provoke, challenge, and inspire. Its haunting image of an angel looking back at the ruins of the past while being driven forward by an uncontrollable storm encapsulates a profound skepticism toward conventional understandings of progress. This metaphor invites ongoing critical inquiry into how history is written, remembered, and mobilized.

In a world still grappling with the legacies of violence, injustice, and rapid change, Benjamin's Angel of History remains a powerful reminder of the need to confront history's wreckage honestly and thoughtfully. Its resonance across philosophy, cultural criticism, and political thought ensures that the Angel of History will remain a touchstone for future generations seeking to understand the complexities of history and human experience.

[Walter Benjamin Angel Of History](#)

walter benjamin angel of history: Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, Or the Transfiguration of the Revolutionary Into the Historian , 1996

walter benjamin angel of history: Behind the Angel of History Annie Bourneuf, 2022-09-24
This short book offers a dazzling new interpretation of Paul Klee's most famous work: his *Angelus Novus* (1920), which was purchased by Walter Benjamin and became the model for his Angel of History, a figure saturated with Jewish mysticism that he introduces in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. In 2014 the celebrated American artist R. H. Quaytman made a surprising discovery about Klee's work when she examined it at the Jewish Museum in Israel. She realized that Klee had carefully pasted the *Angelus* down over another image, a face, leaving just a finger's breadth of it showing. Through forensic science and lots of sleuthing it was determined that face belonged to Martin Luther. *Behind the Angel of History* tells the story of how Quaytman solved the mystery of who lurks behind Klee's angel. It then plunges into questions about why a face long hidden beneath

another picture might matter. The book travels through a tangle of loaded conversations among images—from Klee's *Angelus* to Benjamin's own drawing of a crucified angel, from Klee's *Angelus* to Quaytman's own layered panels meditating on its secret--

walter benjamin angel of history: Behind the Angel of History Annie Bourneuf, 2022-10-01 The story of artist R. H. Quaytman's discovery of an engraving hidden behind a famous artwork by Paul Klee. This book begins with artist R. H. Quaytman uncovering something startling about a picture by Paul Klee. Pasted beneath Klee's 1920 *Angelus Novus*—famous for its role in the writings of its first owner, Walter Benjamin—Quaytman found that Klee had interleaved a nineteenth-century engraving of Martin Luther, leaving just enough visible to provoke questions. *Behind the Angel of History* reveals why this hidden face matters, delving into the intertwined artistic, political, and theological issues consuming Germany in the wake of the Great War. With the *Angelus Novus*, Klee responded to a growing call for a new religious art. For Benjamin, Klee's *Angelus* became bound up with the prospect of meaningful dialogue among religions in Germany. Reflecting on Klee's, Benjamin's, and Quaytman's strategies of superimposing conflicting images, Annie Bourneuf reveals new dimensions of complexity in this iconic work and the writing it inspired.

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walter benjamin angel of history: Totaladler - Fragmentary remarks on Walter Benjamin's 'On the concept of history' Johannes Lenhard, 2012-05-15 Essay from the year 2012 in the subject Philosophy - Philosophy of the 20th century, grade: 2:1, London School of Economics, course: Modern Social Thought, language: English, abstract: Today, Benjamin's 'angel of history', his 'angelus novus' has to fight an even greater danger than the storm of progress that was characteristic for Benjamin's time. Today's force is more material, more powerful and perhaps even more catastrophic but just as total and real as was the storm blowing away the angel sixty years ago. The angel has finally found a counterpart that fights him, something that he can touch. But does this make it easier for the angel, the embodiment of history, "to stay, awaken the dead, make whole what has been smashed" (392) or are we still to await the coming of a messiah that can win over the antichrist (391)?

walter benjamin angel of history: *Walter Benjamin's Other History* Beatrice Hanssen, 1998-03-27 Long considered to be an impenetrable, hermetic treatise, Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* has rarely received the attention it deserves as a key text, central to a full understanding of his work. In this critically acclaimed study, distinguished Benjamin scholar Beatrice Hanssen unlocks the philosophical and ethical dimensions of his thought with great clarity and sophistication.

walter benjamin angel of history: *The Mental Life of the Architectural Historian* Gevork Hartoonian, 2014-08-11 Starting with the question concerning the discursive formation of architectural history, the chapters compiled in this book attempt to re-read the historiography of early modern architecture from the point of view of the theoretical work produced since the post-war era. Central to the objectives of the argument are the ways in which, firstly, architectural history differs from the traditions of art history, and, secondly, that the historical narrative works its autonomy through theoretical representation, the discursive flow of which is interrupted by the historian's urge to support arguments with references to buildings, texts, drawings, and historical events. The historians discussed in this volume are those regularly addressed by most critics revisiting modern architectural history. Individual chapters are dedicated to N. Pevsner, H. R. Hitchcock, and S. Giedion, an economy of selection that is formative for a critical understanding of the canon established by these historians. Themes such as periodization, autonomy, and time are discussed, and the coda of the final chapter expands on the scope of "critical historiography" popularised by Kenneth Frampton and Manfredo Tafuri.

walter benjamin angel of history: *Tony Kushner* James Fisher, 2006-04-21 Playwright Tony Kushner is a voice of intellectualism, neo-socialism, gay activism and political outrage in an era

when the political pendulum has swayed to the right. Through scalding humor, thought, and compassion, he explores political dynamics and the human condition in the modern era, shedding light on and giving hope for the direst of circumstances. His best known work, *Angels in America*, delves beneath the anti-gay rhetoric and political superficiality of the AIDS pandemic to true suffering and transformation. His political epic *Homebody/Kabul* engages the issue of terrorism and conflicting fundamental beliefs. In this book 11 scholars explore the works of Tony Kushner across his career. Several address *Angels*: one explores the presentation of homosexuality by Kushner compared to that of Tennessee Williams, who wrote in a less tolerant era; another places *Angels* in the contexts of Hegel's concept of freedom and the gay revolution; a third discusses the play in terms of queer theory and politics. *Homebody/Kabul* is examined in two essays, one analyzing media reaction, the other exploring cultural and economic differences, religious fundamentalism and the West's luxurious predominance in the world. Other studies address relationships in Kushner's works to William Inge's 1950 play *Come Back, Little Sheba*; the plays of experimentalist Adrienne Kennedy; and fascist creep in the era of playwrights W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, among other topics.

walter benjamin angel of history: Africa in Stereo Tsitsi Jaji, 2014 Stereomodernism and amplifying the Black Atlantic -- Sight reading: early Black South African transcriptions of freedom -- Négritude musicology: poetry, performance and statecraft in Senegal -- What women want: selling hi-fi in consumer magazines and film -- 'Soul to soul': echo-locating histories of slavery and freedom from Ghana -- Pirate's choice: hacking into (post-)pan-African futures -- Epilogue: Singing songs.

walter benjamin angel of history: Messiahs of 1933 Joel Schechter, 2008-05-07 A lively examination of Yiddish theatre during the Great Depression.

walter benjamin angel of history: Mythistory Joseph Mali, 2003-05 Ever since Herodotus declared in *Histories* that to preserve the memories of the great achievements of the Greeks and other nations he would count on their own stories, historians have debated whether and how they should deal with myth. Most have sided with Thucydides, who denounced myth as unscientific and banished it from historiography. In *Mythistory*, Joseph Mali revives this oldest controversy in historiography. Contesting the conventional opposition between myth and history, Mali advocates instead for a historiography that reconciles the two and recognizes the crucial role that myth plays in the construction of personal and communal identities. The task of historiography, he argues, is to illuminate, not eliminate, these fictions by showing how they have passed into and shaped historical reality. Drawing on the works of modern theorists and artists of myth such as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Joyce and Eliot, Mali redefines modern historiography and relates it to the older notion and tradition of mythistory. Tracing the origins and transformations of this historiographical tradition from the ancient world to the modern, Mali shows how Livy and Machiavelli sought to recover true history from uncertain myth-and how Vico and Michelet then reversed this pattern of inquiry, seeking instead to recover a deeper and truer myth from uncertain history. In the heart of *Mythistory*, Mali turns his attention to four thinkers who rediscovered myth in and for modern cultural history: Jacob Burckhardt, Aby Warburg, Ernst Kantorowicz, and Walter Benjamin. His elaboration of the different biographical and historiographical routes by which all four sought to account for the persistence and significance of myth in Western civilization opens up new perspectives for an alternative intellectual history of modernity-one that may better explain the proliferation of mythic imageries of redemption in our secular, all too secular, times.

walter benjamin angel of history: Hindutva and Violence Vinayak Chaturvedi, 2022-09-01 Examines the place of history in the political thought of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, one of the key architects of modern Hindu nationalism. *Hindutva and Violence* explores the place of history in the political thought of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966), the most controversial Indian political thinker of the twentieth century and a key architect of Hindu nationalism. Examining his central claim that Hindutva is not a word but a history, the book argues that, for Savarkar, this history was not a total history, a complete history, or a narrative history. Rather, its purpose was to trace key historical events to a powerful source-the font of motivation for chief actors of the past who had

turned to violence in a permanent war for Hindutva as the founding principle of a Hindu nation. At the center of Savarkar's writings are historical characters who not only participated in ethical warfare against invaders, imperialists, and conquerors in India, but also became Hindus in acts of violence. He argues that the discipline of history provides the only method for interpreting Hindutva. The book also shows how Savarkar developed his conceptualization of history as a way into the meaning of Hindutva. Savarkar wrote extensively, from analyses of the nineteenth century to studies of antiquity, to draw up his histories of Hindus. He also turned to a wide range of works, from the epic tradition to contemporary social theory and world history, as his way of explicating Hindutva and history. By examining Savarkar's key writings on history, historical methodology, and historiography, Vinayak Chaturvedi provides an interpretation of the philosophical underpinnings of Hindutva. Savarkar's interpretation of Hindutva, he demonstrates, requires above all grappling with his idea of history.

walter benjamin angel of history: Memory, Subjectivity and Independent Chinese Cinema Qi Wang, 2014-09-19 *Memory, Subjectivity and Independent Chinese Cinema* provides a historically informed examination of independent moving image works made between 1990 and 2010 in China. Showcasing an evolving personal mode of narrating memory, documenting reality, and inscribing subjectivity in over sixteen selected works that range from narrative film and documentary to experimental video and digital media (even including a multimedia avant-garde play), this book presents a provocative portrait of the independent filmmakers as a peculiarly pained yet active group of historical subjects of the transitional, post-socialist era. Through a connected investigation of cultural and cinematic concepts including historical consciousness, personal memory, narrative, performance, subjectivity, spatiality, and the body, Wang weaves a critical narrative of the formation of a unique post-socialist cultural consciousness that enables independent cinema and media to become a highly significant and effective conduit for historical thinking in contemporary China. Covering directors such as Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Jia Zhangke, Jiang Wen, Lou Ye, Meng Jinghui, Wang Bing, Wang Guangli, Duan Jinchuan, Cui Zi'en, Shi Tou, and Tang Danhong, this book is essential reading for all students and scholars in Chinese film.

walter benjamin angel of history: Shakespeare's Surrogates S. Loftis, 2015-12-11 *Shakespeare's Surrogates* contends that adapting Renaissance drama played a key role in the development of modern drama's major aesthetic movements. Loftis posits that playwrights' reactions to Shakespeare and his contemporaries worked to create their public personas, inform their theoretical writings, and influence the development of new genres.

walter benjamin angel of history: Violence and Grace Nichole E. Miller, 2014-11-30 In *Violence and Grace*, Nichole Miller establishes a conceptual link between early modern English drama and twentieth-century political theology, both of which emerge from the experience of political crisis. Even as philosophers from Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Walter Benjamin to Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil drew upon sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dramatic representations of the nation-state to analyze the political phenomena of late modernity, Miller contends that they effaced the gendered and sexual dimensions of power and exceptional life so crucial to these plays. Miller's analyses accordingly undertake to retrieve for political theology the relations between gender, sexuality, and the political aesthetics of violence on the early modern stage, addressing the plays of Marlowe, Middleton, and especially Shakespeare. In doing so, she compellingly expands our understanding of drama's continuing theoretical impact.

walter benjamin angel of history: Catalan Culture , 2018-03-28 1) The subject matter is topical: Catalonia's relationship with Spain is arguably the most important political issue within the peninsula today. 2) The coverage is diverse, adopting a multi-generic approach focusing on new and innovative cultural outputs, some of which have received limited critical attention to date. 3) The volume brings together the scholarship of leading UK and US Catalan specialists which is nicely contextualized by the thoroughgoing introduction.

walter benjamin angel of history: Benjamin's Arcades Peter Buse, 2006-09-19 'Benjamin's Arcades' is an innovative text for students and specialists on the intellectual and political context of

Walter Benjamin's unfinished masterpiece, 'The Arcades Project'. It includes a special 'convoluted index' to aid the reader in discovering recurrent themes and ideas, both in the book itself and Benjamin's methods.

walter benjamin angel of history: German-Jewish Thought and Its Afterlife Vivian Liska, 2016-12-19 In German-Jewish Thought and Its Afterlife, Vivian Liska innovatively focuses on the changing form, fate and function of messianism, law, exile, election, remembrance, and the transmission of tradition itself in three different temporal and intellectual frameworks: German-Jewish modernism, postmodernism, and the current period. Highlighting these elements of the Jewish tradition in the works of Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Paul Celan, Liska reflects on dialogues and conversations between them and on the reception of their work. She shows how this Jewish dimension of their writings is transformed, but remains significant in the theories of Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida and how it is appropriated, dismissed or denied by some of the most acclaimed thinkers at the turn of the twenty-first century such as Giorgio Agamben, Slavoj Žižek, and Alain Badiou.

walter benjamin angel of history: Think in Public Sharon Marcus, Caitlin Zaloom, 2019-06-25 Since 2012, Public Books has championed a new kind of community for intellectual engagement, discussion, and action. An online magazine that unites the best of the university with the openness of the internet, Public Books is where new ideas are debuted, old facts revived, and dangerous illusions dismantled. Here, young scholars present fresh thinking to audiences outside the academy, accomplished authors weigh in on timely issues, and a wide range of readers encounter the most vital academic insights and explore what they mean for the world at large. Think in Public: A Public Books Reader presents a selection of inspiring essays that exemplify the magazine's distinctive approach to public scholarship. Gathered here are Public Books contributions from today's leading thinkers, including Jill Lepore, Imani Perry, Kim Phillips-Fein, Salamishah Tillet, Jeremy Adelman, N. D. B. Connolly, Namwali Serpell, and Ursula K. Le Guin. The result is a guide to the most exciting contemporary ideas about literature, politics, economics, history, race, capitalism, gender, technology, and climate change by writers and researchers pushing public debate about these topics in new directions. Think in Public is a lodestone for a rising generation of public scholars and a testament to the power of knowledge.

walter benjamin angel of history: Troubling The Angels Patricia A Lather, Christine S Smithies, 2018-03-14 Educator Patti Lather and psychologist Chris Smithies observed and chronicled support groups for women diagnosed with HIV. Whether black, Latina, poor, or middle class, the women in these groups share the common bond of living with HIV/AIDS, and they describe how it affects their lives in terms full of practical reality and moving poignancy, as they fight the disease, accept, reflect, live and die with and in it.

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