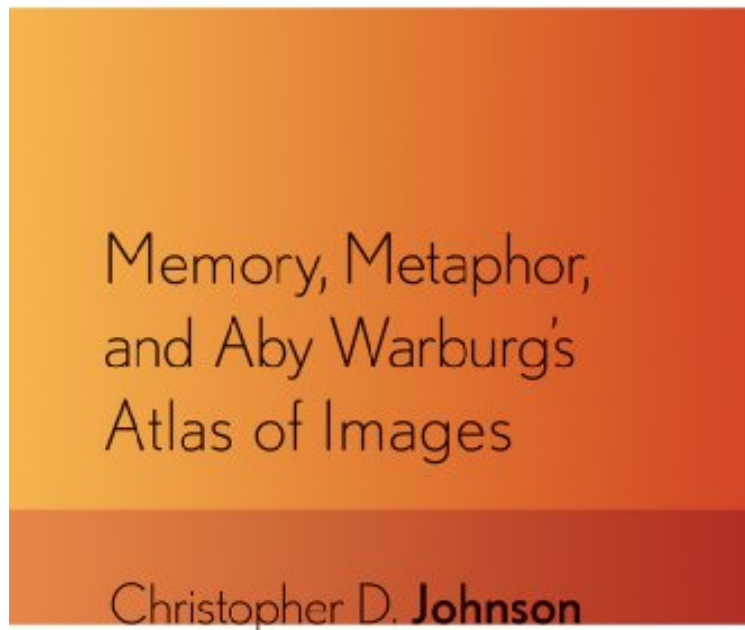


(Free) Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images (Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought)

## Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images (Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought)

*Christopher D. Johnson*

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**Christopher D. Johnson : Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images (Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images (Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very worthwhileBy janet tysonThe author is passionate about his

subject--Warburg and his Atlas--but is able to assess the work in terms of its weaknesses as well as its strengths. Johnson's analysis through the lens of metaphor (and his discussions of various approaches to metaphor) are particularly useful and enriching.

The work of German cultural theorist and art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929) has had a lasting effect on how we think about images. This book is the first in English to focus on his last project, the encyclopedic Atlas of Images: Mnemosyne. Begun in earnest in 1927, and left unfinished at the time of Warburg's death in 1929, the Atlas consisted of sixty-three large wooden panels covered with black cloth. On these panels Warburg carefully, intuitively arranged some thousand black-and-white photographs of classical and Renaissance art objects, as well as of astrological and astronomical images ranging from ancient Babylon to Weimar Germany. Here and there, he also included maps, manuscript pages, and contemporary images taken from newspapers. Trying through these constellations of images to make visible the many polarities that fueled antiquity's afterlife, Warburg envisioned the Atlas as a vital form of metaphoric thought. While the nondiscursive, frequently digressive character of the Atlas complicates any linear narrative of its themes and contents, Christopher D. Johnson traces several thematic sequences in the panels. By drawing on Warburg's published and unpublished writings and by attending to Warburg's cardinal idea that "pathos formulas" structure the West's cultural memory, Johnson maps numerous tensions between word and image in the Atlas. In addition to examining the work itself, he considers the literary, philosophical, and intellectual-historical implications of the Atlas. As Johnson demonstrates, the Atlas is not simply the culmination of Warburg's lifelong study of Renaissance culture but the ultimate expression of his now literal, now metaphoric search for syncretic solutions to the urgent problems posed by the history of art and culture.

"Johnson's dense, rich, often digressive book defies summary. It is centrally concerned with Mnemosyne as a work of cultural memory based not on metonymy, like modernist montages, but on metaphor. . . . He does much both to illuminate the Mnemosyne project and to place Warburg in the larger context of philosophical and critical thinking about metaphor."?Ritchie Robertson, *Modern Language* (January 2014) "Who could ever tire of Aby Warburg and his ceaselessly meandering mind? Can we ever read enough about this idiosyncratic and brilliant thinker? Probably not. Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images is a most erudite and thoughtful analysis of Warburg's role in twentieth-century intellectual history. Christopher D. Johnson focuses on the way Warburg's triumph is rooted in metaphor and metonymy."?Michael Ann Holly, Starr Director of Research and Academic Program, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute "This is a rich and learned book, and also an extremely humane and attractive one. The final chapter, on Warburg and Bruno, has the status of revelation. It is absolutely fascinating, not only as a dialogue in intellectual history but also as a political allegory. Christopher D. Johnson pays close attention to Warburg's ethical and epistemological aspirations when he focuses on Warburg's final and uncompleted project: the Atlas of Images. Assembled during the years prior to his death in 1929, these collages strove to mount a history of cultural memory via a dense series of images from antiquity to the present."?Michael P. Steinberg, Director of the Cogut Humanities Center and Barnaby Conrad and Mary Critchfield Keeney Professor of History and Professor of Music, Brown University  
About the Author Christopher D. Johnson is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University. He is the author of *Hyperboles: The Rhetoric of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought*.