

Mehmet Sülek

The Geological Metaphor and Multiplicity of Time in Aby Warburg's Thinking and the Postwar Era

“Warburg is our obsession [hantise]; he haunts us. He is to art history what an unappeased ghost— a dybbuk— might be to the house we live in. What is such an obsession? It is something or someone that always come back, survives everything, reappears at intervals, and expresses a truth concerning an original state of affairs. It is something or someone that one cannot forget, and yet is impossible to recognize clearly”.¹

In 2020, we witnessed the arguably most substantial event dedicated to a single art historian, the *Aby Warburg: Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* exhibition at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin. As a collaboration between the Warburg Institute in London and HKW, the exhibition displayed the fully recovered version of Warburg's *Bilderatlas*.² This was a peculiar exhibition for two reasons. First, a simple but significant question emerged from this exhibition: Why do we need an exhibition on an unfinished project of an early 20th-century art historian? What makes it so pertinent for contemporary culture? Second, why was this exhibition displayed at HKW, which is a contemporary art venue? The HKW exhibition did not answer these questions.³ After going through the literature on Warburg, one realizes that this is not unusual but very much the dominant approach for the scholarship on Warburg.⁴ This has a number of reasons, but one important reason stands out from the rest: Warburg had a vast range of influences and contacts.⁵ To decipher his thinking completely, assuming that one has such an ambition, is almost an impossible task. As Didi-Huberman wisely noted, “to write about this oeuvre today, we must accept that our working hypotheses may one day be modified or brought into question by an unanticipated piece of this floating corpus”.⁶ It seems that, for this very reason, scholars are hesitant to approach this topic. In this regard, however, this

paper will detach itself from a philological approach and seek to determine why Warburg matters today.

The hypotheses of this paper are fairly straightforward: the paper argues that contemporary scholars have turned their attention to Warburg because, like these scholars, Warburg had a particular way of looking at the past as a dynamic multilayered space rather than a fixed singular one.⁷ To arrive at such a significant understanding of the past, both postwar thinkers and Warburg employed geological metaphors to describe how temporality runs at a different pace at different locations, just like the layers of the earth. It can be argued that this metaphor was the outspring of one turn within the humanities: the spatial turn first coined by Edward Soja and Frederic Jameson.⁸ That being said, the will to return to Warburg cannot be pinpointed to one phenomenon. I would argue that the number of turns that we have witnessed within the last 40 years, such as the “affective turn”, “temporal turn”, and most importantly “pictorial turn”, equally accommodate the reasons for turning to Warburg.⁹ But it can be argued that both for Warburg and postmodern thinking, the idea of spatiality is the main driving force. After all, Michel Foucault claimed that “[t]he present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near-far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed”.¹⁰ The years between 1967 and today seem to prove him right.¹¹

The Geological Metaphor and Multiplicity of Time

Scholars often praise Warburg's understanding of temporality and anachronism, but I would argue that his understanding of temporality very much depends on his way of looking at space and spatiality. We often forget that Warburg was surrounded by the idea of space just like we are today. The ideas in art history

were no different; the theories of *Einfühlung*, which denote the spectators' encounter with artworks in space, were extremely influential in art history and at the turn of the 20th century.¹² There was also a group of scholars who were drawn to the question of *Kunstgeographie* (geography of art).¹³ All of these things were happening at the turn of the 20th century, at a time when Warburg was establishing himself as a scholar. This was, perhaps, the reason why he asked the question, "What does it mean to orient oneself in space?"¹⁴ However, this question was not something that he came to at the end of his life but rather the accumulation of the questions that he asked over the course of his entire life.

It seems that the question of movement was particularly important for Warburg from very early on. In his doctoral thesis, *Sandro Boticelli's Birth of Venus and Spring: Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance* (1893), he investigated what he called "fluttering garments". However, Papapetros has argued that this was one of the main topics of discussion among Warburg's contemporaries. In this regard, Papapetros underlines Schmarsow's rather dismissive stance regarding Warburg's thesis.¹⁵ Schmarsow is particularly important for understanding Warburg's interest in spatiality and his exposure to theories of *Einfühlung*. After all, Schmarsow was one of Warburg's professors at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence and he was the first scholar who understood architecture as space through the theories of *Einfühlung*. This possible influence can also be seen in these two quotations, one from Schmarsow and the other from Warburg. Schmarsow stated: "It is evident that all instruments and objects man invents and makes, must be adapted to his body and members; they become with the living organs they serve."¹⁶ And Warburg stated that "[t]he memory image [*Erinnerungsbild*] is felt as a bodily member".¹⁷ Furthermore, there is a wide range of spatial vocabulary that Warburg used throughout his life such as *Bildfahrzeuge* (image vehicles), *Gesetz der guten Nachbarschaft* (the law of the good neighbor), *Bilderwanderung* (migration of images), among many others.¹⁸ One such metaphor that Warburg used was *Leitfossil*. According to Didi-Huberman, it was a term that demonstrated that Warburg understood the

different layers of time. For him and geology, *Leitfossil* are objects used to understand the characteristic nature of epochs. What is significant about Warburg's usage of this metaphor, Didi-Huberman has argued, is the fact that he was aware of the heterogeneous nature of these layers.¹⁹ I believe that Warburg's usage of such a metaphor is quite telling regarding his understanding of time and space. It shows that Warburg understood the multiplicity of time, but Warburg is certainly not alone in this regard. As Helge Jordheim has pointed out, the notion of a multiplicity of time based on an understanding of different geological layers was first formulated by Danish natural historian Nicolaus Steno in the 17th century. In the aftermath of the Second World War, this idea has emerged as a metaphor to think about multiplicity of time for number of historians.²⁰ From this group of scholars, I would like to highlight Reinhart Koselleck, who is arguably the most influential historian of the postwar era. This is because of his usage of a geological metaphor: "sediments of time", which correlates to Warburg's understanding of *Leitfossil*. Koselleck stated:

*"My topic is 'sediments of time'. And I should preface it by noting that, as a historian, I am not capable of making any claims based on the laws of physics or biology. Instead, this essay operates much more in the realm of metaphor: 'sediments or layers of time' refers to geological formations that differ in age and depth and that changed and set themselves apart from each other at differing speeds over the course of the so-called history of the earth. We are, then, using a metaphor that first emerged in the eighteenth century, after traditional, static natural history (historia naturalis) had become temporalized and thus also historicized. By transposing this metaphor back into human, political, or social history as well as into structural history, we can analytically separate different temporal levels upon which people move and events unfold, and thus ask about the longer-term preconditions for such events".*²¹

Now, one may assume that this geological metaphor means that Warburg's and Koselleck's understanding of time and space is fixed and stable, as

geological layers seem to be fixed and run parallel while remaining distinct from each other, but that is not the case. This is the significance of the metaphor. For example, take the explanation given by geologist Marcia Bjornerud for a phenomenon that may appear surprising to many. She asks us to consider the St. Peter Sandstone of Ordovician age at Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis. She argues that even though the same geological layers run uninterrupted through hundreds of kilometers, this is not the same everywhere. She explains that due to a vast range of events such as volcanic eruptions or the impact of meteorites, this continuity can become fractured. Thus, Bjornerud states, not all layers of St. Peter Sandstone are markers of the same time, that is, the layers are not *isochronous*; instead, the layers are *diachronous* and show the traces of different events that occurred after the formation of the first geological layers. In other words, geological layers are not always homogenous but also heterogenous, which shows how different layers of time collapse and interfere with each other.²²

It seems that Warburg was very much aware of this condition of the geological layers. In this regard, Didi-Huberman has highlighted Ferdinand von Richthofen's classic book on geology that could be found in Warburg's Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg. In this book, Didi-Huberman has found an idea that correlates to his way of thinking: the "folding of layers". In this regard, Didi-Huberman stated that "the dialectic of long-lasting epochs and catastrophic alterations of the earth's crust—all things that Warburg's 'seismography' was ready to welcome as a genuine epistemological model of the *Nachleben*".²³ By this, Didi-Huberman suggests that Warburg found an epistemological model that understands time and space as a dynamic sphere in which images become the gateways of not just the past but also the present. In other words, Warburg understood images as active agents and called them *Dynamogramme* (energy-containers).²⁴ By seeing images as active agents rather than passive ones, he was opposing an art-historical tradition that had been in place since the Enlightenment.²⁵ Warburg's understanding of dynamic time and space was also evident in his eagerness to get in contact with Albert Einstein, whose theory of relativity had

far-reaching consequences in art and culture.²⁶ The archive of the Warburg Institute shows that Warburg made several attempts to meet Albert Einstein and he wanted to welcome him in the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg.²⁷ In the end, Warburg and Einstein met at Scharbeutz in Germany. According to Warburg and Fritz Saxl, their meeting was a successful one in which Warburg described the *Bilderreihen* (image series) technique.²⁸ Warburg's eagerness to meet Einstein and his insistence on the similarities between his work and Einstein's work is quite telling and a clear indicator about his scholarly endeavors. In this regard, for example, Bernard Westphal has argued that Einstein's theory of relativity was essentially a blow to views of positivist time and space as well as Euclidian geometry that had been inherited from the Enlightenment.²⁹ But Warburg's interest in Einstein's work was no accident; Warburg had a keen interest in astrological motifs and he believed that it was a significant way of demonstrating how ideas migrated from one location to another.³⁰ Warburg's interest in astrology is probably best expressed in the first three panels of *Mnemosyne*: A, B, and C. In this regard, I would like to argue that Panel C is particularly significant.

Although this panel is structured around Warburg's interest in Keplerian ideas, it is also a key panel for understanding the sense of *Mnemosyne*. One of the most striking features of this panel is how Warburg placed a photograph of a Zeppelin on the panel. This was the embodiment of Warburg's keen interest in aviation, which was yet another way of thinking about images and ideas migrating to different locations. He famously wrote an essay entitled, "Airship and Submarine in the Medieval Imagination", in 1913 and a lecture on airmail stamps entitled, "Die Funktion des Briefmarkenbildes im Geistesverkehr der Welt".³¹ All of these interests of Warburg stem from one big idea: *Wanderstraßen des Geistes* (paths taken by the mind).

As Dorothea McEwan has demonstrated, Warburg also had a deep interest in maps, mapmaking and astrology. This led him to the concept of *Wanderkarte* (map of images) and the idea of *Wanderstraßen des Geistes* (paths taken by the mind). According to McEwan, this term indicated what Warburg had in mind in his scholarly enterprise:

*“A Wanderstraße in Warburg’s understanding provided a path, a course for all that and more; it was an artery along which ideas coursed, semi hidden, but vital for the health of the organism. But ideas were not only carried in a physical sense from landmark to landmark by traveling scholars, merchants, pilgrims and beggars. In uncharted territories or on the high seas it was only natural that travelers were guided by the stars and, by extension, by a belief in the guiding properties of the stars.”*³²

This also takes me to one particular object for discussing Warburg’s understanding of spatiotemporality: the Liver of Piacenza, which is a bronze Etruscan artifact in Panel 1 of *Mnemosyne*. Didi-Huberman has questioned why Warburg placed such a peculiar object in *Mnemosyne* and has traced the meaning of the liver in ancient times as the center of the human soul and body. Most importantly, he has argued that this object was important first, because it signified the idea of migration (*Wanderung*), and second, it represented to him the idea of the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm.³³ Didi Huberman stated:

*“[...] divinatory sheep’s livers were of interest to Warburg because they represented, in his view, an exemplary case of that historical and geographical mobility for which images are the privileged vehicles: migratory images whose consideration makes every ‘artistic style’ and every ‘national culture’, as we say incorrectly, an essentially hybrid, impure, and mixed entity. A mix or montage of things, of places, or of heterogeneous times. One of the most decisive contributions in the Warburgian history of art is found in his discovery, at the very heart of the most ‘classical’ or most ‘measured’ things the West has produced—referring to Greco-Roman art and the Italian Renaissance, respectively—a fundamental impurity linked to the great migratory movements that could only be brought to light by a Kulturwissenschaft worthy of that name, that is, one capable of reading the movements of spaces in each visual configuration.”*³⁴

One can argue that Warburg’s way of looking at space as a fluid and dynamic sphere rather than a fixed prism very much correlates with a postmodern

understanding of space. Tim Cresswell has argued that one of the ways of conceiving postmodern geography is an insistence on topology rather than topography.³⁵ While the former refers to the connectedness of different spaces, the latter constructs space as distinct units. In other words, for the former, the space is dynamic, whereas for the latter, space is fixed and stable. Thus, Cresswell stated that postmodern geography understands space as overwhelmingly relational. In this regard, he quoted Marcus Doel, who is one of the most important advocates of postmodern geography. Doel stated:

*“Since space is continuously being made, unmade, and remade by the incessant shuffling of heterogeneous relations, its potential can never be contained and its exuberance can never be quelled. What becomes of space always and necessarily eludes the grasp of every will to order. Although space may be stabilized for a time, it cannot be entirely mastered [...] Whence the shift from a ‘topographical’ to a ‘topological’ appreciation of space: from an orderly patchwork of surfaces to an unruly skein of relations, from a structuralist to a post-structuralist kind of geography.”*³⁶

It can be argued that one of the key differences between these two notions is that postmodern geography insists on putting a human at the center of the equation of space whereas the modern understanding of space is detached from social life. In this regard, Anthony Vidler has argued that although thinkers at the turn of the 20th century such as Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer thought about space, and urban space in particular, they postulated an idea of urban space that was detached from social life.³⁷ This was significantly different from the approaches of scholars such as Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, who above all understood space as a social construction.³⁸ In the 1970s, the rise of phenomenology among geographers such as Yi-Fi Tuan, Edward Relph, and David Seamon and the development of the idea of place was yet another interlocutor in this regard. Concurrently, the phenomenology of architecture was also gaining momentum in architectural circles; the most famous example of this approach being Chris-

tian Norberg-Schulz with his notion of *genius loci* through his reading of Heidegger.³⁹ Without a doubt, phenomenology of architecture has become one of the dominant approaches in architecture, with scholars such as Joseph Rykwert, David Leatherbarrow, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Perez-Gomez, among many others, supporting the approach.⁴⁰ Now, one may very well ask what do all of these have to do with Warburg? I argue that Warburg's *Mnemosyne* was also produced to understand the dwellings of humans and their imagination, dreams, and traumas. This is evidence of his interest in not just artworks but artifacts such as tapestries, coins, postal stamps, and airmail stamps, as noted earlier. In this regard, it was not a matter of lyricism when McEwan called *Mnemosyne* psychogeography.⁴¹

In recent years, with the discussions on global and transnational discourses in the background, the idea of the connectedness of different geographies has gained momentum as well. For example, Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru have identified a “planetary turn”, which is opposed to globalization and cosmopolitanism. They stated that their concept of “planetary relatedness” runs contrary to global and cosmopolitan abstract space. They have argued that the “planetary turn is thus bioconnective. Not a monologue but an echo, speaking to us not through a mouthpiece but as through a sonar, cultural discourse and identity come about through the connection of bodies in space and time in the post-Cold War, planetary age”.⁴² In geography, too, we see similar tendencies with the emergence of the “new mobilities paradigm”, coined by Mimi Sheller and John Urry. According to Sheller and Urry, the question of movement has become increasingly important as a wide spectrum of people are constantly on the move due to various phenomena ranging from asylum seeking to holiday-making. They stated that traditional social sciences are insufficient to understand this flow of mobilities as it is predominantly “a-mobile”. The “new mobilities paradigm”, they stated, investigates vast forms of movement which include not only the movement of people but of images and information.⁴³ In memory studies, too, there has been a call for the transnational or transcultural turn.⁴⁴ In this regard, Ann Rigney and Chiara de Cesari have argued that the current

conditions of the world dictate a transnational framework of memory studies that have been long built on national memories.⁴⁵ Most substantially, Astrid Erll has acknowledged the importance of Warburg's work to her conception of “traveling memory”.⁴⁶ Erll stated:

*“Memories do not hold still—on the contrary, they seem to be constituted first of all through movement. What we are dealing with, therefore, is not so much (and perhaps not even metaphorically) ‘sites’ of memory, lieux de mémoire, but rather the ‘travels’ of memory, les voyages or les mouvements de mémoire. Possible contexts of such movement range from everyday interaction among different social groups to transnational media reception and from trade, migration and diaspora to war and colonialism”.*⁴⁷

In all of these studies, one conception stands out—space as a relational sphere, i.e., understanding space topologically rather than topographically, in the way that Warburg proposed. Thus, both Warburg and scholars of the postmodern era understand time in a relational way that runs through nothing but heterotopia.⁴⁸

Conclusion

*“To use a geographical map, it is not enough to look at it from the outside: we must know where we are situated in relation to what it represents. In order to understand our experience of space, it is not enough to think of Newtonian space. We must remember that we see this space from inside it, that we are localized. In order to understand time, it is not enough to think of it from outside: it is necessary to understand that we, in every moment of our experience, are situated within time”.*⁴⁹

I would like to conclude this essay with one of the most famous Japanese folktales, if not the most famous: the story of Urashima Tarō. According to this anonymous tale, Urashima (a fisherman) spots a group of children abusing a turtle by the sea and he saves the turtle from them. When Urashima goes to sea the next day, he realizes that the same turtle awaits him. The turtle, in a show of gratitude, offers Urashima a visit to his kingdom under the sea, Dragon

Palace. Urashima spends three days underwater, but soon he misses his home and family. He tells the King and Princess of Dragon Palace of his wish to return home. They reluctantly accept Urashima's desire to leave. When he is about to leave, they give him a box and warn him to never open the box. When Urashima reaches his village, he realizes that his village is completely different and everyone he once loved is long gone. In grief and despair, he opens the box, and in the blink of an eye, he becomes an old man. At this point, we realize that it was the old age of Urashima that was hidden in the box and the three days that he spent under the water were equal to 300 years in his village. It can be argued that this little story is the perfect allegory for how time flows at different speeds in different places and time is not one-dimensional and linear but heterochronous and multiple. But our story does not culminate here: the story of Urashima tells how those different flows of time percolate differently in different places, but there is one more important feature that Urashima does not tell us. For this, I would like to turn to the story of Mr. Palomar.

Mr. Palomar is a novel by Italo Calvino, but what is important about this novel is how Donald J. Wilcox uses it in his *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and Rhetoric of Relative Time*, in which he investigates the development of Newtonian absolute time and space, which is fixed and singular. He argues that while the Newtonian understanding of time and space was essential for scientific methodology and positivist historians in particular, this position was challenged by the new conception of time which emerged from the studies such as Einstein's theory of relativity, Alfred White Norhead's philosophy, among others.⁵⁰ To explain the position of scholars who adopted the Newtonian understanding of time and space, Wilcox opens his book by telling the whimsical story of Mr. Palomar, who wishes to distinguish the waves from each other and see one wave in particular. Mr. Palomar changes his point of view and position in a desperate attempt to identify that single wave. Wilcox stated, "Italo Calvino has drawn this protagonist as an exemplar of twentieth-century humanity seeking the certainty of concrete and objective truth in a world where particular events with simple lo-

cations in space and time are no longer seen as an adequate expression of reality".⁵¹ Wilcox went on to explain that it is not that Mr. Palomar is ignorant, rather he is in doubt; he does not know how to interpret the new reality of the 20th century where no single point in space and time represents reality anymore.⁵² This is what the sea, if you will, puts forward to us.⁵³ It pushes us to think about connectiveness rather than discreteness; it leads us to look at the world through boundaries (fluid) rather than borders (fixed).⁵⁴ And Warburg seemed to understand this in his eagerness to develop what he called "pictorial orientation". Warburg stated:

*" Since reading my cherished friend Boll's Sphaera in 1907, I have been able to integrate the cosmological, pictorial element into our considerations, whereby we, that is, I and my trusted friend and assistant, Dr. Saxl, were able to create a science of pictorial orientation, which has justified us in speaking of new, cultural-scientific art history. Such an art history knows neither temporal nor spatial boundaries. For our work, however, we deal with the temporal framework of 2000 BCE to 1650 CE, and we have geographically limited our search for the Mediterranean influence to the terrain from Khorasan to England and from Egypt to Norway".*⁵⁵

This passage, I would argue, underlines Warburg's eagerness to see the connectedness of cultures and different spatiotemporalities rather than dividing them into discrete units. In this regard, it can be argued that Warburg was not very far from French philosopher Michel Serres, who stated: "I don't think it is an ontology we need, but a desmology—in Greek *desmos* means connection or link.... What interests me is not so much the state of things but the relations between them".⁵⁶ Warburg seems to be interested in desmology as well, specifically the desmology of images, and, for him, this desmology extended overwhelmingly and inevitably beyond any borders. I would like to argue that this is the reason why scholars of the humanities are so obsessed with Warburg. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Robert S. Nelson showed that art history remains loyal to its foundational ideas.⁵⁷ This condition, I argue, shows that the art historian continues to

be Mr. Palomar. It is not that art history is now ignorant of anachronism and symptoms, as Didi-Huberman has put it, but it is anxious about what these questions would mean for art history.⁵⁸

Orhan Pamuk contributed to the catalogue of the 14th Istanbul Biennial, *SALTWATER: A Theory of Thought Forms* (2015), with a short text on the sea. In this text, he stated that all year long, the sea appears peaceful and beautiful. But as soon as he puts his feet in the water, Pamuk continued, he realizes the horrors of the sea.⁵⁹ This is also Mr. Palomar as an art historian who is hesitant to step into the sea because s/he is all too aware of the horrors and chaos that inhabits the sea. But as Friedrich Hölderlin in his poem, *Patmos*, reminds us: “Where there is danger, a rescuing element grows as well”.⁶⁰

Endnoten

- Georges Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, University Park, PA 2016, p. 13
- In recent years, there have also been a number of exhibitions such as *Atlas: How to Carry the World on One's Back?* (2011), *Dear Aby Warburg, What Can Be Done with Images?* (2013), and *Thinking with Images* (2016), which displayed works by artists who are influenced by Warburg or showed similarities with Warburg's thinking.
- See Mehmet Berkay Sulek, “Why do we need Aby Warburg today? Or, is image memory a bodily sensation?”, in: *Third Text Online*, September 2021, www.thirdtext.org/sulek-warburg.
- See Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, Los Angeles, CA 1999.
- There are a number of further reasons for this. Firstly, Warburg left a relatively small number of completed texts before his untimely death. Secondly, his writings were translated only 20 years ago and a significant portion of his work remains untranslated.
- Didi-Huberman 2016, *The Surviving Image*, p. 15.
- For my discussion on Warburg's understanding of memory as a reconstruction in the present likewise contemporary artists, scholars of art and memory scholars, See Mehmet Berkay Sulek, “Tell me whom you haunt and I tell you who you are”: *Aby Warburg, Memory and Artistic Practices in the 21st Century*, in: *AHM 2022: Witnessing, Memory and Crisis: AHM Annual Conference 2022: Proceedings for the annual conference hosted by the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture (AHM): June 30-July 2, 2022, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. (History, Culture, and Heritage)*, Amsterdam 2022, pp.65-72.
- For an overview of the spatial turn, see Robert T. Tally, *Spatiality*, London 2013.
- For a discussion of the pictorial and iconic turn, see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago, IL 1994, and Gottfried Boehm, *Was ist Ein Bild?* München 1994. For an overview of the numerous turns in the humanities, see Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, Berlin, Boston 2016.
- Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”, in: *Diacritics*, 16(1), 1986, pp. 22-27.
- In recent years, the question of place has also gained momentum. In this regard, for example, Jeff Malpas has questioned Foucault's idea of space and how his usage might have been lost in translation. He underlined that French word *espace* could mean both space and place as there are no separate words for them. Indeed, Malpas states that Foucault's usage of *espace* is oblique; it both connotes space and place. See Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience*, Milton Park 2018, p. 24.
- See Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, Santa Monica, CA 1994.
- For a discussion of the *Kunstgeographie* (geography of art) tradition, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, Chicago, IL 2004.
- Dorothea McEwan, “Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines”, in: *German Studies Review*, 29(2), 2006, pp. 243-267. The quotation appears on p. 243.
- Spyros Papapetros, *On the Animation of the Inorganic: Art, Architecture, and the Extension of Life*, Chicago, IL 2012, pp. 34-37.
- August Schamarsow quoted in Alina Payne, *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of a Architectural Modernism*, New Haven, CT 2012, p. 112.
- Aby Warburg quoted in Papapetros 2012, *On the Animation of the Inorganic*, p. 104.
- Sulek 2021, “Why do we need Aby Warburg Today?”, p. 1.
- Georges Didi-Huberman 2016, *The Surviving Image*, p. 217.
- Helge Jordheim, “Introduction: Multiple Times and the Work of Synchronization”, in: *History and Theory*, 53(4), 2014, pp. 498-518.
- Reinhardt Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*, Stanford, CA 2018, p. 1.
- Marcia Bjornerud, *Timefulness: How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save the World*, Princeton, NJ 2018, pp. 38-39.
- Didi-Huberman 2016, *The Surviving Image*, p. 217
- Didi-Huberman 2016, *The Surviving Image*, pp. 217-218.
- For Horst Bredekamp's discussion of art history's repression of image, see Horst Bredekamp, *Image Acts: a Systematic Approach to Visual Agency*, Boston, MA 2018, pp. 7-8.
- For how the theory of relativity affected the exhibition practices of El Lissitzky and Alexander Dorner in the 1920s, see Charlotte Klönk, *Spaces of Experiences*, New Haven, CT 2009, pp. 119-120. For the affect of the theory of relativity on architecture and beyond, see Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Towards a Theory of Event in Modernist Culture*, Cambridge, MA 2002.
- See the Warburg Institute Online Archive (WIA GC/20035; WIA GC/20036; WIA GC/22423).
- Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, Ithaca, NY 2012, p. 40.
- Bernard Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, Basingstoke 2011, p. 1.
- McEwan 2006, “Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines”
- Frank Zollner, “Aby Warburg and Flying”, in: *Visual Engagements. Images Practices and Falconry*, ed. Yannis Hadjinicolaou, pp. 241-254. The quotation appears on p. 250.
- McEwan 2006, “Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines”, p. 251.
- Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas or the Anxious Gay Science*, Chicago, IL 2018, pp. 22-34.
- Ibid.*, p. 17.
- Tim Cresswell, *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction*, Chichester 2013, p. 218.
- Marcus Doel quoted in Tim Cresswell 2013, *Geographic Thought*, p. 220.
- Anthony Vidler, “Agoraphobia: Spatial Estrangement in Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer”, in: *New German Critique*, 54 (autumn), 1991, pp. 31-45.
- See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford 1991, and Edward W. Soja 1996, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imaginary Places*, Oxford 1996.
- Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, New York, NY 1979.
- For a historical overview of the phenomenology of architecture, see Jorge Pailos-Otero, *Architecture's Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern*, Minneapolis, MN 2010.
- McEwan 2006, “Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines”, p. 252.
- Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru, “Introduction: The Planetary Condition”, in: Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru, *The Planetary Condition*, Chicago, IL 2015, p. xxiv.
- Mimi Sheller and John Urry, “The New Mobilities Paradigm”, in: *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 2004, pp. 207-226.
- See *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Stakes*, eds. Ann Rigney and Chiara de Cesari, Berlin, Boston 2015, and *Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders*, eds. Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, Berlin, Boston 2014.

45. Ann Rigney and Chiara de Cesari, "Introduction", in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Stakes* 2015, p. 2.
46. Astrit Erll, "Travelling Memory", in: *parallax*, 17(4), 2011, pp. 4-18.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
48. Didi-Huberman makes a correlation between Foucault's notion of heterotopia and Warburg's thinking. Didi-Huberman states that Warburg's Atlas is "an actual heterotopia of art history". See Georges Didi-Huberman 2018, *Atlas or the Anxious Gay Science*, p. 55.
49. Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*, Milton Keynes 2018, p. 134.
50. Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time*, Chicago, IL 1987, pp.16-50.
51. *Ibid.*, p.1.
52. Wilcox 1987, *The Measures of Times Past*, pp. 1-3.
53. Warburg also had an interest in maps of sea routes. For example, he asked Heinrich Sieveking to help him find a map of sea routes from Flanders to Italy. For this, see the Warburg Institute Online Archive (WIA GC/18098).
54. Edward Casey has argued that borders and boundaries refer to different understandings of space. While borders are static, Casey stated, boundaries are fluid. To make this difference between boundaries and borders, he gives an example which I believe captures this argument succinctly. Casey stated: "We may usefully contrast border and boundary by recourse to a single example: the Mississippi River. Considered as a natural phenomenon, this river has continually shifting boundaries: it swells and shrinks, depending on the season and the weather. Even when it is comparatively stable, its precise shape is difficult to make out: just where does its outer edge begin or end? When the river is ensconced in its accustomed banks, we can plausibly say that this edge is found in these banks. But the banks themselves alter shape, position, even their entire identity—notoriously so when spring rains cause extensive flooding or hurricanes suddenly raise water levels. Furthermore, in many stretches the banks are barely discernible or have been overlain by wetlands in the form of marshes or floodplains. The latter, which are no less boundaries than are the banks, are still more indefinite in form, and are rarely included in cartographic representations. In their passion for accuracy, such representations prefer the simplicity of continuous single lines, hence the characteristic remove of these representations from the local landscape by the assumption of a bird's eye view far above it. Seen from a sufficient height, even the massive Mississippi increasingly resembles a line drawn in planiform space. But the closer one comes to the river itself, the less likely a strictly linear representation is able to capture its natural coursing and seasonal variability". See Edward, *The World on Edge*, Bloomington, IN 2017, p.8.
55. Aby Warburg, "From the Arsenal to the Laboratory", in: *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 19(1), 2012, pp. 106-124. The quotation appears on p. 118.
56. Michel Serres in Mary Zournazi, *Hope: new philosophies for change*, Annandale, NSW 2002, p. 204.
57. Robert S. Nelson, "The Map of Art History", in: *The Art Bulletin*, 79(1), 1997, pp. 28-40. While it is true that it has been more than two decades since Nelson wrote this paper, it still resonates with the dynamics of art history today. For example, an annual listing of Ph.D. dissertations completed is still being published by CAA (College Art Association). These lists still resemble what Nelson outlined in his article.
58. For Didi-Huberman's critique of Panofsky and the differences between Panofskian iconology and Warburg, See Georges Didi-Huberman, "Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time", in: *Common Knowledge*, 9(2), 2003, pp.273-285. In recent years, there have been a number of studies which sought to implement anachronism along with Didi-Huberman. For this, Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, New York, NY 2010; Amy Knight Powell, *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum*, New York, NY 2012.
59. Orhan Pamuk writes, "The sea is not a foreign realm to me, fearsome and deadly, but a part of my day-today life, like a boulevard, a park, a street—as it is for most of us who live in Istanbul. When I look at the Bosphorus and at the Sea of Marmara, I don't think of pirate raids, ship-wrecking storms and cities flattened by tsunamis; nor do I think of waves, like Calvino's Mr Palomar. At any given moment of any ordinary day, a single glance at the Bosphorus in the distance can make me feel at home, in a familiar realm. The sea in Istanbul is like a trusty old friend. I never doubt it. I see it every day. If I go too long without seeing it, I feel bere. But once a year, that trust is broken, and on that day I discover there is a whole other sea inside of me. On that day I remember that the sea is a large and terrifying world full of chemical salts, weird insects, crusty creatures, and poisonous fish, an infernal liquid that could engulf me at a moment's notice and drown me before I have a chance to catch my breath. On that day I also realise there is a connection between the vastness of the sea and the darkness in my mind. That is the day in early June when, somewhere in Istanbul, I take my first dip of the year. No sooner do my feet touch the water than my body remembers, even before my mind can catch up, that the sea is a salty, sticky thing that will burn my eyes and invade the innermost parts of my being. I take small steps further into the slightly dirty water, but stand on tiptoes to protect myself. That's when I realise with a shudder that my mind and my body must be taking orders from different places". See Orhan Pamuk, "The Sea", in: *14th Istanbul Biennial: SALTWATER Catalogue*, ed. Carolyn Christov-Bakar-giev, Istanbul 2015, p. 116.
60. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin: The fire of the gods drives us to set forth by day and by night*, trans. James Mitchell, San Francisco, CA 2004, p. 39.

Zusammenfassung

Over the last 30 years, Aby Warburg (1866-1929) has emerged as one of the principal figures of not just art history but the humanities in general. This recent interest in Warburg has arguably been spawned by the exhibition of the fully recovered version of Warburg's last and unfinished project, *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1927-1929), at Haus der Kulturen Welt in Berlin, which is primarily a contemporary art venue. This paper will discuss why Warburg's thinking has unexpectedly resurfaced in academia today. In this regard, it will argue that one of the reasons is Warburg's and postwar-era scholars' insistence on the multiplicity of time. To arrive at such a significant understanding of time, the paper will show how the emergence of geological metaphors was crucial both for Warburg and postwar scholars. In this regard, the paper will underline the similarities between one of the most influential historians of the postwar era, Reinhart Koselleck, and his notion of *Zeitschichten* (sediments of time) and Warburg's formulation of *leitfossil* (index fossils). The paper will argue that these metaphors are the result of a fluid topological understanding of space rather than a static topographic understanding. Moreover, the paper will underline how academia since the 1980s has fostered such a topological space. Thus, the paper will ultimately argue that Warburg has become prominent in contemporary scholarship due to his formulation of the multiplicity of time which arose from his topological understanding.

Autor

Mehmet Berkay Sülek is a PhD candidate in Art History at AHM, University of Amsterdam. His PhD project investigates the art historiographical challenges posed by large-scale contemporary art exhibitions and how Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas (1927-1929) can help provide answers to these questions. His writing has appeared in Third Text Online, Espace:art actuel, and Art&Education.

Titel

Mehmet Sülek, The Geological Metaphor and Multiplicity of Time in Aby Warburg's Thinking and the Post-war Era, in: kunsttexte.de, Nr. 2, 2023 (9 Seiten), www.kunsttexte.de.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48633/ksttx.2023.2.98875>