



Despoix, Philippe, and Jillian Tomm, eds. *Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library Network: Intellectual Peregrinations from Hamburg to London and Montreal*

Despoix, Philippe, and Jillian Tomm, eds. 2018. *Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library Network: Intellectual Peregrinations from Hamburg to London and Montreal*. Montreal ; Kingston; London; Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press. \$49.95 ISBN 9780773554634.

This collaborative book uses Raymond Klibansky as a window through which the reader can become acquainted with the agents and circumstances the philosopher encountered and navigated throughout his life. Although the book demonstrates how Klibansky was the result of his context, it is also clear that his intellectual journey, his philosophical and philological enterprises, and his rigorous commitment to knowledge changed the intellectual landscapes of Art History, Medieval Studies, and Philosophy. The title accurately depicts the focus of the book; a discussion of Klibansky that does not acknowledge the network surrounding the Warburg Library is not possible, just as an attempt to revise the history of The Warburg Institute without mention of Klibansky's contributions would be unimaginable. In accordance with the Warburg method that calls for diverse approaches, multiplicity of sources, and varied scholarly inputs, this book brings together contributions from different authors and is a remarkable illustration of how collaborative efforts done right accomplish successful results. The comprehensive knowledge each scholar possesses on Klibansky's work enables this volume to engage with the topics that interested Klibansky. In other words, the structure and content of this book make it an example of the spirit behind Klibansky's and the Warburgian's academic attitude.

To achieve a comprehensive overview of an individual's intellectual endeavors and legacy is not an easy task. The editors asked for contributions focused on three main topics: "Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library network; the continuity of the Platonic tradition and the *Corpus Platonicum Meddi Aevi*; and the *Saturn and Melancholy* project" (Despoix and Tomm 2018, 17). The first section traces Klibansky's years. We learn, for example, that he attended the Odenwaldschule, a progressive school founded by Paul Geheeb, where Klibansky became acquainted with Walter Solmitz, a member of the Warburg network, and with Heinrich Cassirer, son of famous philosopher Ernst Cassirer. The relationship between Cassirer and Warburg is key to understanding Klibansky's introduction to the Warburg sphere and his later work. Cassirer's *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* was dedicated to Aby Warburg; additionally, Warburg's Kreuzlingen lecture *The Snake Ritual* was



Despoix, Philippe, and Jillian Tomm, eds. Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library Network: Intellectual Peregrinations from Hamburg to London and Montreal

not meant to be published, but was intended only to be read by a select few, which included Ernst Cassirer. This shows the respect each scholar had for the other. With regard to this influence on Klibansky directly, this volume recalls in detail the publication process for *Philosophy and History: Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer*, which was edited by Klibansky. However, according to Jean-Philippe Uzel, Klibansky's preface for the 1989 edition of *Saturn and Melancholy* departs from Panofsky's perspective and takes a more Warburgian approach. Warburg and Cassirer are always present in Klibansky's life.

Letters between the members of the Warburg network and the paratextual features of publications are crucial for the texts of this collection. As Jillian Tomm says:

[H]istorians routinely navigate published attributions and references that are by no means innocent of personal vanity or preference, just as correspondence or diaries can be rife with bias or obfuscation. For historians, such aspects can be obstacles, but they are also information; these elements too are part of the true story"

(Despoix and Tomm 2018, 108).

The archival work behind this collective book is rigorous and generous. Through analysis of the letters between members of the Warburg network, we learn how difficult the process of moving the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg to London and turning it into The Warburg Institute was; how crucial Gertrude Bing and Fritz Saxl were in achieving this enterprise; and that Klibansky was invited to become the director of the institute. These personal histories put faces to the evolution of a research institution and further remind us that these people were at the same time subject to the major historical events of the era. For example, the volume illustrates how Nazism in Germany plays a major role in the decision of moving the Bibliothek to another country. World War II saw Klibansky working for the British Secret Service as a political intelligence officer. On the other hand, Niels von Holst, who



Despoix, Philippe, and Jillian Tomm, eds. *Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library Network: Intellectual Peregrinations from Hamburg to London and Montreal*

studied under Panofsky, became a Nazi and worked during the war in the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, “an organization notorious for planning and participating in the Nazi plunder” (Despoix and Tomm 2018, 61), which adds another layer of intricacy to the ideas we may have about the Warburg network. As these texts inform us, Klibansky devoted part of his life to promoting the concept of tolerance. The balance the book strikes between intellectual heritage, personal narratives, and historical processes constructs a panoramic view that does not diminish the complexities of events from the past.

The book examines Klibansky’s intellectual biography, researches the Raymond Klibansky Collection held at McGill’s University Library, retells the importance of the platonic project, and dedicates a very important portion to the publication of *Saturn and Melancholy*. A main part of the discussion is that Panofsky did not want Klibansky to appear as a co-author. According to Panofsky, the title page should have included his name and Saxl’s as co-authors and should then specify “in collaboration with Raymond Klibansky.” However, in a letter to Saxl, he mentions his horror that the book is to be published with himself, Saxl and Klibansky as authors. In a later letter to Bing, he states that Klibansky did not play an appreciable role in the making of the book. However, in a future letter, after receiving a visit from Klibansky, Panofsky withdraws his original objection and says to Bing, “you may formulate the by-line as you please” (Despoix and Tomm 2018, 273). Aside from the interesting process that led to the publication of the *Saturn and Melancholy*, this also resignifies this volume’s front cover which reads “Edited by Phillippe Despoix and Jullian Tomm with the collaboration of Eric Méchoulan and George Leroux”. The *Klibansky place* occupied by the latter two reveals that none of these agents are unessential to the creation of this book.

There are no considerable faults in this volume. *Raymond Klibansky and the Warburg Library Network* accurately informs the reader of Klibansky’s projects, contextualizes his importance from both academic and personal perspectives, and most significantly, thoroughly frames his impact in Western Academia and the way in which we study the past.

Adam Vázquez, University of Saskatchewan