

VIRTUAL MATERIALITY: THE INTERSECTION OF ABY WARBURG AND GILLES DELEUZE

Summary. The article analyses intersecting points between Aby Warburg's theory of memory and Gilles Deleuze's concept of virtuality. This study aims to supplement Warburg's interpretations by Giorgio Agamben, Georges Didi-Huberman, Philippe-Alain Michaud, and other scholars who rely on poststructuralist theories. These ideas highlight several aspects of the problematic field in contemporary art history, including criticism of traditional art research methods and the idea of the dynamism of the artwork. Based on a comparative genetic method, Warburg's theory of memory is examined through Gilles Deleuze's concept of virtuality, which unites the theories of both scholars via the virtual memory concept of Warburg's contemporary, Henri Bergson. The study reveals how the ontological connotations of Warburg's *Pathosformel* and *Dynamogramm* are unveiled through Deleuze's philosophical framework. This approach localises a part of Warburg's theory as a starting point for a poststructuralist-inspired rereading of Warburg's image theory. It is argued that the dynamogram, when adapted through Deleuze's philosophical concepts, emerges as a material expression of memory encompassing the plane of virtuality.

Keywords: Aby Warburg, memory, Henri Bergson, dynamogram, Gilles Deleuze, materiality, virtuality.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary history of art research and visual studies influenced by poststructuralist theories go beyond formal research methods and develop new approaches based on interdisciplinary insights and the critique of epistemology. In the context of post-structuralism, traditional iconographic and iconological approaches have become insufficient. The ideas of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and other theorists suggest that the meaning of a work or text is fluid and cannot be unequivocally defined. For example, such art historical movements as the New Art History and the Visual Turn, instead of analysing formalistic material, delve into the visual structure of the artwork itself, incorporating various research methodologies. Therefore, the ideas of Aby Warburg, a pioneer of iconology, are particularly relevant in contemporary art history discourse as he was one of the first to initiate the shift in art history from the formal analysis of art research to comparative, cultural art studies. Contemporary theorists interpret his ideas through philosophical, poststructuralist lenses. His ideas are crucial in current discourses on images,

image culture, and memory technologies. The *Mnemosyne Atlas* inspires memory technology researchers, visual system practitioners, and digital art history theorists, especially those who use rhizomatic image access systems instead of traditional classification. While earlier art historians like Erwin Panofsky, Ernst Cassirer, and E. Gombrich adhered to traditional Neo-Kantian principles in Warburg's studies, contemporary scholars interpret Warburg's contributions through poststructuralist, often Deleuzian, perspectives. Influential contemporary theorists such as Giorgio Agamben, Georges Didi-Huberman, and Philippe-Alain Michaud exemplify this approach. For instance, Michaud's book *Warburg and the Image in Motion*¹ shows indirect yet clear connections to Deleuze's concept of the Movement-Image (*L'image-mouvement*). Agamben, in his essay "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science",² applies the concept of the interval, akin to Deleuze's notion of virtuality. Didi-Huberman, drawing on Deleuzian concepts, identifies the idea of the aesthetics of forces in Warburg's theory, leading to the fluid meaning of images in his study *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's*

History of Art.³ In these researches Deleuze's concepts serve as tools to trace the grounds of the dynamic essence of images and their rhizomatic interactions pertinent in contemporary interdisciplinary image studies.

The theme of memory in Warburg's philosophy is an essential concept that enables a consistent understanding of the phenomenon of visuality, and is pertinent within the context of contemporary art theory because it includes anachronism and correlates with the theory of virtual memory as duration developed by Henri Bergson, Warburg's contemporary. This Bergsonian context of Warburg can be seen as the primary link to Deleuze's philosophy, where the concept of virtuality is also closely related to Bergson's notion of virtual memory. Thus, this concept is seen as a very useful tool for analysing Warburg's theory, through Deleuze's philosophy and it adds additional connotations revealing the meaning of Warburg's concepts in a new way. Virtuality in Deleuze's philosophical frame is essentially a phenomenon of the past and fundamental characteristic of reality, which is formulated in the Aristotelian context of the distinction between potentiality and actuality. Reality-actuality presupposes a tangible and defined plane, while virtuality, detached from the Aristotelian meaning of potentiality, is characterised by the immanent categories of event and becoming.

The event as a virtual plain in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari has had a strong influence on art theory. Their influence functions as deterritorialisation of art history as a separation from the traditional methods of iconography and iconology, which embraces the representation characteristic of the above-mentioned methods. The event (*événement*), according to G. Chirolla and J. F. M. Mosquera, is the reason for this new approach in art history as it expresses the separation from historical or factual connotations. Within art analysis, this concept ushers in a new perspective on art history.⁴ When a historical event in Deleuze's philosophy corresponds to the plane of actuality, a non-historical one corresponds to virtuality. In Deleuze's philosophy, the event is virtual

and does not reveal the actual moments, but rather the active forces, their dynamics and ontological depth.

The subject of this study is the interaction between Warburg's theory of memory and Deleuze's concept of virtuality. Considering the influence of Deleuze's philosophy on art theory and its connections with Warburg's theory on memory, this article aims to deepen the existing interpretations of Warburg's ideas inspired by poststructuralist thought. It localises the point in Warburg's theory that correlates with Deleuze's philosophical themes, which have inspired contemporary research on art and visual phenomena, particularly focusing on the indeterminacy of the meaning of the work of art. The article asserts that Warburg's concept of the dynamogram, reinterpreted through Deleuze's philosophical framework emerges as a material manifestation of memory that encompasses the plane of virtuality and serves as a foundational starting point for contemporary interpretations of Warburg's theory. Based on comparative-genetic method, the article delineates its analysis into two stages: firstly, it provides the analysis of the concept of virtuality and its connecting points in the theories of Warburg, Bergson, and Deleuze; secondly, Warburg's dynamogram is elucidated as an embodiment of virtual substance.

VIRTUALITY AND MEMORY: ABY WARBURG, HENRI BERGSON AND GILLES DELEUZE

Art historian Aby Warburg is best known for his initiation of the Mnemosyne project, which is considered innovative and revolutionary because it proposes a new methodology for art research. He rejects the iconographic practice of the time, which was based on periodisation and categorisation by plot and genre. Instead of traditional methods, Warburg offers an anachronistic and comparativist approach to art studies. Its most important example is the Mnemosyne Atlas, which Warburg used to analyse the repetition and transformation of visual motifs in various cultural phenomena.

Warburg introduced the concept of iconological analysis,⁵ which, unlike the previously applied formalistic methods characteristic of the 19th-century art historians, included intellectual, cultural, and social contexts, emphasising the anthropological dimensions of the work of art and the fact that it contains a certain emotional and intellectual energy. This energy is an expression of cultural memory, which Warburg mainly explored as the repetition of antique motifs in Renaissance art. So, the essential element of memory and its function emphasised in Warburg's theory is the highest point of tension that enables continuity: "The faculty of memory activates the mneme of our enduring inherited constitution, but its intention in doing so is not primarily to protect; rather it employs the full force of the person – passionately fearful, unsettled by religious mystery (...), just as on the other hand science, which records, retains and passes on the rhythmic structure in which the monsters of our imaginations become the life-leaders that determine our future."⁶ Warburg treats memory as a tool of culture and artistic creation, evoking the highest mental tension that pulsates and repeats itself in different periods due to the capacity for remembrance. He tried to reveal this pulsation by constructing the Mnemosyne Atlas, consisting of photographs of various works of art mounted on plates, whose central axis and principle are expressed through the concepts of pathos formulas and dynamograms.

For the first time, the concept of pathos formulas was introduced in Warburg's text "Dürer and Italian Antiquity" (*Dürer und die italienische Antike*, 1905). In this work, Warburg examines depictions of the death of Orpheus, including Albrecht Dürer's 1505 sketch and images from the ancient period found in vase decoration. Warburg selected these pieces to illustrate the influence of ancient motifs on the stylistic evolution of Renaissance art. According to Warburg, their comparison with motifs on the theme of the death of Orpheus in the decoration of Greek vases and other works reveals that the Greek depiction of emotional gestures had a major influence on them. In this context, Warburg, as far as is known, introduces the concept of

the pathetic formula for the first time: "Northern Italian sketchbook in Lord Rosebery's collection, the Orpheus plate in the Correr collection, a plaque in the Berlin Museum, and a drawing (by Giulio Romano?) in the Louvre – supply almost identical proofs of the vigor with which this archaeologically authentic emotive formula [Pathosformel], based on an antique Orpheus or Pentheus, had taken root in Renaissance artistic circles."⁷

Named after the personification of memory, the Mnemosyne project revolves around memory as its central axis, a concept that resonates closely with Bergsonian philosophy in many respects. The link between Warburg's and Bergson's theories, centred on a critique of epistemological methods, is articulated by cultural anthropologist Martha Blassnigg: "In a reading of Warburg's approach from a Bergsonian perspective it could be said that the Mnemosyne opens up the formalism in art in order to get in touch with the underlying vital principles and creative energies, which are accessible through the timeless pathos formulas that carry the dynamism of its principle."⁸ In her analysis of the Mnemosyne project, Blassnigg asserts that Warburg's conception of memory, drawn from the theories of Richard Semon and Ewald Hering as a system of temporal energy storage and transfer, could be explained in resonance with Bergson's notion of memory, which views memory as a movement from the past to the present. She argues that, for Bergson, memory entails the actualisation of a memory image, prompted by the tension of consciousness toward present perception conditions, as well as the imaginations and desires of the remembering subject. Blassnigg suggests that Warburg's mnemonic method aligns closely with Bergson's perspective, as the Mnemosyne project also anticipates a movement from the past toward its reproduction through archaic symbols in images.⁹ Warburg analyses the emotional charge contained within memory, which evolves and actualises in various creative forms, leaving traces (dynamograms) in cultural phenomena.

Meanwhile Deleuze's philosophical project is also closely related to Bergson's theory and functions as

a critical tool against the identity principle established in classical philosophy as a model of thought, limiting the process of becoming and creation. He scrutinises this classical model prevalent in Western metaphysics since Plato, which presupposes the function of recognition: “We take as a model the process of recognition – in other words, a common sense or employment of all the faculties on a supposed same object; we designate error, nothing but error, as the enemy to be fought; and we suppose that the true concerns solutions – in other words, propositions capable of serving as answers.”¹⁰ As an alternative to this classical line of thought, Deleuze embraces a fundamentally different philosophical approach, shifting focus from the process of recognition to the method of invention or creativeness. Bergson’s intuitive philosophy profoundly influenced the development of this methodological orientation. Therefore, to delve into the significance of the concept of virtuality within the framework of Warburg’s theory of memory, it is essential to commence the analysis by elucidating the concept of intuition.

In his book *Bergsonism*¹¹ (*Le Bergsonisme*, 1966), where themes of memory and virtuality intersect, Deleuze examines intuition as a philosophical method that enables the expansion of critical thought in terms of epistemology and the critique of identity. Intuition, according to Deleuze, establishes a variable that has the ability to unveil the presumption or the presupposition of what is given. Deleuze interprets Bergsonian intuition as the capacity to transcend the boundaries of truth and falsity, arguing that the rational framing of the question “why is there something rather than nothing?” already imposes an answer. A philosophy grounded in intuition offers an alternative approach – an experiential and immanent one – rather than an external and rational perspective on an object: “We go beyond experience, toward the conditions of experience (but these are not, in the Kantian manner, the conditions of all possible experience: They are the conditions of real experience).”¹²

In Immanuel Kant’s philosophical framework, the apprehension of reality is posited as inherently unknowable – it is an image created by the intellect, and the noumenon, as a thing-in-itself, is ungraspable by the intellect. The Bergsonian concept of intuition allows the transcendence of this epistemological limit by linking the image of the intellect with duration. Contrary to Kant, Bergson proposes to understand consciousness in terms of time, i.e. as duration, as a qualitative rather than a quantitative multiplicity, thus in his philosophy, intuition is equated with memory, not with pure perception. In this way, in Bergson’s philosophy, intuition becomes inseparable from the concept of duration, and duration from memory, which in both Deleuze’s and Bergson’s philosophies is understood as virtual – implying multiplicity in the context of qualitative, temporal consciousness. It points to the heterogeneity of time, its overlap, which is an important element linking, as we will see later, the concept of memory in Bergson and Warburg’s theories.

In the context of memory mechanisms, Bergson introduces the distinction between actuality and virtuality. This fundamental principle of memory’s operation is examined in his second book, “Matter and Memory” (*Matière et mémoire*, 1896), where the functioning of memory is elucidated through the metaphor of a cone.¹³ The area at the base of the apex of a cone represents the actual representation. The volume of the cone itself represents virtual memories, ranging from those nearest to the realm of actuality to the most distant ones indicated by the cone’s widening. This Bergsonian figure itself cannot indicate movement, but it is important to emphasise that the mechanism is constantly in motion, as memories are multiplying and movement also takes place between images that suddenly emerge from the subconscious.

The cone metaphor also illustrates the idea that memory as duration and virtuality is essentially assigned to the past. However, it is important to emphasise that present and past intersect. Deleuze, in his analysis of Bergson’s concept of memory, argues that the conventional understanding of the

past and future as a linear structure is erroneous: “We have thus confused Being with being-present. Nevertheless, the present is not; rather, it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It is not, but it acts. Its proper element is not being but the active or the useful. The past, on the other hand, has ceased to act or to be useful. But it has not ceased to be. Useless and inactive, impassive, it IS, in the full sense of the word: It is identical with being in itself.”¹⁴

Hence, in Bergson’s philosophy, the past operates in the present, while the present is in a perpetual state of flux. Memory, conceived as duration, enables continual transformation and differentiation of an object, not in terms of quantity, but quality. The concept of duration performs a special function here that reveals the relevance and significance of Bergson’s philosophy – memory, which is contained in the concept of duration, emerges as the becoming. Memories are constantly changing as they accumulate and assimilate. A future memory will already be embedded in an ever-increasing reservoir of memory perceived in this ever-changing context.

It is important to point out that the concept of virtuality dissociates the concepts of memory and duration from the psychological connotation. Memory is essentially virtual and therefore cannot be psychologised, even though it refers to the Freudian distinction between consciousness and subconsciousness. According to Laura Junutyte, Bergson’s and later Deleuze’s understanding of the subconscious alludes to an ontological reality.¹⁵ Psychological significance emerges through the actualisation of virtuality — by bringing memory into the present. However, here, memory is conceptualised as a virtual space, wherein the times of present and past coexist. This is precisely why Deleuze refers to time as the deepest paradox of memory, as the past is simultaneous with the present.¹⁶

Building upon the concepts of virtuality and actuality discussed in Deleuze’s and Bergson’s philosophies, we can now assert that the notion of formula suggests not only repetition but also the potential for actualisation, signifying recurrence

in subsequent cultural phenomena. Moreover, the implications of *Pathosformel* enable it to be aligned with virtuality as a pre-reflective energy, akin to the energy of becoming or duration accumulated through experience in Bergson’s philosophy. As previously discussed, duration signifies the inherent expanse of experience within the memory concepts of Deleuze and Bergson, serving as one of the fundamental categories of virtuality and implying a qualitative, rather than quantitative, distinction. Consequently, the concept of energy employed in Warburg’s theory can be equated with the concepts of duration and virtuality, grounded in the principle of immanence. Blassnigg observes that Warburg’s principle of montage, which investigates and illustrates the trajectories of associations, bears resemblance to Bergson’s concept of cognitive memory processes: “Consistent with Bergson’s understanding of movement as the transference of an experienced state rather than a moving object Warburg transferred movement to an inner principle and saw it no longer merely as an external force. His method can in this sense be understood as constituting a transition from a representation of movement, from an embodiment of life in motion to the psychology of the interior – a meta-psychology for a historical study of the human psyche.”¹⁷

The concept of virtuality is used in the context of Deleuze’s philosophy to distinguish the pre-reflective energy operating in memory from the actualised phenomenon that already acquires a psychological expression. Precisely for this reason, it was necessary to emphasise the separation of Deleuze’s concept of virtuality from psychological connotations. In Warburg’s theoretical frame this idea of pre-reflective and virtual instead of psychological energy is strengthened by Giorgio Agamben’s insight that the symbol in Warburg’s theory belongs to no man’s land, i.e. it is the interval (*Zwischenraum*) between consciousness and primitive reactions, between history as the expression of consciousness and anthropology as the unconscious. Agamben contends that this “no man’s land”, existing in a state of “between”, is what Warburg referred to as the nameless science and underscores why Mnemosyne – the mother of the three muses

– assumed central importance in Warburg's theory.¹⁸ The symbol mentioned in Agamben's theory correlates with Warburgian concept of dynamogram. It describes the traces of pathetic energy that remain in cultural phenomena. These are visual and material objects that, based on the concepts of pre-reflexivity, immanence and qualitative difference, contain the plane of virtuality.

DYNAMOGRAM AS VIRTUAL MATERIALITY

It can be said that the neologism "dynamogram" created by Warburg expresses the most mature and complete concept of his image perception. As Didi-Huberman observes: "Late in his career Warburg himself stated that his entire interdisciplinary project – joining art history, history, and social psychology (*kunstgeschichtlich, historisch und sozialpsychologisch*) – should eventually yield a grand 'aesthetics of the dynamogram' (*Aesthetik des Dynamogrammes*)."¹⁹ In Warburg's context, the concepts of *Pathosformel* and dynamogram are parallel. However, the concept of the dynamogram appeared only in the late years of the scientist's life, and it deepened the concept of *Pathosformel*, supplementing it with the function of energy transfer and conversion.²⁰ The dynamogram concept is more fundamental in terms of the innovativeness of Warburg's research, since it is the emphasis on the transfer function that presupposes an even clearer basis for thinking about the dynamism of the image and thus deepens the difference from traditional formalism-based art research. Christopher D. Johnson notes that: "Some twenty years after the essay on Dürer, wrestling with his *Bilderatlas*, Warburg effectively leaves the iconographic path that his successors, Panofsky, Gombrich, and Wittkower, will later follow in his name. He chooses instead to convert his *Pathosformeln* into 'dynamograms' – metaphors infused with Bacchic, emotive energy that also, remarkably, obey the grammar of form".²¹ When the *Pathosformel* concept prioritises the manifestations of emotional expression in art, the dynamogram is more focused on the fact of transference, because it contains the concept of

an engram – the trace – created by the energy of movement.

Despite the fact that the concept of dynamogram emerged later, but the idea of the engrams as the material traces of the ancient energy were already present in Warburg's earliest works. For example, in his dissertation, he identified the moving accessories (*bewegtes Beiwerk*) characteristic of the depiction of nymphs: "It is possible to trace, step by step, how the artists and their advisers recognized 'the antique' as a model that demanded an intensification of outward movement, and how they turned to antique sources whenever accessory forms – those of garments and of hair – were to be represented in motion".²² Warburg emphasises that the motifs of the moving hair and clothing are tendentious in early fifteenth-century painting. He also notes that Alberti, in his *Libro della pittura*, warned artists that they must be careful and attentive when depicting a movement in a way that it corresponds to the direction of the wind. However, according to Warburg, the paintings reveal a compromise between anthropological imagination and realistic depiction.²³ He points out that the folds in the back of the grace on the right can only be created with the help of a string, but in the transparent material of the garment, no string is visible, therefore for this visual effect, the reality is sacrificed. Warburg also notices this discrepancy in a painting attributed to Botticelli entitled *Venus and the Three Graces offering to a young girl* (1486–1490), which depicts three virgins carrying gifts to Giovanna degli Albizzi during her wedding day with Lorenzo Tornabuoni. Young women's fluttering folds of clothing also seem miraculously unrestrained by straps or cords.²⁴

The relationship of memory as a virtual phenomenon encounters a contradiction, as Warburg's theory of memory itself finds its origins in neurophysiology. However, the virtual dimension of the concept of the dynamogram is demonstrated through the idea of memory as potential energy, adopted from Richard Semon. Researcher Claudia Wedepohl observes that Warburg first encountered ideas from neurophysiology in 1894 while attending

lectures by memory studies specialist Hermann Ebbinghaus. Furthermore, she posits that Warburg was likely to have read Ewald Hering's "On Memory as a General Function of Organized Matter" (*Über das Gedächtnis als eine allgemeine Funktion der organisierten Materie*, 1870) during that period. Wedepohl suggests that it was from Hering that Warburg adopted terminology for his theories of individual and collective memory. She underscores Hering's assertion that memory must be material, as the processes constituting it are subconscious – comparable to a certain genotype within the substance composing nerves.²⁵ Wedepohl highlights that Warburg replaces what Hering considers matter (*Materie*), namely the substance of the brain or nervous system where memory operates, with cultural production in his theory. This adjustment is evident in another text by Warburg – "Memory of Antiquity as a Function of Organised Matter" (*Erinnerung an die Antike als Funktion der organisierten Materie*) – wherein Hering's terminology becomes a tool for Warburg to elucidate the phenomenon of symbol expression or manifestation.²⁶

On the other hand, as one of Warburg's most important conceptions, the dynamogram, finds its origins in Richard Semon's conception of the engram, it is one of the reasons to think that Semon's influence was crucial. Agamben notices that it was Gombrich who revealed Richard Semon's influence on Warburg's theory and the emergence of his dynamogram concept. Unlike Hering, Semon posited that memory is not material, but rather potential energy as a quality which is preserved in the engram as an imprint and that can be activated under specific conditions.²⁷ According to Agamben: The symbol and the image play the same role for Warburg as the "engram" does in Semon's conception of the individual's nervous system; they are the crystallisation of an energetic charge and an emotional experience that survive as an inheritance transmitted by social memory and that, like electricity condensed in a Leyden jar, become effective only through contact with the "selective will" of a particular period. The engram, representing the concept of an individual nervous system in Semon's theory, is transformed into a symbol and image in Warburg's theory.²⁸

Under conditions of heightened tension, it is adopted by artists in the form of a dynamogram.²⁹ Considering the alignment of Warburg's theory of memory as a virtual phenomenon, it can be argued that Semon's concept, rather than Hering's, is more closely aligned with Warburg's thinking. A purely physical interpretation of memory would neglect its dimension of virtuality and immanence, crucial elements in the concept of duration, which preserves memory in the form of an prereflective pathos. And virtual memory, as a pre-reflective quality, as potentiality in a Deleuzian sense, as change and energy, enables the significance of a material symbol to be elevated to the plane of virtuality, embodying the process of cultural evolution, charged with primordial experiences of desire, suffering, or ecstasy.

Georges Didi-Huberman is one of the most influential contemporary scholars on Warburg, whose interpretations are inseparable from the influence of Deleuze's philosophy. His book, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, significantly contributed to the re-reading of Warburg's theory and its relevance in the context of contemporary history of art. Similar to Didi-Huberman's own approach to visual studies, his interpretation of Warburg's theory also reflects the strong influence of Gilles Deleuze's ideas. In the aforementioned book, it is noted that Didi-Huberman central focus is on the Deleuzian interpretation of Nietzsche's eternal return, which is centred on Warburg's concept of survival. As G. Chiolla and J. F. M. Mosquera observe: "For Didi-Huberman, Nietzsche wrote about the immanence of plastic force, and Deleuze interpreted this as the repetition of difference, but it was Warburg who applied superior empiricism to art history."³⁰ In analysing Warburg's concept of the dynamogram, he also draws on Deleuzian philosophical ideas, which allow for the ontologisation of this aspect of Warburg's theory. This is evidenced by the fundamentally Deleuzian use of the concept of the aesthetics of forces in Warburg's analysis. Didi-Huberman states: "We could say, in fact, that Warburg's dynamogram is an attempt to

answer Nietzsche's call for a psychology, but also for an *aesthetic of forces* and not of meanings."³¹

The interaction between virtuality and materiality in the dynamogram reveals itself as a dialectical tension. As Warburg states: "The dynamograms of ancient art are handed down in a state of maximal tension but unpolarized with regard to the passive or active energy charge to the responding, imitating, or remembering artists. It is only the contact with the new age that results in polarization. This polarization can lead to a radical reversal (inversion) of the meaning they held for classical antiquity."³² Also: "Polarizing of the energies of images coined in the memory stores of ancient art as an elemental psychological process."³³ Viewing the dynamogram as a dialectical concept through Deleuze's philosophy, or more precisely Deleuze's Nietzschean interpretation as adapted by Didi-Huberman in his analysis of Warburg's theory, it becomes clear that this tension is created by certain opposing poles. In Deleuze's Nietzschean interpretation, these poles are the Dionysian and Apollonian principles. In Warburg's theory, as Didi-Huberman notes: "Olympian and demonic categories of culture",³⁴ which act within the concept of the dynamogram as fundamental components of the image, expressing the relationship between form and force, as well as spirit and matter.

The concept of virtual materiality could be further elucidated by an adaptation of Deleuzian Didi-Huberman's theory of Warburg's dynamogram by notion of the symptom, specifically the material expression of the symptom in an artwork. Didi-Huberman referred symptom to a patch (*le pan*), contrasting with the iconographic principle of detail. This term is borrowed by Didi-Huberman from Marcel Proust's "In Search of Lost Time" (*À la recherche du temps perdu*, 1906–1922), where the protagonist, writer Bergotte, contemplates a yellow patch in Jan Vermeer's painting "View of Delft" (circa 1661) before his death, disrupting the usual logic of the painting. Didi-Huberman links the materiality of the artwork – the peculiarity of the pigment, the paint stain – with an Aristotelian concept of matter – undefined, indicating tension

and desire, bypassing the representational object.³⁵ Thus, the patch signifies a material element of the artwork yet is infused with Deleuzian virtuality. The aesthetic forces unleashed by the materiality of an artwork are indeterminate, virtual, yet also genuine. This Didi-Huberman's example demonstrates how Warburg's concept of the dynamogram, which is based on the coexistence of virtuality and matter, can be adapted. It shows how virtuality, imbued with pre-reflective emotions, transcends the plane of representation.

CONCLUSIONS

This article aimed to reveal the intersecting points between the Warburg's theory of memory and Deleuze's concept of virtuality, identifying the fundamental structure of visual dynamism relevant in today's art history discourse. It was found that Warburg's theoretical movement, by which he questions the traditional formalist methodology of art studies, which operates based on the identification of the meaning of a work of art, correlates with Deleuze's philosophical project, by which he criticises the concepts of traditional Western metaphysics, based on the principles of identity and recognition that suspend the opportunity for becoming and change. The common starting point for both scholars in this context the Bergsonian idea of virtual memory. In the context of Warburg's and Deleuze's theories, the most important aspect of this virtual memory is anachronism, which emphasises the coexistence and constant transformation. The ontological connotation of Deleuze's concept of virtuality allows us to conceive Warburg's *Pathos-formel* as pre-reflective energy, thereby detaching his theory from its exclusively psychological origin, that confines it to the plane of actuality. Meanwhile, in Warburg's theory, virtual memory as pre-reflective energy is revealed as based on the non-historical categories, which encompasses duration and becoming.

Despite the neuroscientific (Ewald Hering and Richard Semon) origin of Warburg's idea of memory, it turns out that it is the concept of a

dynamogram that further confirms the ontological connotation of Warburg's idea of memory and its closeness to Deleuze's concept of virtuality. The engram from which this concept was derived was taken from Semon's theory, which, unlike his predecessor Hering, treated memory as potential energy. Therefore, engrams, as a material trace in the form of a symbol, and the connotations of dynamism converging in the concept of a dynamogram, correspond to the idea of virtual materiality. This integration of the concept of virtuality into the genesis of Warburg's theory reveals a structure and localises a place that coincides with the problems of contemporary art theory discourse and breaks away from its traditional methods. These philosophical instruments open the depths of the concept of a work of art as a dynamic entity. The application of the plane of virtuality as an ever-changing plane to Warburg's theory highlights the fluidity mechanism of the material symbol.

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Notes

- ¹ Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2007).
- ² Giorgio Agamben, "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science," in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 89–103.
- ³ Georges Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017).
- ⁴ Gustavo Chirolla and Juan Fernando Mejía Mosquera, "Deleuze and Didi-Huberman on Art History," in *Art History after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Stephen

Zepke (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2017), 91–104, 28.

⁵ It is important to emphasise that Warburg's follower, Erwin Panofsky, also known for his iconology, developed different approaches, but these were often criticised for his traditional, formalist view of this method.

⁶ Aby Warburg, *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne – The Original* (Berlin: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, London: The Warburg Institute, 2020), 20.

⁷ Warburg, "Dürer and Italian Antiquity," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 553–558, 555.

⁸ Martha Blassnigg, "Ekphrasis and a Dynamic Mysticism in Art: Reflections on Henri Bergson's Philosophy and Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas," in *New Realities: Being Syncretic* (Transtechology Research, 2009), 42–45, 44, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-211-78891-2_9

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 16.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*.

¹² *Ibid.*, 23.

¹³ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (London: George Allen & Unwin, New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 211.

¹⁴ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 55.

¹⁵ Laura Junutyte, *Gilles'is Deleuze'as: filosofijos samprata* (PhD diss., Vilnius University, 2010), 61, accessed 5 February 2024, <http://talpykla.elaba.lt/elaba-fedora/objects/elaba:1737738/datastreams/MAIN/content>

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 58.

¹⁷ Blassnigg, "Ekphrasis and a Dynamic Mysticism in Art: Reflections on Henri Bergson's Philosophy and Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas," in *New Realities: Being Syncretic* (Transtechology Research, 2009), 42–45, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-211-78891-2_9

¹⁸ Agamben, "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science," in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 99–100, 89–103.

¹⁹ Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017), 109–110, quoted in Aby Warburg, "Allgemeine Ideen," *III.io2.i*, WIA, London, 1927, 9.

²⁰ Daniela Sacco, "The Braided Weave of Mnemosyne: Aby Warburg, Carl Gustav Jung, James Hillman," *La Rivista di Engramma* 114 (March 2014), 79.

²¹ Christopher Dyer Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 64.

²² Warburg, "Sandro Botticelli's Birth of Venus and Spring: An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance (1893)," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 89, 553–558.

²³ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁵ Claudia Wedepohl, "Mnemonics, Mneme and Mnemosyne: Aby Warburg's Theory of Memory," *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 20, No. 2 (2014), 385–402, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24339072>, 392–393

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 396–397.

²⁷ Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), 242.

²⁸ Agamben, "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science," in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 89–103, 93.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁰ Chirolla and Mejía Mosquera, "Deleuze and Didi-Huberman on Art History," in *Art History after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Stephen Zepke (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2017), 91–104.

³¹ Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017), 110.

³² Warburg, 1927, "Allgemeine Ideen," *Notizbuch*, 20, quoted in E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), 248.

³³ *Ibid.*, 248.

³⁴ Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017), 114.

³⁵ Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2005), 236.

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VIRTUALUS MATERIALUMAS: ABY WARBURGO IR GILLES'IO DELEUZE'O SANKIRTA

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojami sąlyčio taškai tarp Aby Warburgo atminties teorijos ir Gilles'io Deleuze'o virtualumo koncepcijos. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama papildyti Warburgo interpretacijas, pradėtas Giorgio Agambeno, Georges'o Didi-Hubermano, Philippe'o-Alaino Michaud bei kitų mokslininkų, kurie remiasi poststruktūralistinėmis idėjomis,

suponuojančiomis tokius šiuolaikinės meno teorijos probleminio lauko aspektus kaip tradicinių meno tyrimo metodų kritika ir kūrinio dinamiškumo idėja. Remiantis palyginamuoju genetiniu metodu, A. Warburgo atminties teorija analizuojama pasitelkus G. Deleuze'o virtualumo koncepciją, kuri vienija abiejų mokslininkų teorijas per A. Warburgo amžininko Henri Bergsono virtualios atminties koncepciją. Tyrimo eigoje atskleidžiama, kaip G. Deleuze'o filosofemų dėka atsiveria ontologinės A. Warburgo „Pathosformel“ ir „Dynamogramm“ konotacijos. Lokalizuojama A. Warburgo teorijos dalis, kuri tampa atspirties tašku poststruktūralistinių idėjų inspiruotam A. Warburgo vaizdo teorijos perskaitymui. Teigiama, jog būtent dinamograma, pritaikant G. Deleuzeo filosofijos koncepcijas, atsiskleidžia kaip materialioji atminties išraiška, apimanti virtualumo plotmę.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Aby Warburgas, atmintis, Henri Bergsonas, dinamograma, Gilles'is Deleuze'as, materialumas, virtualumas.

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