

Dialectics of Redemption

**Anselm Kiefer's
The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory**

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Introduction

This paper deals with the 1989 installation *Der Engel der Geschichte: Mohn und Gedächtnis* (*The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*, pl. 1), of the West German 1945-born artist Anselm Kiefer.¹ This is a rather complicated installation, weighing a few tons, which includes many components; hence a coherent description is required. Its main structure is of an airplane, five meters long. It is made of a few parts combined together. The cage, the inner structure of the airplane, is made of wood and steel, while the exterior is made of layers of lead, making it incredibly heavy. In the actual structure of the airplane, there are small compartments filled with dry poppy seeds. Thirteen books are placed on the airplane in total, differing in length and width. Twelve of the books are placed on the two wings of the airplane, six on each wing, and the thirteenth book on the left horizontal stabilizer of the rear part of the airplane. The pages and the covers of the books are made of sheets of lead, making them very heavy as well. Between the leaves of the book some metal wires are being placed. Along with all these, a few dry poppy flowers with their stems still attached are placed on various locations on the wings and between the pages of the books.

In this paper I will discuss the manner in which *The Angel of History* deals with issues of the memory of the Shoah. Therefore the discussion will refer to some literary sources, especially of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. The critical theories of the philosophers of the Frankfurt School had an appeal to the young students of the 1968 protests. The neo-Marxism of some of the Frankfurt School philosophers posited the possibility of a better society without an overall class revolution, in an increasingly capitalist and alienated West Germany. The Frankfurt School philosophers were especially provocative, as some of them, particularly Adorno, were critical of the manner in which Germany had dealt with the troubling memories of the Shoah.² The late 1960's were also the formative years of Anselm Kiefer's art, and the influence of these philosophers is apparent.

¹ I will mostly refer to this installation as *The Angel of History*.

² Werner Becker, "Critical Theory: The Frankfurt School and its Influence on Culture and Politics", in *German Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1905-1985*, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied (Munich – London: Prestel-Verlag –Royal Academy of Arts, 1985), 92-96.

Another key issue in this paper, which is very connected to the previous one, is the perception of modernity. Anselm Kiefer poses some troubling questions about the fruits of modernity in light of the Second World War and the Shoah. He is rather skeptical about the potential of Enlightenment and offers different avenues for human redemption.

Anselm Kiefer's *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory* is not only a fascinating work of art, but also an outcome of a fascinating story. May-June 1920, a drawing by Paul Klee entitled *Angelus Novus* was exhibited in the large Klee exhibition in the Hans Goltz Gallery, Munich (ill. 1). In the summer of 1921, Walter Benjamin purchased *Angelus Novus* in Munich for one thousand marks. This drawing proved a catalyst in the emergence of Benjamin's philosophy, and an ongoing inspiration. It was hung in Benjamin's study in Berlin, and during the Nazi period – in his residence in Paris. When Benjamin fled Paris after the German invasion, he deposited the drawing with the writer Georges Bataille, who hid it in a suitcase in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. After the war, the drawing made its way to America, and subsequently to Frankfurt, where it was kept by Benjamin's colleague, the philosopher Theodor Adorno. Benjamin had willed this drawing to his dear friend, the Kabbalah scholar Gershom Scholem. After the war, Scholem obtained this drawing from Frankfurt. It was hung in the living room of his house in Abarbanel Street in Rehavia, Jerusalem, until his death in 1989.³ Scholem willed the drawing, in turn, to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Ever since, it has been considered one of the masterpieces of the museum's collection.

During the same year, 1989, the artist Anselm Kiefer completed his installation *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*. It was first exhibited in the exhibition *Der Engel der Geschichte* in Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne, November 17th 1989 – January 13th 1990.⁴ The following year the installation was purchased for the Israel Museum by the German friends of the museum. This work by Kiefer is also considered one of the museum's treasures. These two works of art, which interface thematically, were juxtaposed physically for the first and last time on a special occasion. The fortieth anniversary of the Israel Museum featured the major exhibition *The Beauty of Sanctity: Masterworks from Every Era* (March 29th 2005 – July 20th

³ Scholem 1976: 209-210; Scholem 1981: 100.

⁴ Andreas Huyssen, "Kiefer in Berlin", *October* 62 (1992): 93-94; Gerhard Richter, "History's Flight, Anselm Kiefer's Angels", *Connecticut Review* 24/1 (2002): 118.

2005); in it *Angelus Novus* and *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory* were placed side by side.

In order to understand the deepest meanings of *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*, this paper will juxtapose it with creations of some of the greatest writers and artists of the twentieth century: Paul Klee, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Gershom Scholem, Paul Celan, Josef Beuys and Anselm Kiefer.

Heaven versus Earth

It seems that Kiefer's *Angel of History* is not an angel at all, but rather a heavy airplane cast in lead. Kiefer creates a certain collision between the intellectual level of the piece – its title, and the physical image. Kiefer's angel has descended from its heavenly sphere to the earthly domain, and its spiritual essence is manifested in the toxic lead. There is a strong contradiction between the natural poppies placed on the wings of the airplane and between the pages of the lead books, and the metallic industrial airplane. Kiefer critically comments on the modernist approach of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which praises technology as the path to secular apotheosis and salvation for the human being. Kiefer also creates a certain irony: the bringer of the message of God, the angel, has transformed itself into the bringer of menace and destruction. Kiefer's airplane cannot also be a means of travel and tourism and, hence, for interpersonal communication, because the use of the morbid lead alludes more to decay and death.⁵

It seems that Kiefer perceives industrialism as a blight. Industrialism and technology, which were regarded as holding great promise for humanity and as manifestations of Enlightenment, actually undermined the ideas of the Enlightenment by diminishing and suppressing the human body, i.e. by causing its death.⁶ For the same reason Walter Benjamin claimed that “There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism”.⁷

Kiefer shares this stance with Adorno and Horkheimer, who in their 1944 book *Dialektik der Aufklärung (Dialectic of Enlightenment)* depict the Enlightenment as a means of suppressing humanity. They maintain that the bourgeois attachment to rationality led to overly structured societies. The Western addiction to technology created a conformist society whose members' individuality is suppressed; the monopolies' control over these technologies does not allow any kind of ingenuity:

⁵ Matthew Biro, *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 226; Matthew Biro, “Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the Memory of the Holocaust”, *Yale Journal of Criticism* 16/1 (2003): 136.

⁶ John C. Gilmour, *Fire on the Earth: Anselm Kiefer and the Postmodern World* (Philadelphia – Temple University Press, 1990), 53, 146, 154.

⁷ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. H. Zohn (London: J. Cape, 1970), 258.

Under monopoly all mass culture is identical, and the lines of its artificial framework begin to show through. The people at the top are no longer so interested in concealing monopoly: as its violence becomes more open, so its power grows. Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. They call themselves industries; and when their directors' incomes are published, any doubt about the social utility of the finished products is removed.⁸

According to Adorno and Horkheimer the conformity of Occidental society, regulated by strict rationality, suppressed the individual nature of man. Hence a paradox emerges: the manipulative use of Enlightenment ideas by monopolies actually undermines Enlightenment.

Delivery technologies played a crucial role in WWII. Trains were used to transfer millions of Jews to concentration camps and death camps. Airplanes had a significant role in combat. Actually, one of the most critical military innovations of the war was the inclusion of jet aircraft and bombers as an important part of combat. The success of the German army in the war's first three years owed much to its Luftwaffe. The extensive use of aerial bombers during the Blitzkrieg in 1940 spearheaded a swift German conquest of the Netherlands, Belgium and France. German bombers also attacked Britain, causing a near-collapse of southern England. Likewise, Germany's downfall and unconditional surrender was a direct result of the Allied forces' relentless bombing of German cities, Dresden being the leading example.⁹ Kiefer's use of the image of the airplane reflects understanding of this vehicle's profound impact on twentieth-century history. The airplane is a symbol of bursting violence and mass devastation. But as both sides, the Axis and the Allies, used airplanes during the war, the context of the destructive airplane remains unclear: is it a "German" airplane or is it "American"?¹⁰ The ambiguity is crucial: this airplane does not serve as a means of defiance against a certain side, but rather as a means to diagnose the problematic nature of technology.

One level of interpretation is that the title *The Angel of History* has to do with irony: the transformation of spiritual religiosity into technological industrialism in an age of secularization, which led to death and destruction rather than salvation. But

⁸ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, New York: Seabury Press, 1972: 121.

⁹ Ralph Sanders, "Three-Dimensional Warfare: World War II", in *Technology in Western Civilization*, ed. Melvin Kranzberg and Carroll W. Pursell, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 565-566.

¹⁰ Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, 211-214.

there is another important level. The verbal elements in Kiefer's art are fundamental, as the titles of the pieces reveal additional levels of meaning.¹¹ In fact, the artwork in total is a product of juxtaposition between the image and the title, that is, juxtaposition between different cognitive capacities – between sight and touch on the one hand, hearing and speaking on the other. And in *The Angel of History* the new verbal level of meaning is linked to Paul Klee and Walter Benjamin.

Paul Klee dealt intensively with flight in his paintings and drawings. Rosenthal claims that the imagery of flight in Klee's art is self-sabotaging: on the one hand it allegedly enables flight possible by the inclusion of wings, but on the other the images make clear that man is not able to reach the heavens. In the caricaturist etching of *Der Held mit dem Flügel* (*The Hero with the Wing*, ill. 2), Klee added only one wing to the hero. His heroism brings him halfway closer to the gods; therefore he has a wing. But the hero is still human, and far from being a god: his single wing is useless without another one, as he is unable to use it for any kind of flight. Rosenthal compares this image to the myth of Icarus, who tried to fly high in the sky but failed miserably and crashed to the ground.¹² *The Hero with the Wing* is rather pathetic, as he has a broken arm and a wooden leg. It seems that like Icarus, he too tried flying, but failed. Klee comments on this etching:

The man born, only with one wing, in contrast with divine creatures, makes incessant efforts to fly. In doing so, he breaks his arms and legs, but persists under the banner of his idea. The contrast between the solemn stature-like attitude and his already ruined state needed especially to be captured, as an emblem of the tragicomic.¹³

There is a certain mockery of the desire to fly, but at the same time, acknowledgment that this desire is persistent. Therefore, according to Klee the aim of art is to ascend high and reside among the gods, but as it is a human act, it is bound to fail. This ambivalent attitude – the desire for ascension but the recognition of its impossibility – is very similar to Kiefer's approach, though Kiefer is less definite about the impossibility of ascension.

¹¹ Charles W. Haxthausen, "The World, the Book, and Anselm Kiefer", *Burlington Magazine* 133/1065 (1991): 848.

¹² Mark Rosenthal, "The Myth of Flight in the Art of Paul Klee", *Arts Magazine* 55/1 (1980): 92, 94.

¹³ Robert Kudielka, "Paul Klee: The Nature of Creation", in *Paul Klee: The Nature of Creation* (Exhibition Catalogue), ed. Robert Kudielka (London: Hayward Gallery, 2002), 45.

Klee continued to deal with the theme of flight during the 1910's. The pieces during the second half of this decade were influenced by Klee's participation in WWI as a photographer of airplane crashes.¹⁴ In his early letters during the war he seems indifferent and even sarcastic. But as the war progressed, especially after the death of some of his friends and his colleague Franz Marc at the front, Klee grew increasingly pessimistic. He became critical towards the war, and towards Marc's romantic enthusiasm about participating in it, which led to his death. His images of flight change accordingly, becoming less comic and more tragic.¹⁵ Klee was much influenced by the pictures of airplane crashes he had taken during the war, which are actually images of death. Klee called himself "an abstract with memory",¹⁶ meaning that his use of abstraction was not aimed at reaching the purest, most substantial forms and colors; for Klee, abstraction was a means to crystallize meaning, and allowed him to include only the symbolic images of his mind.

During the last two years of the war and afterwards, Klee started to create parallelism between birds and airplanes. The birds in his drawings became increasingly geometric, and they almost always flew in the direction of the ground.¹⁷ In his 1918 drawing *Vogel-Flugzeuge (Bird-Airplanes)*, ill. 3), Klee created hybrid images of birds and airplanes, of nature and machine. The birds have stylized legs, and a bird head with grotesque eyes and beak. But the body is completely geometric, made of several squares. The dots at the edges of the squares resemble nails that attach pieces of metal together. The wings of the birds are actually wings of airplanes. The bird-airplanes are about to crash onto the ground, as they are descending at a 90-degree angle.

Klee's bird-airplane equation is parallel to Kiefer's angel-airplane equation. Moreover, angels and birds are quite similar in how they are perceived in different cultures. In monotheist religions, the angels bring the message of God; in many shamanistic cultures, it is the bird that does so. The Maya believed that shamans were able to transform themselves into eagles in order to bring messages to humans from the gods; the Buriats of Siberia believed that birds were divine messengers dispatched by the gods to help heal humans. Birds acquired their status in these civilizations and

¹⁴ Otto Carl Werckmeister, *The Making of Paul Klee's Career* (Chicago – London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 82.

¹⁵ Marcel Franciscono, *Paul Klee: His Work and Thought* (Chicago – London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 206-207, 210-211.

¹⁶ Werckmeister, *Paul Klee's Career*, 144.

¹⁷ Ibid., 101, 104, 112-113.

other shamanistic cultures because, much like angels in Occidental religions, they operated in the three spheres of existence: heaven, earth and hell.¹⁸

During 1920 Paul Klee made a drawing entitled *Angelus Novus* that depicts a rather disturbing angel. The angel has beastly claws and teeth, a very short and narrow geometrically structured body, and a huge head, with scrolls-like hair. His most disturbing feature is his eyes: they look forwards, but their lack of focus in a specific direction gives them an iconic character, similar to the gaze of saints in Christian icons. With this unfocused gaze, Klee implied that the angel is present in a different sphere than the human sphere, just as the iconic gaze is a representational means to connote the veil that separates the earth from the heavens.¹⁹

In *Angelus Novus* Klee continues to deal with hybridism, as noted regarding *Bird-Airplanes*. It is a hybrid between a bird-angel and a human, its wings looking more like human arms. In his drawings of angels, Klee gives the celestial beings human-like characteristics through the title, as in the cases of *Angel Still Angry*, *Forgetful Angel* or *Angel Applicant*.²⁰ Moreover, it is a hybrid between an organic life form and a machine. The strict geometric lines, drawn in a childlike manner, give the angel a rather austere, mechanical look. *Angelus Novus* is very similar in its structure to Klee's bird-airplanes; it is indeed a hybrid between an angel and an airplane. Therefore, there is a striking resemblance between Kiefer's *Angel of History* and Klee's *Angelus Novus*, as they both share the angel-airplane ambivalence. Adorno observes of this drawing by Klee:

During the First World War or shortly after, Klee drew a cartoon of Kaiser Wilhelm as an inhuman iron eater. Later, in 1920, these became – the development can be shown quite clearly – the *Angelus Novus*, the machine angel, who, though he no longer bears any emblem of the caricature or commitment, flies far and beyond. The machine angel's enigmatic eyes face the looker to try to decide whether he is announcing the culmination of disaster or salvation hidden with it. But, as Walter Benjamin, who owned the drawing, said: "He is the angel who does not give but takes".²¹

¹⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 98-99; Joan Halifax, *Shaman: The Wounded Healer* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 23-24; Adolf E. Jensen, *Myth and Cult among Primitive Peoples*, trans. M.T. Choldin and W. Weissleder (Chicago – London: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 137-138.

¹⁹ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago – London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 90.

²⁰ Franciscano, *Paul Klee*, 316.

²¹ Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment", in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Elike Gebhardt, trans. F. McDonagh (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), 318.

Some issues raised by Adorno, especially Benjamin's perception of *Angelus Novus*, will be discussed later. It is evident that Klee made this drawing as a reaction to WWI, first of all as a caricature of its promoter, Kaiser Wilhelm II. To express a social stance rather than political satire, Klee changed the Kaiser into an angel. From a machine man it became a machine angel. Winter, who notes the rise of spirituality during WWI, asserts that angelic revelations were then common among soldiers at the front.²² But the revelation of *Angelus Novus* is rather disturbing, as its mechanical appearance brings no comfort. Transforming the body of the angel into a machine does not allude to the constructivist approach, which views machines as holding the greatest promise for the future; it alludes to the lack of spirituality and the lack of a possibility of redemption. Although most of the lines and forms (especially the wings and the lower part of the body) in *Angelus Novus* direct the motion of the angel upwards (unlike the bird-airplanes which crash to the ground), the angel seems rather static. Klee's drawing is a variant – or, moreover, a sort of caricature – of Leonardo's desire to enable man to fly by inventing flying machines. According to Klee, a man in flight is a machine, or a menacing airplane which is, according to his personal experience, destined to crash.²³

Walter Benjamin, who owned *Angelus Novus*, became obsessed with it, referring to it directly and indirectly in many of his writings and letters. Benjamin finished writing “Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte” (“Theses on the Philosophy of History”) in January 1940, nine months before his suicide on the Franco-Spanish border. In this essay, the rationalist and materialist Benjamin uses religious and almost mystical terms when discussing his philosophy of history. In paragraph IX Benjamin refers to the Klee drawing:

A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to

²² Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 67-69.

²³ Werckmeister, *Paul Klee's Career*, 240-241.

which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.²⁴

Benjamin's reference to the angel is not one of ecstatic religious experience but rather of destruction. Benjamin's Angel of History looks upon a catastrophe and is unable to assist. Industrialism, war and conflict are piling wreckage at his feet, and the great storm of progress that promotes industrialism, and thus war, is blowing him back to paradise. Thus, both Kiefer and Benjamin mourn the suppression of spiritual religiosity in the name of progress and Enlightenment, and conclude that progress has actually undermined Enlightenment.

Gershom Scholem, one of Benjamin's dearest friends, who also owned Klee's *Angelus Novus* from after the war until 1989, wrote a poem about the drawing. He dedicated this poem to Benjamin, and gave it to his friend for his 29th birthday.²⁵ On a letter from September 19th 1933, 10 years after Scholem immigration to Palestine, he sent this poem once again to Benjamin:

Greetings from Angelus

I hang nobly on the wall
Looking at nobody at all
I have been from heaven sent.
A man of angelic descent.

The human within me is good
And does not interest me.
I stand in the care of the highest
And do not need a face.

From where I come, what world
Is measured, deep, and clear.
What keeps me together in one piece
Is a wonder, it would appear.

In my heart stands the town
Whence God has sent me.
The angel who bears this seal

²⁴ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 259-260.

²⁵ Scholem, *Story of a Friendship*, 102.

Does not fall under its spell.

My wing is ready to beat,
I am all for turning back.
For, even staying in timeless time
Would not grant me much fortune.

My eye is darkest black and full,
My gaze is never blank.
I know what I am to announce
And many other things.

I am an unsymbolic thing.
My meaning is what I am.
You turn the magic ring in vain.
I have no sense.²⁶

We may learn a few things from this poem. First, Scholem noticed as well the man-angel hybridism of *Angelus Novus*. But most importantly, Scholem, like Benjamin, does not perceive the angel as symbolic: it is a real force, sent by God to deliver a message to humanity. The poem proved an inspiration to Benjamin, as he requested Scholem twice to send it to him again.²⁷ Benjamin included its fifth stanza as the motto to the famous thesis IX quoted earlier. In this stanza the angel, who doubts the acceptance of his message, has a rather melancholic tone and is ready to go back to heaven as he has no luck on earth.

Richter points out the significance of images in the theories of both Benjamin and Kiefer, as both of them interpret history through Klee's image of *Angelus Novus* rather than on coherent written history.²⁸ As noted, Kiefer's *The Angel of History* seems to contain a contradiction between image (seen, touched) and text (heard, said), which parallels a contradiction between a dangerous airplane and a benevolent angel. Whereas an angel is a spiritual being, the airplane is very physical in its massiveness; whereas an angel is lofty, Kiefer's installation is enormously heavy, precluding any kind of flight. The airplane seems to be in a degenerate state, as if it was found in

²⁶ Gershom Gerhard Scholem (ed.), *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932-1940*, trans. G. Smith and A. Lefevere (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 79-80.

²⁷ Ibid., 72, 77.

²⁸ Richter, "History's Flight", 128.

some archeological excavation: what was intended to fly in the sky is actually connected to earth. Furthermore, the inclusion of a single book on the left horizontal stabilizer gives a feel of unstableness to the airplane, hence not allowing successful flight. But what seems to be contradictory is actually ambiguous.

Airplanes are ambiguous creations themselves: they transport people from one land to another via the sky, therefore operating both on the ground and on the air. The same is true of angels: they are celestial spiritual beings, yet usually imagined as quite corporeal. This is especially true in art but also in literary sources. The Bible and the *Zohar* (*Book of Splendor*), among many others, allude to the corporality of angels. In *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that while angels do not change in substance, they do change in place.²⁹ The Hebrew word *mala'kh* means both angel and messenger. In other words, angels, like airplanes, operate both in the earthly and the heavenly domain as they bring God's message to humans. As written in Jacob's dream, Genesis 28:12, angels connect heaven and earth: "And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it".

The ambivalence of the nature of angels and airplanes is strongly present in Kiefer's *Angel of History*. This is a complete airplane, supposedly with the ability to fly, but it is grounded on earth. The same motif of grounding the angel appears in Kiefer's monumental painting *Die Ordnung der Engel* (*The Order of the Angels*, ill. 4). In a vast, disturbing, dark landscape, nine numbered rocks are located on the ground. Nine lines stretch from the sky to these rocks. The title is written on the right-hand side of the painting, while on the left side Aeropagite Dionysius is written. The Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about the hierarchy of angels. This hierarchy consists of nine different levels according to proximity to God, equivalent to the nine rocks. Kiefer changed Areopagite to Aeropagite because the latter includes the word *aero*, meaning air. Kiefer thereby alludes to the loftiness of angels, which is contradicted by the image of the angels as earthly, grounded rocks. But the contradiction is ambiguous, as the lines stretching from the heavens to the angels-rocks constitute the heaven-earth axis. Moreover, next to the angels on the ground there is a snake, which is an allusion to chthonic earthly powers. Rosenthal suggests

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101.

that like angels, snakes are also “in between” creatures, operating between man and God.³⁰ Therefore, the heaven-earth motif is fundamental to Kiefer’s art.³¹

The angelic ability to fly is linked in Kiefer’s art to the artistic process. The angel and the palette are interconnected, as is evident in Kiefer’s 1975 painting *Des Malers Schutzengel* (*The Painter’s Guardian Angel*, ill. 5). In this work, a large angel is holding a palette. The angel who is protecting the palette is the protector of the arts. It is reminiscent of images such as Jan Gossaert’s *St. Luke Painting the Virgin* (ill. 6). According to the legend, St. Luke was unable to complete the portrait of the Madonna so he was assisted by an angel. The legend shows an interesting juxtaposition between visual image and mental image. St. Luke was able to see the Madonna in his mind but was unable to transmit his mental image into a visual image; to do so he needed the divine help of the angel. In *The Painter’s Guardian Angel* Kiefer likewise states that he is in need of divine inspiration to make art, and also that he has this inspiration at hand. He is able to make heavenly-inspired art and ascend to the sky. On the other hand, both the angel and the palette are on earth, and connected to earth: the palette held by the angel is transparent and the landscape behind it can be seen, and the angel seems to be part of the glacier behind it, as they are painted with similar colors. Kiefer hereby implies that a spiritual essence is present in nature and on earth.³² Therefore, heaven and earth are connected: they are both spiritual, and the angel and the artist are operating on both planes. Like St. Luke, the artist is the connecting pole of heaven and earth.

A common image in Kiefer’s paintings is the winged palette. It seems to be an iconic, abbreviated image of the angel holding a palette. The palette alludes to the artistic process, and thus is an alternative self-portrait.³³ Kiefer’s sculpture *Palette mit Flügel* (*Palette with Wings*, ill. 7) includes a lead palette with two wings attached that is placed on a pole. The non-figurative sculpture looks highly corporeal, as its components allude to the human body. Despite its wings, there is a lack of illusion of movement in the sculpture: the palette is fixed to the pole that prevents any ascent,

³⁰ Mark Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer* (Chicago – Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art – Art Institute of Chicago, 1987), 137.

³¹ Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, 77, 87, 100; Germano Celant, “The Destiny of Art: Anselm Kiefer”, in *Anselm Kiefer*, ed. Massimo Cacciari and Germano Celant (Milano: Charta, 1997), 14-15.

³² Rudi Fuchs and Jürgen Harten (ed.), *Anselm Kiefer* (Exhibition Catalogue, Mannheim : Mannheimer Kunstverein, 1980), 70.

³³ Lisa Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art after Auschwitz* (Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 64.

and the heavy lead that it is made of prevents flight.³⁴ The artist wishes to fly to the heavens, but he cannot. *Palette with Wings* seems to be a memorial to artistic ability, and a symbol of artistic impotence.

The artist and the angel are analogous, as they both try to maintain the heaven-and-earth axis. The artist-angel transforms the invisible into visible, and vice versa: in a process of transubstantiation, he turns matter into spirit.³⁵ Both the artist and the angel work on the horizon line – on the virtual meeting ground of these two planes of existence; so does Icarus. In Kiefer's painting *Ikarus – Märkischer Sand* (*Icarus – March Sand*, ill. 8), a winged palette is laid on the dense, claustrophobic ground. The palette is the body of Icarus, the naïve boy who wanted to fly in the sky. Ignoring the advice of his father Daedalus, Icarus' wax wings melted as he approached the sun, and he died as he fell back to earth. In Kiefer's painting, Icarus – just like Klee's *The Hero with the Wing* – has only one wing, which does not offer a real possibility of ascendance.

The winged palette of Icarus is actually art's wish, and Kiefer's own wish, to soar high into the heavens. Kiefer's art seeks to ascend from its physical materiality to a metaphysical sphere, thus subliming the earthly to the heavenly. Such a project is risky, as flying too high may bring the wrath of both the heavens and the earth. That is why in *Icarus – March Sand* the horizon line is burning with flames of fire. The line which juxtaposes heaven and earth is impenetrable, and the artist is unable to ascend. Just as *Palette with Wings* is fixed to the ground, so Icarus is prevented from ascending. But unlike in the myth of Icarus, who could fly up to a certain point, Kiefer's Icarus is prevented from any kind of flight. The fire does not originate from the heaven but from the earth, and does not allow the artist to leave earthly materiality.

The source of these dangerous flames is earth itself, the land on which Icarus crashed. Märkischer Sand, or Märkischer Heide, is an area in the province of Brandenburg. It is a fertile area that moved from German to Soviet control after WWI. During WWII the Germans strongly desired to reclaim this area, making Märkischer Heide into a nationalist symbol. Indeed, the saying "Märkischer Heide, Märkischer Sand" was common among German soldiers during their battles in the east. This area is being visually referred in the painting by the sand mounted on the canvas, making

³⁴ Rafael López-Pedraza, *Anselm Kiefer: After the Catastrophe* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 85.

³⁵ Celant, "The Destiny of Art", 14-16.

Märkischer Sand actually present rather than being symbolically represented. It is the German soil contaminated by the history of WWII which is preventing the ascension. Therefore, the sun setting on the background of *Icarus – March Sand* is the sun setting over art's wish for spiritual salvation, which earthly matters, problematic history and troubling memories will not allow.³⁶

³⁶ Andreas Huyssen, "Anselm Kiefer: The Terror of History, the Temptation of Myth", *October* 48 (1989): 44-45; Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 35, 80; Mark C. Taylor, *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 295-296.

Memory versus Repression

With images of a grounded, winged palette symbolizing the inability to create, it may appear that Kiefer presents himself, the German artist, as a victim of WWII. This is naturally a problematic stance considering that he is a 1945-born Christian artist whose life was not directly affected by the war.³⁷ I believe that Kiefer is much less self-involved; the inclusion of the palette is his self-reflection about the possibility of making art after the Shoah and WWII. Therefore, Kiefer visually asks whether “To write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric”, as Adorno put it.³⁸ Later in his life, Adorno withdrew from this statement; but this original statement, as misunderstood as it might be, is a crucial one, because it presents the dilemma of the post-Auschwitz arts, and asks how should the arts be presented and perceived after the Shoah.³⁹ This troubling dictum of Adorno, as it is commonly perceived, presents the Shoah as a singular historical event, creating a schism in linear time between pre-Auschwitz and post-Auschwitz.

The airplane’s inability to fly in *The Angel of History* is because of the books on its wings. The enormously heavy lead books ground the angel-airplane on earth and prevent its flight. Books are commonly perceived as symbols of knowledge and Enlightenment. They store stories and facts, and the holder of books holds those in his mind as well. In a portrait of the famous writer and critic, Eduard Manet places Émile Zola in his study, along with his attributes (ill. 9). Among the many pamphlets in the

³⁷ Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer*, 64-65, 70.

³⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (London: N. Spearman, 1967), 34.

³⁹ Rothberg shows that the Auschwitz dictum of Adorno is often misquoted and misunderstood. He proves that in its original context, the end of the essay “Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft” (“Cultural Criticism and Society”), Auschwitz is the apotheosis in modern history of barbarism, the ultimate barbaric outcome of Enlightenment. In that context, the reference to Auschwitz is part of Adorno’s cultural criticism; Auschwitz serves more as a time reference than as an isolated phenomenon. According to Adorno, “To write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric” because civilization as a whole is barbaric. Writing a poem after Auschwitz means creating art in the same barbaric environment which gave rise to Auschwitz. Michael Rothberg, “After Adorno: Culture in the Wake of Catastrophe”, *New German Critique* 72 (1997): 46-49, 57-58. In his later book, *Negative Dialektik (Negative Dialectics)*, Adorno withdrew from his original dictum, making it even more troubling and mournful: “Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living”. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 362-363. But, as mentioned, the isolated perception of the dictum as programmatic, “wrong” as it might be, is no less important than its original context.

back, a light-blue pamphlet entitled *Manet*, which serves also as the artist's signature, stands out.⁴⁰ Zola is holding in his hand an art book, distinguishable by its grey plates. It is probably a volume of Charles Blanc's *Histoires des Peintres*, a contemporary study used by Manet on various occasions.⁴¹ There are many other books on Zola's desk; these objects are a tribute from an artist to a good friend and defender.

But more importantly, these books and pamphlets tell the story of a modern person with highly sophisticated and up-to-date taste who possesses a great deal of knowledge. It is interesting to note that, though Zola owns many books and is even holding one, he is not engaged in reading in this portrait; instead he stares contemplatively into midair. He looks rather distant, removed from the observer, and totally immersed in his own thoughts.⁴² It is the knowledge in his mind, which he acquired from his vast collection of books, that enabled him to be a rational, thinking and creative person on the one hand, and on the other – to soar high with these thoughts, virtually detach himself from his physical reality. This is the enlightening power imbedded in books which allowed him to look up, from their pages, towards the horizon. But as noted earlier, unlike the books of Zola the books made by Kiefer prevent any spiritual or physical ascension. These are the books that contain the history of Germany, and it is the German history of WWII and the Shoah that grounds the angel-airplane.

Kiefer has dealt constantly with the image of the book since the late 1960's, and made quite a few books. The books in *The Angel of History* are actual, complete sculptural units in their own right. But, though they are actual that can be opened, they remain mysterious. They are placed closed on the airplane's wings, and the historical knowledge they contain is concealed behind the thick layers of the heavy metal.⁴³ Hence, the image of the book in Kiefer's art is quite ironic, as it does not symbolize

⁴⁰ The pamphlet was issued for Manet's 1867 solo exhibition, and included an article about Manet written by Zola. Zola's contemporary taste is manifested through a reproduction of Manet's painting *Olympia*, which Zola vigorously defended against contemporary critics. We may also find in the portrait of Zola a Japanese screen and Japanese print, alluding to his interest in Japan and contemporary taste, shared by many Parisian bourgeoisie in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Zola's strong interest in art is evidenced by a reproduction of the painting *The Triumph of Bacchus* by an artist whom Manet admired, Diego Velasquez, at the back. Françoise Cachin and Charles S. Moffett (ed.), *Manet: 1832-1883* (Exhibition Catalogue, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1983), 186-187, 280, 282.

⁴¹ Theodore Reff, "Manet's *Portrait of Emil Zola*", *Burlington Magazine* 117 (1975): 36.

⁴² Cachin and Moffett (ed.), *Manet*, 285.

⁴³ Götz Adriani, "Every Present Has Its Past", in *The Books of Anselm Kiefer 1969-1990*, ed. Götz Adriani, trans. B. Mayor (New York: George Braziller, 1991), 11; Armin Zweite, *Anselm Kiefer: The High Priestess* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 69.

knowledge or Enlightenment but instead functions as independent visual images of fragmented memory and history.⁴⁴

Unlike the German invention of the printed book, Kiefer's books are unique because each book the artist makes is different from the others. Kiefer's books are not mass-produced culture but, rather, unique images. Unlike most books, Kiefer's contain hardly any text. Most of them include images and objects such as photographs that are being reworked by the artist, pieces of hair and dried peas. These do not illustrate the book but rather function as metaphors.⁴⁵ But, unlike most of his lead books, the thirteen books of *The Angel of History* are totally devoid of images and words (pl. 2). These history books remain silent, neither illustrating nor symbolizing the atrocities of the past. In a way, this silent emptiness is very loud: it articulates what cannot be said, and speaks of the unspeakable. This vacuum in the books is the vacuum left after WWII and the Shoah, the absence of the murdered. Kiefer, being unable to poetically symbolize Auschwitz, presents instead the absent dead.

But in a way, the pages of the books seem like abstract paintings. The bright reflections of light on the lead create visual effects of different hues and colors. On some of the pages white color was applied, making a contrast between the white and the dark grey of the lead. This might be a reference to the abstract art of the 1960s and 1970s. The American Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism had profound impact on West German art till the beginning of the 1980s. The West German *Informel* was to a certain degree a local reaction to the international abstraction.⁴⁶ On the esoteric level, German abstract art, devoid of figures, was a mean for avoiding dealing with the figures of the ancestors and the dead.

Kiefer is making homage to the German *Informel*, but much like Klee, he too is an abstract with memory. Kiefer conceals some lead pages behind this white color, making the "text" of the book hidden. Richter connects Kiefer's method of concealment of layers to the layers of myth and history that await exposure.⁴⁷ Moreover, a fluid was introduced on some of the pages, subjecting the lead sheets to

⁴⁴ Haxthausen, "The World", 847; Daglind Sonolet, "Reflections on the Work of Anselm Kiefer", *Cultural Values* 3/1 (1999): 45.

⁴⁵ Adriani, "Every Present", 10-12; Zdenek Felix, "The Readability of the World", in *The Books of Anselm Kiefer 1969-1990*, ed. Götz Adriani, trans. B. Mayor (New York: George Braziller, 1991): 34.

⁴⁶ Mark Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture", in *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments* (Exhibition Catalogue), ed. Mark Rosenthal (Houston – London: The Menil Collection – Tate Modern), 90, 95.

⁴⁷ Richter, "History's Flight", 117.

chemical reactions that cause yellowish corrosion to appear. The artist is a sort of iconoclast of his own piece, as he causes it to dissolve. The corrosion makes the vacuum image of the sheets even more troubling, as it seems that the book consumes itself and is being dissolved from within: eaten by the horrors it cannot contain.

Generally speaking, the mainstream modernist approach to history has to do with linearity and progress: the human condition is in a state of evolution leading to a better place. The German idealist philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel perceived history as coherent and maintained that each new idea and action is a result of the former, a progression from the former state. This rationality of history and progress of time are the truest testament to God's essence imbedded in His creation:

That the history of the world, with all its changing scenes which it annals present, is this process of development and realization of Spirit – this is the true Theodicy, the justification of God in history. Only this incite can reconcile Spirit with the history of the world – that what has happened, and happening every day, is not only not “without God”, but essentially His work.⁴⁸

Where Hegel sees linearity, Benjamin sees cyclicity; where Hegel sees progression, Benjamin sees a halt; where Hegel sees coherency, Benjamin sees fragments; where Hegel sees documents of reason, Benjamin sees also documents of barbarism. According to Benjamin, history is not a process of progress and advancement but rather one of destruction and the accumulation of industrial wreckage. Moreover, it is not coherent or necessarily linear; “Where we perceive a chain of events, he [the Angel of History] sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet”. Past and present are catastrophic, but at the same time, salvation is not a matter of the future but of the present. Benjamin's perception of salvation and of Messianic times is not of an apocalyptic future, far from human grasp and earthly physics.⁴⁹ Salvation is earthly and humanly attainable, and possible in the present, as stated in paragraph XVIII of “Theses on the Philosophy of History”: “The present, which, as a model of Messianic time, comprises the entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgment, coincides exactly with the stature which the history of mankind has in the universe”.⁵⁰ In the present, Benjamin does not see progress but rather a cessation. The present is at a standstill, waiting for salvation

⁴⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 23.

⁴⁹ Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity* (Cambridge – London: MIT Press, 1999), 101-102.

⁵⁰ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 265.

that may occur at any moment.⁵¹ Benjamin also poses Enlightenment as the contradiction of the sought-after human salvation. He claims through the example of Jewish law that “enlightened” law aims at suppressing the human desire for spiritual redemption, but fails at this:

The Torah and the prayers instruct them in remembrance, however. This stripped the future of its magic, to which all those succumb which turn to the soothsayers for Enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future turned into homogeneous, empty time. For every second of time was the strait gate through which Messiah might enter.⁵²

Benjamin concludes his *Theses* with these sentences, a sort of commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:2: “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night”. Redemption might happen any moment; but just as salvation is not a supernatural phenomenon occurring outside of physical time, it is not the act of God or a superhuman Messiah. The Angel of History stands helpless in the face of destruction and cannot assist: human redemption will be attained by humans and not by God, as He can no longer help.

Benjamin reveals the spiritual concepts that lie behind materialist history. He blames German historicism for creating an artificial narrative unity. The role of the materialistic historian is to save the suppressed, undesirable figures and images from oblivion. Benjamin called for a revision in historical writing, and for a non-Hegelian, dialectical, cultural history. This revised cultural history would deal with the neglected barbaric aspects of society, and would incorporate both the civilized and the barbaric documents. Only a true understanding of the past with all its layers and different aspects would enable effective coping with the present.

Going back to the past also means revealing the archaic origins of the culture of divine revelation. Hence reliable materialist history that saves the suppressed from amnesia, and brings it back to the historical consciousness, also brings salvation.⁵³ Within the illusional coherent timeline, Benjamin offers a sudden human leap out of

⁵¹ Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 48-49.

⁵² Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 266.

⁵³ Robert Alter, *Necessary Angels: Tradition and Modernity in Kafka, Benjamin, and Scholem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 99-100; Howard Caygill, “Walter Benjamin’s Concept of Cultural History”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 73-74, 90-93.

historical linearity into a new reality.⁵⁴ Klee's angel also proved a catalyst for Benjamin's philosophy of time and history in his somewhat esoteric 1933 essay "Agesilaus Santander" (second version quoted):

He [the angel] looks him steadily in the eye, for to a long time, and then retreats – in a series of spasms, but inexorably. Why? To draw him after himself on the road to the future along which he came and which he knows so well ... This is why he has nothing new to hope for on any road other than the road home, when he takes a new person with him.⁵⁵

Here Benjamin breaks the linearity of time: the angel, later known as the Angel of History, is coming from the future to the past, and returns not to the past but rather to the future. This theme is also present in *Theses*, where Benjamin writes that "His face is turned toward the past"⁵⁶ and that "The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned".⁵⁷ It seems there is a clash between humanly structured language and human time perception on the one hand, and the true reality on the other. The time of the future is the reality of redemption, towards which the Angel of History is trying to lead. The goal of man is to reach this realm of future, which is the angel's past. It must be stressed that this is not a paradox but rather a strategy: redemption is found in the archaic origins. For that reason Benjamin quotes Karl Kraus's poem *Der Sterbende Mensch* (*The Dying Man*) as a motto to thesis XIV, putting in God's mouth the words "origin is the goal".⁵⁸ In *Theses*, the angel is forced to return back to the future by the great storm of progress; he is unable to assist mankind, still living in the past, and cannot lead them to salvation. The storm of progress is not only that of technology but also the illusional perception of a coherent linear timeline, which leaves no room for the sudden redemptive leap out of it.⁵⁹

Kiefer's time perception is cyclical rather than linear as well. The ambiguity of his art is partially due to the incoherency of the perception of time and the

⁵⁴ Stéphane Mosès, *Walter Benjamin and the Spirit of Modernity* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2003), 18.

⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, trans. R. Livingston and others, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 715.

⁵⁶ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 259.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁵⁹ A similar approach towards the sudden Messianic leap out of historical linearity is manifested in Franz Rosenzweig's *Der Stern der Erlösung* (*The Star of Redemption*). Mosès, *Walter Benjamin*, 56-59.

uncertainty of history. In Kiefer's art, modernist coherent history is replaced by myths and science is replaced by religion, making his novel art regressive in its ideals.⁶⁰

Pierre Nora maintained that the rapid changes of modern times led to amnesia. The byproduct of the construction of narratives was leaving out all that was undesirable or unneeded. These forgotten or suppressed memories were left in the cracks between the great historical narratives, in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.⁶¹ Kiefer seeks to retrieve to consciousness certain suppressed memories, mainly that of the Shoah. He says his mission is the recovery of memory: "I need to know where I came out of. There was a tension between the immense things that happened and the immense forgetfulness. I think it was my duty to show what is and what isn't".⁶²

While nobody can claim that the Shoah was forgotten in Germany, some claim that the forms of its remembering are inadequate. Margarete Mischerlich maintains that until the late 1970's, the Germans were unable to seriously mourn WWII and the Shoah and preferred forgetting it or suppressing it.⁶³ Adorno discerned a sort of ignorance among the German public that enabled the forgery of WWII and Shoah memory. Adorno posed the question "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" and replied himself: for the Germans it meant a superficial understanding of the past, a lack of desire to deal with troublesome questions, and a desire for instant comfort.⁶⁴ According to Adorno, "To write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric", because he perceived the arts of his time, as a reflection of German society as a whole, being disconnected from the society's own memories and past deeds, hence perpetuating the barbarism of the suppressed Nazi past. In *Ästhetische Theorie* (*Aesthetic Theory*) and in the essay "Engagement" ("Commitment"), Adorno condemned as barbaric and cynical the artistic styles that were not committed to political ideology and the treatment of social problems, because they were continuing the barbarism of Auschwitz.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, 149-150, 192; Gilmour, *Fire on the Earth*, 55; Huyssen, "Kiefer in Berlin", 88-89; Richter, "History's Flight", 116-117; Sonolet, "Reflections on the Work", 44.

⁶¹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*", *Representations* 26 (1993): 15-16.

⁶² Steven Henry Madoff, "Anselm Kiefer: A Call to Memory", *Art News* 86/8 (1987): 127.

⁶³ Margarete Mischerlich, "The Ability of the Germans to Mourn – Illusion or Hope?" in *The Germans 1945-1990*, ed. Moshe Zimmerman and Oded Heilbronner, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998), 442-443.

⁶⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" in *Bitburg in Memorial and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman, trans. T. Bahti and G. Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 126-127.

⁶⁵ Adorno, "Commitment", 317-318; Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. C. Lenhardt (London – Boston – Melbourne – Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul,

Adorno stated that “after Auschwitz there is no word tinged from on high, not even a theological one, that has any right to exist unless it underwent a transformation”.⁶⁶ That is, Auschwitz created a schism in time and all philosophical and ethical ideas must be revised accordingly. Santner continues with the notions of Adorno by maintaining that postmodernism is also post-Shoah: living in contemporary times, one has to deal not only with the positive outcomes of modernism but also with the outcomes of Auschwitz. Living without this “post” retrospect means being cut off from one’s own memories and background. The inability to mourn one’s memories is a sort of self-inflicted violence, or in the case of collective amnesia, a socially inflicted violence.⁶⁷ These writers basically contest the notion of year zero – the German self-delusional assumption that a complete new chapter in history began in 1945 after the collapse of National Socialism. They rightly assume that postwar German history refers, whether directly or indirectly, to prewar and wartime Germany.

This paper does not aim at theoretically examine German memory but deals with it in the specific context of the 1980’s *Historikerstreit* (*Historians’ Debate*). That was a debate between 1986 and 1987 in Western Germany between right wing and left wings historians, the later being represented mainly by Jürgen Habermas. In 1986 and 1987, this debate was held in West Germany between right-wing and left-wing historians, the latter represented mainly by Jürgen Habermas. On the Right, historians such as Klaus Hildebrand, Michael Stürmer, Andreas Hillgruber and Ernst Nolte tried to present the Shoah and WWII as part of a coherent German history and thus to normalize them. These historians conducted their historical research from a German standpoint, stressing the suffering of the Germans during WWII.⁶⁸

Habermas accused the right-wing historians of reediting German history to fit Western German politics, and claimed that this had become the basis of the official West German apologetic self-image.⁶⁹ In response to Ernst Nolte’s article “Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will” (“The Past That Does Not Want To Go

1984), 2, 5. Interestingly, as quoted in the first chapter, Adorno concluded *Commitment* with a review of Klee’s *Angelus Novus* and Benjamin’s interpretation of it, as an example for socially committed art that is able to be more than mere political art.

⁶⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 367.

⁶⁷ Eric L. Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* (Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 9-13.

⁶⁸ John Torpey, “Introduction: Habermas and the Historians”, *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 7-9.

⁶⁹ Biro, “Representation and Event”, 125; Huyssen, “Anselm Kiefer”, 27; Torpey, “Habermas and the Historians”, 6, 12.

Away”), published on June 6, 1986, in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Habermas published a piece in *Die Zeit* on July 11, 1986, entitled “Eine Art Schadensabwicklung: Apologetischen Tendenzen in der deutschen Zeitgeschichtsschreibung” (“A Kind of Settlement of Damages: The Apologetic Tendencies in German History Writing”). In it he expressed outrage against Nolte’s relativism in comparing the atrocities of National Socialism with those of the Soviet Union, asserting that “The magnitude of Auschwitz shrinks to the format of technical innovation and is explained on the basis of the ‘Asiatic’ threat from an enemy that still stands at our door”.⁷⁰ Habermas claimed that the “apologetic tendencies” of the right-wing historians for the German ancestors, the stress put on the suffering of the Germans during the war, and the belittling of the Shoah’s singularity, weakened German accountability:

What is today being lamented as a “loss of history” is not just an aspect of deliberately repressing and ignoring; it is not only an aspect of being overly focused on an encumbered history that seems to have come to a standstill ... But this evidence seems to reveal one thing: that we have not gambled away the opportunity that the moral catastrophe could also mean for us.⁷¹

The *Historians’ Debate* was by no means limited to academia. As most people involved were public personalities, the debate became public and was conducted in influential newspapers. Moreover, it was a professional mirror image of a debate that the whole German society conducted within itself.⁷² *Historikerstreit* may be a very good example of historical uncertainty for Kiefer, as two different camps, motivated by different ideals and political agendas, interpreted differently the same historically certain Shoah.

So far I have dealt only with half the title of Kiefer’s installation. But the title *Der Engel der Geschichte: Mohn und Gedächtnis*, has two parts. The inability to face the consequences of the past is actually amnesia. Memory is mentioned in the title of Kiefer’s installation and amnesia is implicit in the form of poppies: poppy flowers between the pages of the books and poppy seeds in small compartments within the structure of the airplane. Poppies are used to make various sorts of depressant

⁷⁰ Jürgen Habermas, “A Kind of Settlement of Damages: The Apologetic Tendencies in German History Writing”, in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler: Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. J. Knowlton and T. Cates (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994), 41.

⁷¹ Ibid., 43.

⁷² Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 53; Torpey, “Habermas and the Historians”, 11.

narcotics and drugs such as morphine, codeine, opium and heroin. The effects of depressant drugs are often of decrease in vigilance, clouding of consciousness and time perception and suppression of sensory operations, especially sight.⁷³ Depressant drugs are often used to ease physical pain, but also to ease mental pain. People use drugs such as heroin in order to forget or escape from reality: they cloud one's consciousness, and thus repressing troubling thoughts, memories and experiences. By suppressing the true reality, they create a virtual illusional reality, where these menacing thoughts, memories and experiences no longer exist.

Mohn und Gedächtnis (*Poppy and Memory*) is the name of Paul Celan's second book of poems, published in 1952. In this book Celan deals with memories of the Shoah, with his time spent in a Nazi labor camp and with the death of his family. But at the same time he deals with forgetting, with the inability to remember and with the need to protect consciousness from troubling memories.⁷⁴ The opposing themes are in the book's title: memory on the one hand, poppy on the other. Celan himself explained that in his poetry, "poppy" implies forgetfulness.⁷⁵ In Celan's poetry, oblivion is the other side of remembrance, as poppies are the counterpart to memories.

In the poem "Corona", while gazing sensually upon his lover, Celan states that "We love one another like poppies and memories".⁷⁶ It is rather strange that the sensual embrace of a lover brings either memories or forgetfulness; the implication is that Celan is unable to confront the present but deals obsessively with the past. Burnside suggests that a main motif in Celan's *Poppy and Memory* is twofold senselessness: meaningless and bodily numbness. In "Corona" the present is meaningless and the writer is unable to feel his lover, as he is too preoccupied with the past. The past is present through memory: the traumas of the Shoah, or through poppy: oblivion, blackness, the inability to access memories that are crucial to one's identity.⁷⁷

⁷³ Hans Jürgen Eysenck, "Personality and Drug Effects", in *Experiments with Drugs: Studies in the Relation between Personality, Learning Theory and Drug Action*, ed. Hans Jürgen Eysenck (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963), 19-20.

⁷⁴ Bruce Lauder, "Oblivion and Memory in Paul Celan Poetry", in *History and Memory: Suffering and Art*, ed. Harold Schweizer (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1998), 70-71, 75-76.

⁷⁵ Sheridan Burnside, "Senselessness in Paul Celan's *Mohn und Gedächtnis*", *German Life and Letters* 59/1 (2006): 141.

⁷⁶ Paul Celan, *Paul Celan: Selections*, ed. Pierre Joris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 44.

⁷⁷ Burnside, "Senselessness in Paul Celan", 143-144.

Adorno's criticism of the post-Auschwitz arts as barbaric is based on the conclusion that most art forms, while dealing with suffering, do so in a cynical manner and in ignorance of the memories attached to that suffering. He cites Arnold's Schönberg's *The Survivor of Warsaw* as an example of good art that treats repressed memories directly and thus is melancholic rather than cynical in dealing with suffering. Schönberg's compositions thereby "prevent people from repressing from memory what they at all costs want to repress".⁷⁸ In a sense, the opposite of Schönberg is Celan: whereas the former screams, the latter is silent. Adorno asserts that unlike hermetic silence, which aims to create art detached from reality concerned with itself alone, Celan's hermetic silence speaks loudly of the unspeakable:

His [Celan's] poetry is permeated by a sense of shame stemming from the fact that art is unable either to experience or to sublimate suffering. Celan's poems articulate unspeakable horror by being silent, thus turning their truth content into a negative quality. They emulate a language that lies below the helpless prattle of human being – even below the level of organic life as such. It is the language of dead matter, of stones and stars. In doing away with the last vestiges of organic life, Celan brings to completion Baudelaire's task, which according to Benjamin was to write poetry without an aura. Radical in his approach, Celan uses an infinite amount of discretion, which is what makes him so powerful as a poet. The language of the lifeless is the only form of comfort in a world where death has lost all meaning.⁷⁹

Adorno sensed a certain silent melancholy in Celan's poetry that stems from his inability to reconstruct horrifying memories, since too many poppies – too much repression, are present; according to Freud, repression is a protective mechanism for the psyche from memories it cannot handle. The outcome of the inability to reconstruct and deal with memories is loud silence. Celan's silence recalls that of Kiefer's empty books. Those empty books are symbols of the inability to deal with horrible memories. Kiefer's iconoclastic actions point to the blurring of memories by repression. The memory-repression dialectic is evident as *The Angel of History* screams and is silent at the same time. The airplane stands heavily still, unable to move or to speak; but its bursting violent scream is manifested in its form and size

The juxtaposition of poppies, silence, melancholy and death is manifested in the only written words on Kiefer's airplane. On the bottom of the airplane's nose are the Polish words "CICHO JAK MAKIEM ZASIAŁ". This is a common Polish idiom

⁷⁸ Adorno, "Commitment", 312.

⁷⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 444.

that literally translates as “Silence is as if somebody has sown a poppy”; it means “to be very silent”. The saying, then, creates the same parallelism as Celan between silence and poppies. In variants, this idiom may also mean “to be as silent as one sleeps” or “to be as silent as one dreams”. These allude to the already discussed connection between poppies and depressant drugs, which cloud one’s consciousness. In another variant, the idiom may be interpreted as “to be dead-silent”; although it does not refer to physical death, in the context of the airplane it does. In connection to Celan’s poppies and post-Shoah silence, and in the context of Kiefer’s treatment of postwar memory, it is clear that the silence is of the dead and the murdered. Moreover, these are not only the suppressed dead who are silent, but also the suppressing living. The silence of the poppies also refers to the survivors of the Shoah and of the war, who similarly to Celan cannot articulate their pain and trauma. Again, in the face of the unspeakable, only silence remains.

Poppy flowers are indeed strongly connected to death and mourning. Mourning over dead soldiers during WWI in Britain was symbolized by wearing a red poppy on the dash one’s clothes [unclear]. A popular Polish song, “Czerwone Maki na Monte Cassino” (“Red Poppies at Monte Cassino”), tells of the famous Battle of Monte Cassino in which the Allies’ victory over the Germans, seizing Rome, was guaranteed by the participation of the 2nd Polish Corps under the command of General Anders. About a thousand Polish soldiers died in the fighting. The song tells of the red poppies of Monte Cassino which are nourished by the blood of the dead. The Hebrew song “Yesh Prachim” (“There Are Flowers”), by Natan Yonatan, contains the mournful verse “Did you see such ruby/ That screamed to the distant places/ A bloody field was there earlier/ And now it’s a field of poppies”. The parallelism between the red poppy and the redness of man’s blood is probably what leads to associating poppies with death. This motif originates in the myth of Adonis. The hunter-prince Adonis, lover of the goddess Aphrodite, was killed by a wild boar sent by the gods. Out of his blood that trickled into the earth, red poppies grew. In a grotesque similarity, the modern visitor to Auschwitz finds a large field in the area of the death camp where poppies grow on the burial site.

Through Paul Celan it is made clear that the memory and the forgetfulness that Kiefer is dealing with are of the Shoah. Actually Kiefer deals quite extensively with Celan in his art, and one of his greatest inspirations is Celan’s well-known “Todesfuge” (“Death Fugue”). Kiefer made various paintings entitled *Margareta* and

Shulamite. They are allusions to the Golden hair of Margareta – the German, and the ashen hair of Shulamite – the Jew, described as opposites in Celan’s “Death Fugue”. In other works Kiefer used either yellow straw or dark hair to represent the German or the Jew. These paintings and the direct influence of “Death Fugue” have already been studied thoroughly by various scholars.⁸⁰

Melancholy is one of the most prominent motifs by which Benjamin investigates modernity and history.⁸¹ In “Agesilaus Santander” he states himself that he “was born under the sign of Saturn”.⁸² Kiefer’s dealing with the past involves a mournful, melancholic tone, as implied by the choice of material.⁸³ The airplane and the books are made of sheets of lead, and lead is associated with melancholy and Saturn. The ancient Greeks diagnosed melancholia as a lack of equilibrium in the body’s fluids. Medieval astrology identified Saturn as the planet which governs melancholics. The melancholic was described as depressive, apathetic, numb and even suicidal.⁸⁴

The best known image of melancholy is Albrecht Dürer’s celebrated *Melencolia I* (ill. 10). In this engraving the artist expressed his depression over his failure to combine personal creativity and science. He shows the conflict between melancholic genius and melancholic depressiveness. The genius of the melancholic has brought him to the height of human capabilities, and his sadness is caused by his inability to go even higher.⁸⁵ The main figure sits in a characteristic posture of melancholy, with the head leaning on the palm of the hand. But more importantly, this figure is a female angel. She is probably a personification of *Geometria* (*Geometry*), as the liberal arts were usually depicted as female figures or as winged putti.⁸⁶

Günter Grass has shown that the image of *Melencolia I* is so powerful in Western imagery that it not only serves as a model for representing melancholy but

⁸⁰ Biro, “Representation and Event”, 128; Celan, *Selections*, 47-48; Donald B. Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980’s* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 110; Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 95-99.

⁸¹ Max Pensky, *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), especially 165-166, 217-218.

⁸² Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 715.

⁸³ Huyssen, “Anselm Kiefer”, 39-40; López-Pedraza, *Anselm Kiefer*, 85-86; Zweite, *Anselm Kiefer*, 91-92.

⁸⁴ Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1979), 9-17, 127, 209; Wolf Lepenies, *Melancholy and Society*, trans. J. Gaines and D. Jones (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 158-161, 165-168.

⁸⁵ Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 286-288, 323, 334-335, 343-345, 349.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 308-309.

also as a means to interpret melancholy.⁸⁷ Hence, the melancholic angel-airplane of Kiefer is an updated image of Dürer's melancholic angel. Kiefer's allusion to Dürer is a way for Kiefer to deal with representational "Germanness" (an issue that will be addressed in the coming chapter). In 1991 Kiefer created *Melancholia* (ill. 11). It is a lead airplane, very similar to *The Angel of History*, hence showing the parallelism between Dürer's melancholic angel and Kiefer's image of an airplane. On the left wing of Kiefer's *Melancholia*, a polyhedron is placed, which is a three dimensional variant of the polyhedron placed near the angel in Dürer's *Melencolia I*.⁸⁸ Inside this melancholic box, earth taken from the artist's studio is placed. It is a reference to contaminated German soil, which appeared also on the canvas of *Icarus – March Sand*. It signifies historical baggage, the ground upon which people were burned and underneath which were buried. By placing the dirt upon the airplane, Kiefer is switching the positions of heaven and earth, as earth is not only conceptually, but also physically preventing ascension. Dürer's angel is melancholic about his inability to incorporate science – signified among other things by the polyhedron; Kiefer is melancholic about the inability to incorporate the substance of the polyhedron – European soil – into coherent history and memory.

To sum up Kiefer's treatment of memory in *The Angel of History*, it is worth noting the year of its completion: 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall. With the reunification of West Germany and East Germany, two different historical and political narratives met. The two countries, differing in types of regime, interpreted German history differently. The fall of the Berlin Wall gave rise to a new historical debate about WWII and the Shoah. Although Kiefer dealt with German memory long before the reunification, and although I do not believe Kiefer's installation deals directly with the reunification, *The Angel of History* of 1989 may symbolize an embarkation on a new chapter of the German past, which cannot be totally repressed as it cannot be totally remembered.

⁸⁷ Günter Grass, "On Stasis in Progress: Variations on Albrecht Dürer's Engraving *Melencolia I*", in *Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy: The Graphic Work of a Renaissance Artist*, ed. Giulia Bartrum (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially 69-71.

⁸⁸ Richter, "History's Flight", 121.

Construction versus Destruction

With all that said, we cannot ignore the fact that unlike harmless winged palettes or angels, *The Angel of History* is an airplane. And as noted earlier, it has destructive potential. So it must be asked again – is it an angel, or an airplane? Is it constructive or destructive? Is it the solution or the problem itself? The answer is that it is both. As mentioned, ambivalence is the keynote in Kiefer's art. It is a strategic stance on his part to make his art dialectic – as reality is.

The 1974 painting *Nero Malt* (*Nero Paints*, ill. 12) The 1974 painting *Nero Malt* (*Nero Paints*, ill. 12) has a similar composition to *Icarus – March Sand*. A palette is placed against scorched, dark, dense, claustrophobic ground, with fire burning on the horizon line. Four brushes emerge from the palette, but they also function as torches: these brushes-torches set alight a church, some houses and the trees that are located on the horizon line. Thus, while the palette in *Icarus – March Sand* was unable to fly because of the fire, in *Nero Paints* it is the palette itself that sets the fire. In other words, the dead palette in one painting is the cause of death in the other; hence the artist is both the victim and the victimizer.

In destructive images such as *Nero Paints*, Kiefer shows the influence of Romanticism and, one might even claim, of a certain “Germanness” in how such matters as mythical destructions are represented. Kiefer investigates the fascination with power, and the beauty of destructive forces. Kuspit maintains that a main element of Kiefer's art is “archeologism”. He claims that, unlike modern art which looks to the future, “archeologism” is a strategy that enables an understanding of the present via the past. In a similar method to psychoanalysis, the “archeologist”-artist digs beneath the present surface in order to understand suppressed and unconscious motivations of contemporary society. In the allusion to Dürer's *Melencolia I*, for instance, Kiefer deals with physical and mental images of the past in order to investigate the present.⁸⁹ Caspar David Friedrich envisioned nature as a formidable force that man could not cope with. Nature has a destructive potential that can bring man to his knees; yet, at the same time, the powerful nature in Friedrich's paintings is

⁸⁹ Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*, 531-532; Richter, “History's Flight”, 117-118.

beautiful and appealing. Like Friedrich's sublime nature, the apocalyptic fire in *Nero Paints* is also beautiful, its bright colors mesmerizing the viewer with awe.⁹⁰

In *Nero Paints*, Kiefer plays the role of the Roman dictator Nero. Kiefer also makes a small joke – more at the expense of himself as a leading artist than at the expense of Nero, as the self-deluded Nero thought himself to be a great actor and a promoter of the arts. Thus, as (according to the myth) Nero set Rome on fire while playing the fiddle, Kiefer burns Germany while playing with his oil brushes. Kiefer, however, does not have any issues with Nero but rather with a more contemporary dictator who set Europe on fire– Adolf Hitler, who had artistic illusions about being a painter. Therefore, images such as *Nero Paints*, as well as his important *Besetzungen* (*Occupations*) series earlier in his career, brought many critics to the ridiculous conclusion that Kiefer is a neo-Nazi.⁹¹ But Kiefer asserts that this is not a matter of identification but rather of role playing: “I do not identify with Nero or Hitler, but I have to reenact what they did just a little bit in order to understand the madness. This is why I make these attempts to become a fascist”.⁹²

Kiefer, thus, seeks to investigate the sources of evil, because in order to control something and prevent it one must first understand it. Kiefer insists on presenting the atrocities of National Socialism so as to dig deep into the wounds of the nation. He consciously uses defiled images so as to prevent the suppression of the background of their making.⁹³ This method was adopted simultaneously by other West German artists, most notably Georg Baselitz. Baselitz included in his paintings fascist symbols and, through various reactionary images of heroism and death such as in the *Helden* (*Heroes*) series, dealt with anti-heroism, dead fathers and the aftermath of WWII. Baselitz's return to figuration, from the international *Informel* abstraction, aimed at investigating these images of the past.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Siegfried Gohr, “The Difficulties of German Painting with its own Traditions”, in *Expressions: New Art from Germany*, ed. Jack Cowart (Munich: Prestel-Verlag – The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1983), 37; Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*, 18-19, 110-112.

⁹¹ Bazon Brock, “Diving Out One Evil with Another: Prescription of Symptoms as Therapy”, *German Art from Beckmann to Richter: Images of a Divided Country*, ed. Eckhart Gillen (Cologne: Dumont – Yale University Press, 1997), 332-333; Madoff, “Anselm Kiefer”, 125-126; Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 79.

⁹² Ibid., 17.

⁹³ Huyssen, “Anselm Kiefer”, 34.

⁹⁴ Mark Rosenthal, “Joseph Beuys”, 96; Poul Erik Tøjner, “Georg Baselitz. Painter”, in *Baselitz. Painter* (Exhibition Catalogue), ed. Helle Crenzien and Detlev Gretenkort (Copenhagen: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 40-41.

But that is not enough to resolve this problematic issue. In *Nero Paints* the aggressor is not just Nero/Hitler but also the artist himself. The aggression is better manifested in books which Kiefer made during 1970. In allusion to the 1938 burning of the books in Bebelplatz in Berlin, he scorched several of his paintings, cut them and bound them into eight books. In doing so, Kiefer reenacted the deeds of the iconoclastic Nazis, making the painted fire real.⁹⁵ This method of rendering the image aggressive is best manifested in *The Angel of History*, where Kiefer made a destructive airplane. This is not a mediated image of an airplane but rather an actual airplane, supposedly with a potential to kill. Kiefer, as artist, is making tools for destruction.⁹⁶

Here, once again, Walter Benjamin sheds light. In comparison to the previously discussed *Theses*, in his earlier essay “Karl Kraus” Benjamin takes a different approach towards destructive work. In this essay, Benjamin claims that destruction is essential for human life, as history confronts it with technology. Destructive work is actually a revolutionary purification through which the undesirable is removed.⁹⁷ On that note, he addresses the Angel of History:

One must have followed Adolf Loos in his struggle with the dragon “ornament”, heard the stellar Esperanto of Scheerbart’s creations, or seen Klee’s *New Angel*, who preferred to free men by taking from them, rather than make them happy by giving to them, to understand a humanity that proves itself by destruction.⁹⁸

The duality of creation and destruction is inherent in Benjamin’s Angel of History. On the one hand Benjamin mourns destruction, as the Angel of History “would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed”;⁹⁹ on the other Benjamin perceives destruction as a crucial phenomenon, and quotes Adolf Loos’s *Trotzdem* in writing: “If human work consists of destruction, it is truly human, natural, noble work”.¹⁰⁰ And as noted, Adorno affirmed Benjamin’s claim that the angel is a taker rather than a giver.¹⁰¹ How, then, could the contradictions be

⁹⁵ Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 60.

⁹⁶ Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, 211-212; Felix, “The Readability”, 36.

⁹⁷ Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, 109-110.

⁹⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Walter Demyt, trans. E. Jephcott (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 272-273.

⁹⁹ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 259-260.

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin, *Reflections*, 272.

¹⁰¹ Adorno, “Commitment”, 318.

reconciled? First, I claim that the change in attitude towards destructive potential is a change of mood towards Enlightenment. In the earlier essay “Karl Kraus”, Benjamin still holds a certain belief in progress, and the destruction of the old that is making way for the new seems noble to him. This aspect is manifested in Benjamin’s “The Destructive Character”: “For destroying rejuvenates in clearing away the traces of our own age ... But what contributes most of all to this Apollonian image of the destroyer is the realization of how immensely the world is simplified when tested for its worthiness in destruction”.¹⁰²

In *Theses*, his later essay, Benjamin is totally disenchanted with the idea of progress; destruction has led to the war and the persecution of Jews, including himself, forcing him to wander across Europe in flight from the Nazis.¹⁰³ His later essay, completed close to the time of his suicide, reveals a person who is looking at the face of the angel of death, and finding the Messiah. *Theses* reveals a different Benjamin – not a rationalist materialist but, instead, an intellectual mystic. From the flames of modernity and progress, Benjamin finds a new route to salvation.

But there is another reason for these so-called contradictions – that they are not contradictions at all. Like Kiefer’s art, Benjamin’s philosophy is dialectic. One could even claim that ambivalence is the definitive concept of his philosophy. Benjamin’s attitude towards modernity and modern architecture is one of dialectic. On the one hand he praises modern architecture as appropriate for the poor *Zeitgeist* and for the barbaric epoch of the 1930’s, but on the other he mourns the removal of individuality and nostalgia from the dwelling area of one’s home.¹⁰⁴ According to Benjamin, construction and destruction are both parts of cultural history, as they reveal different aspects of culture: one is of civilization, the other of barbarism. Benjamin’s perception of *Angelus Novus* consists of this dialectic. Returning to “Agesilaus Santander”, Scholem claimed that the name of this essay is an anagram for

¹⁰² Benjamin, *Reflections*, 301.

¹⁰³ Mosès, *Walter Benjamin*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, 96, 117-118; Mosès, *Walter Benjamin*, 84-87; Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New-Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2005), 38, 86. In Benjamin’s well-known “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” (“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”) and other essays, he is highly skeptical about the avant-garde and its representational forms. On the one hand, he finds photography and photomontages to be the best at depicting modern times; on the other, he mourns the loss of the aura in times when capitalism is ruling over the representational forms. In times when capitalism dominates the representational forms. Adorno and Horkheimer are even more critical. As quoted in the first chapter, they perceive avant-garde style as a form of brainwashing of the masses on behalf of financial interests.

Der Angelus Satanas, The Angel Satan. This is Lucifer, the fallen angel. He is a hybrid between angel and Satan, and he is both the creator and the destroyer, benevolent and demonic at the same time.¹⁰⁵

I maintain that Kiefer's ambivalent strategy towards destruction is very similar to Benjamin's. On the one hand he condemns violence, mourns it and tries to prevent it; on the other, he promotes it. Both Benjamin and Kiefer believe that the destruction of the old, corrupted reality makes way for a better one. This is far from a novel concept. As the dialectic of heaven and earth is perceived as dualist and contradictory only by the human cognitive structure, destruction and creation are also two sides of the same coin. Actually, just as the natural order is one of a cyclical process of creation-destruction-recreation, so is the metaphysical order. Out of the Flood of Genesis a new and more moral humanity emerged, and humanity gained the possibility of eternal salvation by the crucifixion of God. Most notably, Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction, destroys the world at the end of *Kali Yuga* (the Black Epoch) in his form of Shiva-Nataraj; but at the beginning of *Satya Yuga* (the Golden Epoch) he recreates the world by manifesting its abstract form into matter.

This axis of construction-destruction-reconstruction is fundamental in Jewish Kabbalah and especially in the Kabbalah of Rabbi Yitzhak Luria Ashkenazi (Haa'ri). Lurian Kabbalah interpreted the heavenly reality according to earthly reality by making them analogous. Its most basic assumption is that if something is wrong on earth, then something is wrong in the heavens as well. Haa'ri wondered about the existence of the Diaspora (*Galut*) and persecution of the Jews while the coming of the Messiah and the Redemption (*Geula*) were long ago prophesied. He concluded that God was unable to redeem the Jews. At the core of Lurian Kabbalah is the Breaking of the Vessels (*Shvirat Ha-kelim*). According to Haa'ri and his circle, a sort of malfunction occurred during the creation of the world: God manifested His endless power (*Ein-Sof*) into vessels (*kelim*) in order to create a material world. But the glory of God could not be held by the vessels, and they broke. The breaks of the vessels and God's might – the sparks of divinity (*nitzotzot*), were scattered all over the universe; the breaks of the vessels, which became corrupted with evil, trapped within them the divine *nitzotzot*. The goal of the righteous person (*tzadik*) is to recollect the divine sparks and mend what has been broken (*Tikkun*). By studying the Torah, the righteous

¹⁰⁵ Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism*, 216-217.

one repairs God's might.¹⁰⁶ Lurian Kabbalah includes dialectics of construction and destruction, as the destructive elements are part of the creation of the world. The reconstruction of divinity is a human duty, giving man freedom of choice between good and evil and freedom of action between right and wrong.

Benjamin also studied Kabbalah through discussions and correspondences with his friend Scholem, the greatest modern Kabbalah scholar. Jewish mysticism is apparent in all Benjamin's writings, as he deals – in a rather materialist manner – with issues such as the uncovering of archaic memory, revelation and salvation. Scholem insisted that while he himself was a researcher of Kabbalah, meaning a student of the text engaged in empirical investigation, Benjamin was a sort of mystic who confronted metaphysics directly.¹⁰⁷ One of the most apparent influences on Benjamin, in discussing the origin as a goal, is the myth of the Tree of Life (*Etz Ha-Hayim*) and the Tree of Knowledge (*Etz Ha-Daa't*) according to the *Zohar*.¹⁰⁸ Life in paradise was utopian in the dominion of the Tree of Life. The sin of Adam and Eve transferred existence to the dominion of the Tree of Knowledge, which included the harsh laws of the Torah and the reality of exile. The goal of man is to return to the primordial, utopian state of harmony in the dominion of the Tree of Life.¹⁰⁹

The influence of Kabbalah is especially pronounced in *Theses*. When Benjamin claims that the angel – hence, the power of God – is impotent to save humanity, he makes humans responsible for salvation. Therefore, the materialist historian is actually the *tzadik* who performs the *Tikkun*: he redeems humanity by his revision of history and memory.¹¹⁰ And from the destruction and derbies of the present, piled at the feet of the Angel of History, redemption is attainable; moreover, the reconstruction of Messianic reality will emerge from the catastrophic deconstruction of physical reality.¹¹¹

Benjamin's interest in Kabbalah was arguably caused by a situation similar to the one that brought Haa'ri to practice Kabbalah. Haa'ri was greatly influenced by the trauma of the Jewish expulsion from Spain of 1492, and tried to make sense of a

¹⁰⁶ Rachel Elior, "Various Dimensions of Freedom: Studies in Jewish Mysticism", *Alpayim* 15 (1998): 56-57, 70-72; Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 246-275

¹⁰⁷ Alter, *Necessary Angels*, 103-104, 111-112; Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism*, 198-201.

¹⁰⁸ Wolin, *Walter Benjamin*, 37-38.

¹⁰⁹ Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 23.

¹¹⁰ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 233-234.

¹¹¹ Wolin, *Walter Benjamin*, 60-61.

senseless world. He tried to understand why God does not intervene while Jews are being persecuted, and concluded that there must be something wrong with God. The expulsion from Spain is one the greatest Jewish catastrophes, probably second only to the Shoah. Benjamin drew closer to Kabbalah while Jews were being persecuted in Germany, and while he himself was being persecuted even in his refuge in Paris. Jewish catastrophes on earth drove both Haa'ri and Benjamin to look for alternative mystical worlds in the heavens, for a possibility of mystical salvation within chaotic reality.¹¹² Kiefer does the same. He is a German, born in the year that WWII ended, in a country whose wounds from the war and the Shoah are still open. His heaven-earth axis is actually a mystical one, which the righteous one engages in the intermediate space between them, and influences both. Kiefer is the new *tzadik* who is trying to better humanity's condition by influencing heaven.

Kiefer also knows Kabbalah and some of his pieces are named after mystical terms. He even made an installation entitled *Bruch der Gefässe (Breaking of the Vessels)* where he placed forty-one lead books on a bookcase and added written words such as *Ein-Sof* and the names of the ten *Sefiroth* (spheres) in Hebrew.¹¹³ The influence of Jewish mysticism on Kiefer is best exemplified in his usage of words. According to most Kabbalistic texts, the Hebrew word, and even the Hebrew letter, has magical power. God created the world by speaking Hebrew words; therefore, the axiomatic assumption of Jewish mysticism is that Hebrew is not a normative language but rather a divine one which embodies the power of the Lord. That is why the correct usage of the Hebrew language by the righteous is *imitatio Dei*, because man may alter reality through language.¹¹⁴ According to the Kabbalah of Rabbi Abraham Abula'fia, a Spanish Jewish mystic of the latter thirteen century, reality and the physical world are material manifestations of the various names of God. Hence he used different combinations of Hebrew letters in order to mystically affect the world.¹¹⁵

To return to *Nero Paints*, when Kiefer writes *Nero Malt* in the center of the palette he behaves like the Jewish mystic who writes his mystical texts in order to

¹¹² Interestingly enough, this may also be the case with Gershom Scholem. His disappointment with Zionism in Palestine, which he perceived as materialist and severed from its Jewish roots, led him to study Kabbalah and seek Jewish redemption in mysticism. Mosès, *Walter Benjamin*, 117-119. Similarly, Winter maintains that great catastrophes in the modern era, such as the First World War, gave rise to spiritualism as a form of consolation. Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 54-55.

¹¹³ For more complete study of *Breaking of the Vessels*, see Haxthausen, "The World", 850-851.

¹¹⁴ Elior, "Various Dimensions of Freedom", 28-30, 76-80.

¹¹⁵ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 132-134.

magically influence reality. Hence, Kiefer is not only symbolizing a past event but is actually reenacting the burning of Rome/Europe by Nero/Hitler. Mircea Eliade explains that the reenactment of a myth is actually a return to the primeval time of its happening, and thus does not function as an allegoric illustration of the past but rather as a concrete reoccurrence.¹¹⁶

The importance of the lingual aspects of Kiefer's art may now be better understood: not only do they add a new level of interpretation, or act as symbols, but they function as magical powers. Hence, the impact of Kiefer's art is immense: first, the great impact of the image as itself on the observer, and second, the impact of the image and its lingual aspects on actual reality. Reality is transformed through Kiefer's magical titles and texts.¹¹⁷ When Kiefer writes on the airplane "CICHO JAK MAKIEM ZASIAŁ", he goes back to the time of the death of the Jews during the Shoah, and to one of the sites of their extermination in Poland. Now the use of Polish, rather than German or Hebrew, is understandable: it alludes directly to a place where the Jews were murdered. The heavy airplane is unable to fly but, through magical words written on it, can transport the observer to a distant time and place. It takes us to the goal, which is also the origin: Auschwitz. Consequently, by naming his installation *The Angel of History*, Kiefer is actually going back to the moment of immense catastrophe which Benjamin described. Viewing *The Angel of History* not only means witnessing the horrible potential of war, and the work not only symbolizes WWII and the Shoah; it actually relives it. Kiefer forces himself and the observer to descend into the depth of death and evil for a pure rebirth that is achieved via alchemy.¹¹⁸

Kiefer's use of lead has an immediate connotation of alchemy. Alchemy imitated natural phenomena in order to change nature: alchemists observed the chemical changes occurring in nature and applied them artificially so as to improve nature and sublimate its materials.¹¹⁹ Their aim of transforming dirt into gold meant

¹¹⁶ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1979: 391-395.

¹¹⁷ I do not mean that Kiefer is trying to promote radical violence in the name of salvation, as Shabtai Tzvi and Yaakov Frank intended. Both of them were radical mystics, who intentionally broke the Torah law and were morally corrupted, in order to hasten redemption. Kiefer is trying to face the mythical time of destruction of Europe and its Jewry in order to relieve it from this trauma, by facing it without any clouding of amnesia.

¹¹⁸ Celant, "The Destiny of Art", 17-18.

¹¹⁹ Stanton J. Linden (ed.), *The Alchemy Reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12-15.

transforming an unworthy substance into the sublime uncorrupted metal, an ascent from low to high that recalls Kiefer's earth-heaven axis.

Rosenthal traced the theme of alchemy as a prominent motif in Kiefer's art. The first stage of the alchemical transformation is *Nigredo*, or Blackness. During *Nigredo*, dirt, earth and other low materials are cooked by the alchemist till they become a thick black liquid. Karl Jung used the term *Nigredo* in his psychology to connote complete desperation. herefore, the dark, violent, claustrophobic grounds of Kiefer's paintings, as in *Nero Paints*, evoke the stage of *Nigredo*: the black ground is an image of an unworthy existence of complete desperation. From this stage, the only possible direction is ascension. The second stage of alchemy entails turning the black liquid into lead. Lead is the lowest of the seven primal metals and the alchemists identify it with Saturn, the planet of melancholy. This is an intermediate stage in the alchemical process, whose ultimate goal is to transform the lead into the highest primal metal – gold.¹²⁰

It is evident that a transformation has begun in *The Angel of History*. The installation mainly consists of a lead airplane and lead books, but also includes the organic material of poppies. As claimed earlier, the contrast between the organic material and the metal is the contrast between nature and destructive technology. From an alchemical viewpoint, however, the hierarchy is switched, adding to the ambivalence of this installation. In *The Angel of History* an alchemical process has begun, and the organic earthly materials have begun their ascension towards becoming pure gold, in the intermediate stage of transformation into lead. The pages of the books – allegedly made from organic paper – have already transformed into lead. But the change is a difficult one because lead has very special chemical qualities: when it hardens from its fluid condition, it barely shrinks and, therefore, maintains its original form. Unlike most metals, weather changes do not affect lead much and it hardly corrodes. Lead, then, is a very stable material and very resistant to change.

The change of the lead into gold will not be an easy one. But this change has already started: the metal wires which are placed between the pages of the books are

¹²⁰ Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 132. Kiefer actually entitled one of his paintings *Nigredo*. In *Jerusalem*, Kiefer placed on the canvas metal poles and gold leaves against a dark background. For an analysis of these paintings in connection to alchemy, see *ibid.*, 127, 143. The usage of alchemy is manifested in the earlier discussed 1991 *Melancholia* by Kiefer. The soil in the polyhedron is being transformed into lead in the airplane. Therefore, the dirt that is preventing the flight of the airplane is also of an inferior materiality that is physically burdening the higher material.

made of iron. Iron, according to alchemists, is the sixth lowest primal metal.¹²¹ But it is one stage higher than lead and hence one stage closer to gold. Moreover, the corrosion on some of the sheets of the books has a yellowish hue resembling gold. Hence, the destruction-construction ambivalence appears once again: earlier I have demonstrated that this corrosion is an act of aggression against the book on the part of the artist, symbolizing the destruction of Europe and its Jewry. But the golden color alludes in this context to the alchemical transformation from lead to gold. So the other side of the destruction of the lead sheets is their reconstruction as golden: redemption has begun. It seems that what appears to be a degenerate, crumbling airplane, a static, grounded object with no ability to fly, is actually in motion: it is transforming itself in a slow internal motion of change.

Many alchemists over the ages insisted that the material transformation was only the exoteric side of alchemy. They claimed the ultimate goal of alchemy was spirit. The sublimation of materials was just a means, or even just a metaphor for the sublimation of physicality. The ultimate goal of the alchemist is not to manufacture gold but to reach the divine.¹²² Therefore, the transcendence of materials in Kiefer's installation is symbolic of transcendence of mind. The sublimation of poppy to lead, lead to iron and iron to gold, aims at enabling the angel to fly – that is, at enabling religious experience.

The heaven-earth motif is linked to the alchemical transformation. I have traced the heaven-earth dialectic in *The Order of the Angels*, and it is parallel to this piece's materiality. In *The Order of the Angels*, Kiefer uses straw, lead and various colors. While the black color and the straw allude to *Nigredo*, the lead alludes to the intermediate stage of transformation. Interestingly, the angels, depicted by earthly rocks, have transformed into lead. The inclusion of yellowish color resembling gold on top of the lead rocks, in the heavenly beams of light and as part of the black landscape, is an allusion to the final transformation to gold.

Yet, despite the ambivalence in *The Angel of History*, Kiefer shows hardly any ambivalence in his negative attitude towards technology. As Gilmour demonstrates, Kiefer's use of archaic non-scientific methods is actually a rejection of modern technology and science. Whereas modern science perceives itself as a linear progression towards attaining the ultimate truth about physicality, Kiefer finds truth in

¹²¹ Linden (ed.), *The Alchemy Reader*, 21.

¹²² Ibid., 5, 22.

myths of the past.¹²³ Science tainted itself with war during the twentieth century. The vast use of destructive airplanes during WWII was enabled by the participation of scientists in the war effort. For the first time in modern history, WWII saw the inclusion of scientists in that effort in order to promote destructive technologies, such as of airplanes and missiles on the one hand, and on the other, by creating technologically “advanced” methods for mass murder.¹²⁴ Occidental science became corrupted with destruction, and cannot be used for the reconstruction of the fragments.

Moreover, National Socialism can be viewed as a distorted outcome of modernism, bringing to grotesque extremes some fundamental elements of modernism: nationalism and empirical science. Both of them, under the pretense of progress, rationality and secularism, were used to persecute and murder millions. Peukert examines the way in which Nazi ideology utilized and misused late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scientific medical practices. He maintains that at the turn of the century, as health improved and mortality decreased thanks to medical progress, a cult of youth and health grew in Western Europe. Because health problems have strong links to social problems, a connection between biology and sociology was created. The Nazis wanted to realize the utopia of a totally young and healthy society, ridding itself of the worthless bodies of the diseased Jews. Peukert also traces the aspect of secularization, and the weakening of the Catholic Church that sanctifies life: as modern Europe rid itself of God, science played the role of the angel of death. And as science and technology greatly advanced, the new inventions were utilized not only to heal people but also to gas them: it was possible to mass-murder millions in a “neat and tidy” manner.¹²⁵

When Kiefer chooses alchemy over empirical science he actually makes a stand against the distorted outcome of modernity in the form of Nazism, WWII and the Shoah. As in the cases of Eugène Delacroix and Morocco, Paul Gauguin and Tahiti and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Africa, turning to non- modern-European traditions means challenging the European condition and accusing it of degeneracy.

Though having informal relationship, Kiefer was the pupil and the protégé of the great German artist Josef Beuys, and Beuys had a huge influence on the younger

¹²³ Gilmour, *Fire on the Earth*, 53, 99.

¹²⁴ Sanders, “Three-Dimensional Warfare”, 562-563.

¹²⁵ Detlev J. K. Peukert, “The Genesis of the ‘Final Solution’ from the Spirit of Science”, in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, ed. Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), 238-239, 245-247.

artist in form and in theme. The use of diverse and unconventional materials such as lead, poppies and glass is a direct influence of Beuys, whose unique use of materials such as felt, fat and honey was revolutionary.¹²⁶ Beuys was also very much connected to the image of airplanes, much more than Kiefer and Klee, as he was a Luftwaffe pilot during WWII. According to the legend, Beuys's airplane crashed in Crimea during 1943, the most critical year of the war. Beuys said that a group of nomads found him frozen and almost dead, and assisted his God-like "resurrection" by wrapping his body in felt and fat. Beuys depicted this incident as a rite of passage and an inauguration of his new social role. He shed his German past and became a shaman whose aim was to heal post-WWII Germany. Like a shaman, he came near death and was redeemed.¹²⁷

It is doubtless that Kiefer had in mind the master's airplane connection. Hence, I propose that *The Angel of History* is a kind of tribute by Kiefer to Beuys. It not only depicts a general crash of civilization but a very specific one – a crash that offered the redemption of Beuys, the self-proclaimed redeemer of German culture. Just as, through the "resurrected" Beuys, German art was allegedly redeemed, the destructive image of Kiefer's angel-airplane brings hope for resurrection.

Kiefer's return to mystical myths of the past – whether of Kabbalah or alchemy – seems, then, to have been influenced by his teacher. Beuys's main interest was in the transformation of materials by heat, which was actually transubstantiation from physicality to spirituality.¹²⁸ Undoubtedly this process is parallel to Kiefer's alchemy.¹²⁹ Ray suggests that a concealed aim of Beuys's art was to heal the wounds of the Shoah. Among other things, Ray shows that Beuys's use of fat is in allusion to the fat of the Jews who were burned, which was collected in order to make soaps.¹³⁰ In *Auschwitz Demonstration* (ill. 13) Beuys placed fat on electronic heaters. He thereby reenacted the deeds of the Nazis and exposed the catastrophe, but also tried to achieve accession to the dead via transformation. The image of Christ in the

¹²⁶ The Italian *Arte Povera* and the French *Nouveau Réalisme* were also influential on Kiefer in his usage of materials such as straw, metal and dirt.

¹²⁷ Alain Borer, *The Essential Joseph Beuys* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 24; Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol", *Artforum* 16/1 (1980): 38.

¹²⁸ Borer, *The Essential Joseph Beuys*, 16, 22; Donald B. Kuspit, "Beuys: Fat, Felt and Alchemy", *Art in America* (May 1980): 86.

¹²⁹ Mark Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys", 96. In the 1965 performance *Wie Man dem Toten Hasen die Bilder Erklärt* (*How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*) Beuys wrapped his face with gold leaves. This has an immediate connection to alchemy, and thus, to Kiefer's alchemical transformations.

¹³⁰ Gene Ray, "Joseph Beuys and the After-Auschwitz Sublime", in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: Distributing Art, 2001), 56, 59, 95.

installation offers spiritual redemption via the earthly incarnation of God.¹³¹ Therefore, Beuys's method – reenactment which promotes salvation – is strongly influential on the practice of Kiefer.

¹³¹ Biro, "Representation and Event", 120, 122; Mario Kramer, "Joseph Beuys: Auschwitz Demonstration 1956-1964", in *German Art from Beckmann to Richter: Images of a Divided Country*, ed. Eckhart Gillen (Cologne: Dumont – Yale University Press, 1997), 264-267.

Conclusions: Why Versus?

Heaven versus earth? Memory versus repression? Construction versus destruction? Perhaps not versus at all. What is linguistically perceived as contradiction is, rather, dialectic. I return to Benjamin's famous, almost overused and sometimes misused, quote, "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism".¹³² It is not sometimes civilized and sometimes barbaric; it is not sometimes good and sometimes bad: it is both at the same time. And I certainly do not believe that Benjamin intended a kind of postmodern cultural and moral relativity – civilized and good for one side being barbaric and bad for another.

This is the core of Anselm Kiefer's *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*. The different axes that he works on: past and future, memory and history, heaven and earth and construction and destruction, are dialectic. Neither is totally barbaric and neither is totally civilized. I believe that in Kiefer's mind these so-called opposites are not only intertwined so that they cannot be separated, but also dialectic phenomena of sameness. That is how the mind of the mystic works: where most people see separateness, he sees the unity of the whole. In Kiefer's art, the poetic mysticism of unity is the means to deal with civilized-barbaric culture. From that standpoint, one may claim that especially after Auschwitz one must write poetry, because coherent philosophy of reason is no longer possible.

Kiefer's strategy of dialectic ambivalence is an attitude towards modernity. He cannot dismiss modernist progress as he cannot ignore the atrocities perpetrated during this era, hence questioning the concept of enlightenment. The same Occidental progress that improved health also invented Zyklon B; and the concept of Enlightenment which enabled man to recognize his almost godly capabilities, also brought man to act as God by taking the lives of the so-called unworthy. While Kiefer does not yearn to return to a monkish religious society, he also does not totally trust the concept of progress.

The ambiguity has to do with the action of man. Just as in the case of Benjamin's Angel of History, redemption is in the hands of man. He and he alone can redeem himself and human society from the flames of the past and from amnesia. It is

¹³² Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 258.

possible that the mournful, melancholic tone of Kiefer is over the loss of God: whether the sublime God of religion or the machine-God of modernism. But certainty is lost, and everything is dialectic. Man stands quite lonely facing his past and his future. In such loneliness, much like *The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*, it is very hard to progress.

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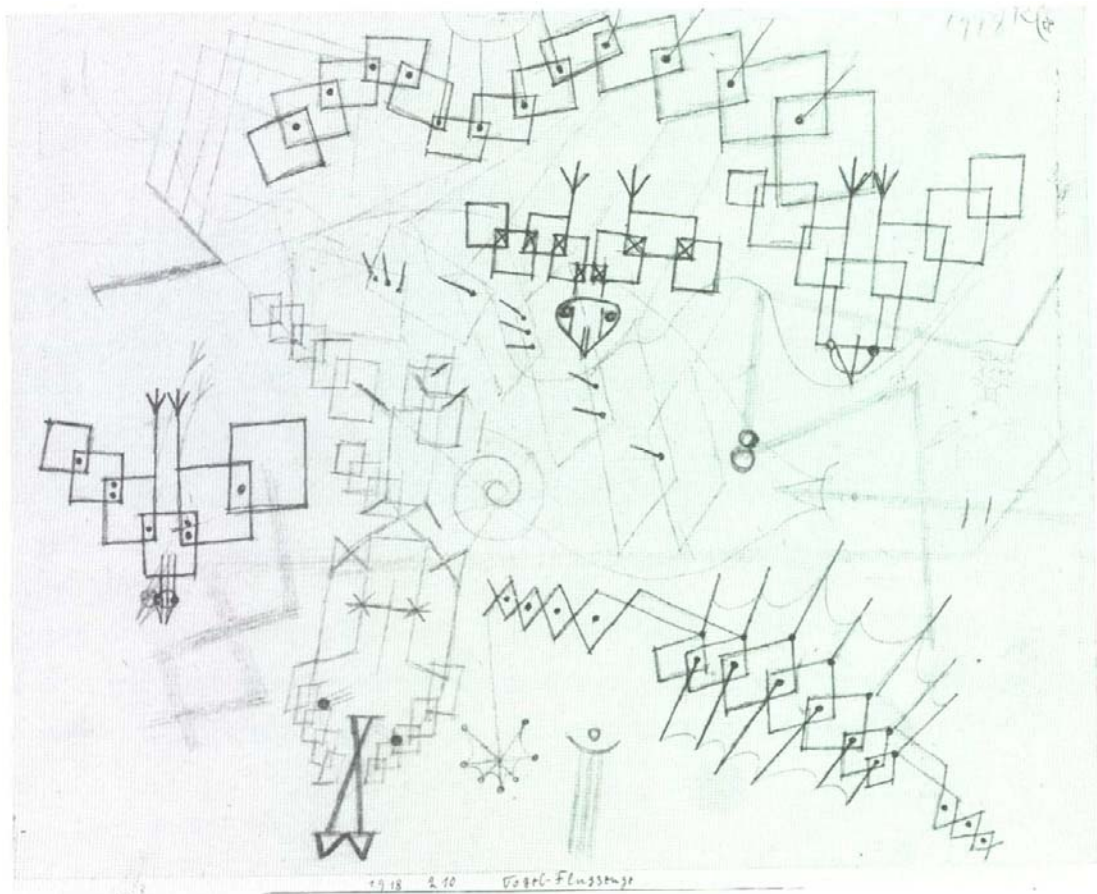
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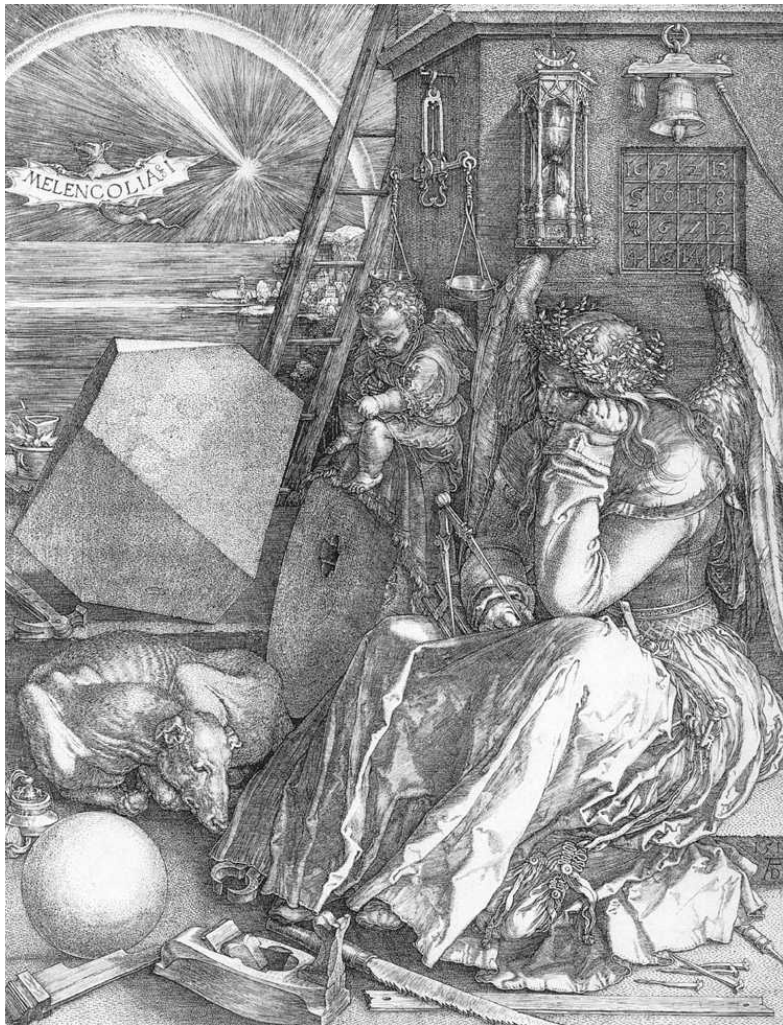
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