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One of the unresolved riddles in the history of the humanities is the relationship between Aby Warburg and Ernst Cassirer, or, more precisely, the impact of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg on Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. In engaging with this particular constellation I lay out a model of what I call epistemic surroundings and how they facilitate scholarly production in the humanities. Therefore, this article sets out to describe the labor of humanists in terms of an historical epistemology. In short, this is an essay in understanding humanist scholarship in the making and its afterlives as plastic knowledge in inevitable motion.

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