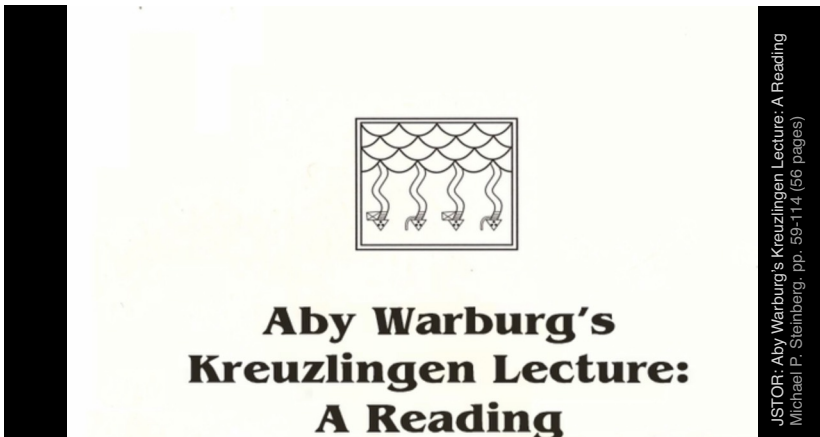


Serpent as lightning.
Reproduction of an altar floor, kiva ornamentation

Retrieving a sample from a *sequence* and splicing it with a *consequence*—whenever these are adjacent and *contemporary*—is a way of creating from this *crossover*, a link imbued with *thought* and *extension*. Such crossovers *can* involve writing, but more frequently do *not*. But they remain readable.

That is, in the sense that a third party—one following in the trail, or foot-steps, of the creator—can read them. It features the specific readability of the *atlas*, discussed by Georges Did-Huberman in his short book on Warburg's *Mnemosyne* project. *Reading what has never been written*.

Third party readability derives from the affordances of the *metalepsis*: i.e., contents of thought or extension that are caught up by and impacted by the course of events. While the *metonym* proceeds at severing this connection, the *synecdoche* developing it. Metalepsis is a *sustained* synecdoche.



JSTOR: Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture: A Reading
Michael P. Steinberg, pp. 59-114 (56 pages)

A kiva-motif from an altar in Hopi country is reproduced in drawing, and subsequently included on the title-page of an essay by [Michael Steinberg](#), on the lecture given by [Aby Warburg](#) prior to his release from Bellevue, the private asylum in [Kreuzlingen](#), headed by psychiatrist [Ludwig Binswanger](#).

Aby Warburg's lecture was *not* intended for publication. It was his healing lecture. *Neither* was the Warburg's sick-journal, logged by Binswanger, when he was a resident. How should we understand the *status* of these writings in the train of comprehending *reading what was never written*?

This is *not* a minor issue, since it concerns the majority of archive materials. Such documents are of more/less restricted public access. This mode of access is linked institutionally to the notion of *transparency*. But, to be of public interest, such materials need to be mobilised by an active element.

In the case of Michael P. Steinberg's essay, this element is the reproduction of the *snakes as lightning*: it is *active* in relation to Warburg's lecture in 1923, in the sense that it was observed and recorded by him, during his journey to the Hopi in 1996. As [Asclepius](#) with his serpent-twined staff.

The poison, that caused the ill (Warburg's psychosis), is somehow also *part* of the cure. But the kind of *sympathy* that links the evil to its remedy can work in more than one way. We need to pierce what is summarily understood by a 'symbol'—symbolic and/or symbolism as something *generic*.

The adjunction of the 'serpents as lightning' element is readily overlooked for the contents of Steinberg's texts we are about to read. But we cannot allow ourselves this licence here. Since the adjunction of the element is a prime example of an event catching up with the contents, by *design*.

That is, it is a case of designed *metalepsis*: it is easily overlooked precisely because it comes up from *behind*, and thereby features a *rear view*. From this vantage-point it is *not* an illustration, but a gesture that releases the lecture from the asylum: itself the term of Warburg's release from Bellevue.

Moreover, of which the present deliberation testifies, it is readability to a *3rd party*. This third party readability is the hallmark of the synecdoche, at that specific point where an active element is [transposed](#) from *one* context to a *different* context. The transduction is not a simple transfer, it *transforms*.

For better or for worse—healing or curse—it follows the meanders of *anamorphosis*; which, we remember, means 'formed again'. It is *different* from metamorphosis, in the sense that the latter determines a *total* change: a material change into *something else* where the link to substance is *severed*.

The turning of symbol into *emblem*—the snake twined rod of Asclepius as a *medical emblem*—in which *sympathy* amounts to *mimesis*: as bad repels bad. Not to be overtaken by *metonymy*, the synecdoche must remain ever *restless*. It transposes the *work of time* unto the *work of living*. Actively.