

'A Tract for the Times' – Edgar Wind's 1960 Reith Lectures¹

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Among the drafts of Hugh Lloyd-Jones's biographical essay on the German historian and émigré Edgar Wind, the first of its kind, published in 1983,² are critical comments made by Margaret Wind, the historian's widow. Margaret's notes reflect on the biographer's excitement over *Art and Anarchy*. Manifest in seven typewritten pages, Lloyd-Jones's enthusiasm for that particular work exceeded the attention he paid to Wind's other important books, such as *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. Too many pages for Margaret, who felt a certain amount of contempt for the time her deceased husband had dedicated to *Art and Anarchy*³: the book, originally transmitted as the BBC Reith Lectures of 1960, was only published in 1963, accompanied by a long and excursive chapter of explanatory endnotes. Its main polemical thesis: modern artistic expressions would be characterised essentially by their marginalisation in relation to human experience. In several documents in Wind's *Nachlass* at Oxford, of which Margaret was the main compiler, she judges the booklet to be insignificant compared with his properly historical oeuvres. She referred to it as a 'tract for the times', a disdainful judgement she rightfully attributed to her husband.⁴

¹ This article results from a communication in the international colloquium 'Aby Warburg and his tradition' held in the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (Brazil) on 10 May 2017. A shortened version of this article was recently published in Portuguese in *Figura* 5:1, 2017, 269-297. The author thanks Luiz Marques, Maurizio Ghelardi, David Freedberg, Caroline Elam, Jas Elsner, Jaynie Anderson, Christa Buschendorf, Rebecca Zorach, and Michele Dantini for essential comments and insights on Edgar Wind's intellectual path.

² Hugh Lloyd-Jones, 'A Biographical Memoir', in Edgar Wind, *The Eloquence of Symbols*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, xiii-xxxvi.

³ 'Hugh has been captivated by *Art and Anarchy* – which for me will always stand as a tract for the times and a fatal interruption in Edgar Wind's historical studies – and has devoted seven pages to a lively description of its contents.' Margaret Wind to John Bell, June 2, 1980. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 22, file 4.

⁴ 'A good deal of commotion accompanied their delivery (after the third lecture he hardly gave the B.B.C. time to read the scripts), a large correspondence and other problems followed afterward. The revised text and Notes were published in 1963. Three important years were consumed in this way – for good or for ill his historical writing had been interrupted by a "tract for the times" (his description of *Art and Anarchy*).' Comment by M. Wind in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 95, file 2. In a letter to a Faber & Faber editor, Wind observes: 'it [*Art and Anarchy*] is clearly not a historical book but a tract for the times. Its problems, if there are any, are therefore quite different from those of the two other books [*Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* and *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*].' Edgar Wind to Jean-François Revel, February 25, 1964. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 105, file 1.

Lloyd-Jones's ultimate description of *Art and Anarchy* incorporates Margaret's remark,⁵ thereby revealing their somewhat antagonistic relationship during the writing process of Wind's 'Biographical Memory'. In the Brazilian edition of *Eloquence of the Symbols*, the poet José Laurêncio de Melo translated 'tract for the times' as 'uma obra adequada à época'⁶ (Eng.: 'a work suiting its period'). Despite the overall high quality of the translation, this passage fails to communicate the semantic breadth of the expression in its vernacular language—the terms 'work' and 'suiting' do not correspond to 'tract' and 'for'; while they are correct translation choices, they do not capture the contextual meaning. The expression, derived from the ninety *Tracts for the Times* produced by the Oxford Movement – that stood for the spiritual renewal of nineteenth-century Anglicanism – became a popular saying in English. It denotes a pamphleteering and intellectually superficial piece of writing, produced in response to an event or trend within a specific historical period and aimed at mass communication and the popularisation of ideas. 'Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission', the first of the *Tracts for the Times*, published on 9 September 1833, conveys this sense, beginning: 'I am but one of yourselves, – a Presbyterian; and therefore I conceal my name, lest I should take too much on myself by speaking in my own person. Yet speak I must; for the times are very evil, yet no one speaks against them'. It concludes affirming that 'If you will not adopt my view of the subject, which I offer to you ... CHOOSE YOUR SIDE. To remain neutral much longer will be itself to take a part. *Choose your side.*'⁷

A fascinating later appearance of the expression 'tract for the times', albeit an ironic and heterodox one, is in the poem 'Under Which Lyre?' by Wystan Hugh Auden, maliciously subtitled 'A Reactionary Tract for the Times'.⁸ Delivered by the author in 1946 at a Harvard celebration honouring the Allied victory in the Second World War, 'Under which lyre?' attacks official knowledge institutions and the optimistic atmosphere in the United States during the 1940s, characterising it as ruled by Apollo. The poem, in fact, praises the lyre's legitimate inventor, the bohemian and thief Hermes, within whom the poet locates artistic freedom and real knowledge – i.e. marginal knowledge. At the same time, he covertly denounces Harvard's intimacy with military agencies and the growing servility of academic

⁵ Lloyd-Jones, 'A Biographical Memoir', xxxi.

⁶ Wind, *A Eloquência dos Símbolos*, Port. translation by J. L. de Melo, São Paulo: Edusp, 1997, 37.

⁷ John H. Newman, *Thoughts on the ministerial commission: respectfully addressed to the clergy*, London: Catholic Literature Association, 1833, 1-4. Accessed May 5, 2017. <https://archive.org/details/a561781300newmuoft>.

⁸ W.H. Auden, *Selected Poems*, New York: Vintage Books, 2007, 178-183. Auden was Wind's colleague at Smith College during the 1950s, and their lives have several parallels. In 1953, after a debate on artistic engagement in the symposium 'Art and Morals' including both of them and the poet *engagé* Archibald MacLeish, Auden dedicated a poem called 'The Truest Poetry is the Most Feigning' to Wind. See Christa Buschendorf, 'Kunst als Kritik. Edgar Wind und das Symposium *Art and Morals*', in Horst Bredekamp et al., eds, *Edgar Wind – Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph*, Berlin: Akad. Verl., 1998, 117-133; see also Rebecca Zorach, 'Love, truth, orthodoxy, reticence; or, what Edgar Wind didn't see in Botticelli's Primavera', *Critical Inquiry*, 34:1, September 2007, 190-224.

and artistic production to state guidelines. As a strategy for resistance, he suggests obeying the 'hermetic Decalogue,' a jesting list of commandments which proscribes, for instance, friendships with advertisement agents or sexual relationships with excessively hygienic people.⁹ The poem's title itself is a light-hearted joke, a pun on the words 'lyre' and 'liar,' implying that both Apollo and Hermes are deceptive deities (although, paradoxically, since the latter is a confessed liar, he displays greater honesty than his half-brother). Auden's poetic witticisms notwithstanding, the poem contains features of a tract for the times: the perception of lines of force at a particular time, of public literary reaction and popular admonition. This appellation applies where a thinker dares to break with expectations of an impartial, detached and hermetic discourse and assume an open position, crying 'wolf' – whether the danger is really present or not – from the agora, and not from the top of the ivory tower.

Nearly fifty years after Auden's pronouncement, Edward Said, an intellectual to whom the political implications of academic activity never went unnoticed, called attention to the contemporary dangers of intellectuals taking over public functions and moral duties with excessive professionalism. In response to such disproportions – i.e. a trend towards hyper-specialization, a cult of expertise, and public servility –, the Palestinian émigré defends the benefits of dilettantism, observing that 'the intellectual today ought to be an amateur, someone who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of a society one is entitled to raise moral issues.' The dilemma, therefore, 'is whether that audience is there to be satisfied, and hence a client to be kept happy, or whether it is there to be challenged, and hence stirred into outright opposition or mobilised into greater democratic participation in the society.'¹⁰ Said formulated this challenging opposition between two types of intellectual, the professional and the amateur, in his 1993 Reith Lectures, entitled *Representations of the Intellectual*.

Although the BBC's Reith Lectures were designed to be thought-provoking, they do not always profess – *qua* Said – a spirit of political contestation and reaction. Beginning in 1948 with *Authority and the Individual* by Bertrand Russell, the best-known British public intellectual at the time, the Lectures were idealised as a series of annual radio lectures to be broadcast by a leading thinker. Ideally, the lecturer should display vast, erudite musculature and profound critical judgement together with the qualities of a good broadcaster. The ultimate goal was to make available to the public in accessible, yet non-condescending language the reflections of original research by a famous contemporary thinker who was to address a topic relevant to post-war British society. The reality of the time was a world newly divided between two ever-expanding power poles – one vulgar, the other totalitarian –, an inevitably decaying colonial empire, threatened by the atomic *dies iræ*, marked by the surprising victory of Attlee's Labour party; the old structures lay in ruins, and traditions were disrespected by social upheavals and technological optimism. In this *brave new world* – perhaps not so new and certainly not that brave – the Reith Lectures were expected to offer a proud-spirited intellectual discourse, one that

⁹ Auden, *Selected Poems*, 182-183.

¹⁰ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, New York: Random House, 1996, 82-83.

should not only embrace a vast, epistemic outline but provide solutions and generate ideas, as provoking and idiosyncratic as those might be.

Conceived as the ultimate expression of the BBC's Talks Department, the Reith Lectures constituted the highest intellectual ambitions of the corporation. They evolved from the National Lectures, a series of radio lectures formulated by the BBC in 1928 which aimed to affirm the ability of telecommunications (and the BBC's, in particular) to produce intellectual content of the highest calibre, and to convince the local intelligentsia to take the new radiophonic media seriously. Taking place twice or three times a year from 1929 to 1938, each edition of the National Lectures offered a single lecture on a relevant academic topic.¹¹ Their discontinuation was partly due to the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 and partly to criticism within the corporation as to their value.¹² Despite this negative evaluation, the wish to revive them in the post-war period paved the way for the creation of the Reith Lectures.¹³

However, if the National Lectures were modelled upon Oxford's Romanes Lecture and Cambridge's Rede Lecture,¹⁴ the Reith Lectures, serial and demanding a longer-lasting commitment from the lecturer in charge, were inspired by the prestigious Gifford Lectures,¹⁵ a series of lectures on natural theology by the Scottish academe, that produced, for instance, William James' *The Varieties of the Religious Experience* (1901-1902). The Gifford Lectures were named after lawyer Adam Gifford (1820-1887) in honour of his interest in Spinoza's theological vision, while the Reith Lectures pay homage to the BBC's founding father, Lord John Reith (1927-1938), the Scottish Calvinist entrepreneur who was the first Director-General of the

¹¹ The first National Lecture was given by the celebrated poet Robert Bridges on 28 February 1929, and transmitted from Magdalen College, Oxford. Harry S. Goodhart-Rendel's National Lecture on 4 October 1938, entitled 'Architecture in a Changing World,' was the last one.

¹² The National Lectures were criticized for low public interest, variable quality, and for not being sufficiently differentiable from regular intellectual speeches. Programme Board (Talks Dpt.), BBC Broadcasting House, *Minutes of a Meeting held in the Council Chamber*. 9 June 1938. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), National Lectures, 1934-45.

¹³ The idea of refreshing the National Lectures was initially put forward in a Talks Department meeting in January 1945: 'Another thing discussed was the old National lectures, which everybody at the meeting maintained had been popular, and wanted to see re-established.' (See G. Grigson (Talks Department) to Director of Talks, memorandum, January 31, 1945. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), National Lectures, 1934-45). That wish, however, would only be put into action two years later, when R. A. Rendall, the controller of Talks Department, proposed a redesign of the National Lectures to BBC's Director-General, Sir William Haley. Rendall argued that technical developments, the recent familiarity many intellectuals had with radio speeches, and BBC's post-war prestige would have solved the previous difficulties the National Lectures had faced, making it easy to invite well-known figures for the production of radio lectures. He also suggested that their title was weak and that it should be replaced by something like 'The Reith Broadcasts.' See R. A. Rendall to W. Haley, memorandum, February 26, 1947. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), National Lectures, 1947.

¹⁴ 'The National Lectures', *The B.B.C. Year-Book 1930*, London: BBC, 1930, 229.

¹⁵ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Volume IV: Sound and Vision*, London: Oxford University Press, 1995, 520.

corporation from 1922 to 1939.¹⁶ The tribute, however, is not solely to the individual, but to the set of principles and ethical values instituted by him, labelled Reithianism. This term expresses an idealist view of mass media as an impartial and plural public service under a single diffuser organ. Protected from commercial pressures by its monopoly, that organ should produce high-quality content with the ultimate aim of informing and educating society – even if, to achieve that end, it had to be entertaining. Those ideal characteristics are complemented by an energetic and totalitarian administrative practice, impervious to decentralisation and individual initiatives, with a coercive hierarchy that imposes conformity with the interests of the superior command structure – which, in the Reithian BBC, comprised the Heads of Departments, Director-General, and Board of Governors. The BBC's historical activities were ruled by Reithianism's paternalistic and lofty motto: 'inform, educate, and entertain.'

Reithianism pays tribute to certain British intellectual trends of the late nineteenth century. Specifically, it propounds an educational vision in the radio era which was originally formulated by Matthew Arnold. In his 1863 seminal work, *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold diagnosed a British society on the verge of an immense socio-political fracture, figured as the spectrum of 'anarchy.' The growing insurrections of the working class – labelled the 'Populace' by Arnold¹⁷ – was incontestable evidence of this crisis. As a remedy, Arnold exhorted the state's financial aid for culture – defined, from Jonathan Swift, as 'sweetness and light': an aesthetic and epistemological ideal expressed by the best of humanity's subjective activity throughout history.¹⁸ Social cohesion, formerly the duty of religious

¹⁶ 'We have decided to call these the Reith Lectures, as a tribute, in this the Silver Jubilee year of the BBC, to the great work that Lord Reith did for broadcasting during the sixteen years of his charge of it.' See W. Haley (Director-General) to R. Robinson, December 5, 1947. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), Reith Lectures Advisory Panel.

¹⁷ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 78.

¹⁸ Swift's first use of the term was in *The Battle of the Books* (1704), a satire of the French quarrel in which old and modern books in the King's Library, St James's Palace, battle for supremacy. In the narrative, Swift introduces a parable in which a bee debates with a spider (the ancients and the moderns respectively): 'For, anything else of genuine that the moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large vein of wrangling and satire, much of a nature and substance with the spider's poison; which, however they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same arts, by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age. As for us the ancients, we are content, with the bee, to pretend to nothing of our own, beyond our wings and our voice: that is to say, our flights and our language. For the rest, whatever we have got, has been by infinite labour and search, and ranging through every corner of nature; the difference is, that instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are *sweetness and light*.' See J. Swift, *The works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift*, London: Nichols and Son, 1801, v. 2, 226, emphasis added. The term, expressing the junction between pleasure and instruction, dates back to Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, where poetic language is employed for the instruction of Epicurean doctrine, especially its well-known simile of the honeyed wine glass. Swift's expression is cited many times in *Culture and Anarchy* as an ideal of perfection gathering beauty and intelligence; a paradigmatic reference to it occurs in the first chapter of Arnold's book, where he affirms that: 'the notion of perfection as culture

institutions, should from then on be promoted by an ambitious and universal liberal education, a kind of secular spirituality. In Arnold's view, disputes among the three English social groups – workers, bourgeoisie, and nobility – occurred because each of them required the political system to work for their own particular cause, and not for the sake of the state. That is, the worker, the merchant, and the lord disputed the political and economic power as workers, bourgeois, and nobles, but not as members of the same society. Arnold believed access to culture would help overcome these conflicts of interest by suppressing the classes' clashing identities in favour of each individual's 'best self': the citizen. *Culture and Anarchy*, with its activist defence of high culture's social value, could be read as a 'tract for the times.' It opposed the vogue for materialism and hoped to sublimate the social tensions of its era, the outcome of a staggering process of democratisation and the emphasis on objective, rather than subjective, values. Moreover, Arnold had deep connections with the Oxford Movement: not only was he the godson of John Keble, one of the movement's leaders, but he was also partially in favour of its ideas.¹⁹

Arnold's perspective – expressed in the BBC's biblical motto 'Nation shall speak peace unto Nation' – was enacted within the corporation in two distinct ways. Between 1922 and 1939, there was a single station, whose schedule did not make concessions to the public's divergent interests. Only two variations were admissible: one between programmes deemed 'light' and 'elevated,' the other between London's central emission (National Programme) and regional emissions (Regional Programmes). From 1939 to 1967, however, the BBC's radio programming became threefold, separated into the Light Programme, Home Service, and Third Programme. These were intended to respond to different interests in three social-cultural strata (in Anglophone jargon, 'lowbrow,' 'middlebrow,' and 'highbrow'²⁰),

brings us to conceive of it: a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things," – as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*, – "the two noblest of things, sweetness and light.'" See Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 40.

¹⁹ Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 46-47.

²⁰ The term 'highbrow' comes from phrenology. Originally a physiological correspondence between prominent foreheads and cognitive capacity, it was transformed into a synonym for 'intellectual' as phrenology was discredited as a pseudo-science in the late 1800s. However, it mostly carries a derogatory sense, characterizing individuals who, due to their access to high culture's codes and values, are condescending towards those understood as cultural and intellectual inferiors. 'Lowbrow,' in its turn, appeared in opposition to 'highbrow,' created by the *New York Sun* in 1902. It denotes the opposite type of subject, that is, the anti-intellectual who is interested solely in the products of mass culture. See Robert Hendrickson, *The Facts On File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, New York: Facts on File, 2008, 415, 520. In the Anglo-Saxon lexicon, their antagonism reflected the conflicting spheres of popular and erudite culture. 'Middlebrow' was apparently coined as a reaction to the BBC's creation in 1922. An article in *Punch*, a seminal satirical British magazine, affirmed that the recently-created company had opened a new niche – the 'middlebrow' – which consisted of an intellectually poor public seeking access to high culture. The dispute between factions and diverging conceptualizations proposed for the terms stimulated plenty of articles and essays, especially during the first half of the twentieth century, involving famous authors such as D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. See Marcelle Clements, 'Crème de la Crème: Highbrows,

but with an important proviso: the scheme was aimed at the public's pyramidal ascension, gradually moving from the vulgar and modest programmes of the Light Programme to the Home Service's middle range, and, if possible, up to aesthetic and epistemic heavens of the Third Programme.²¹

Edgar Wind's first interaction with the BBC was with the Third Programme, where he was recruited by Anna Kallin (1896-1984), an influential Russian-English producer in the Talks Department. A prominent figure among intellectuals of Central Europe living in London, Kallin moved seamlessly between academic and artistic environments: originating from pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia, she had graduated in History and Philosophy from Leipzig University in the decade after 1910 and was also a trained musician. In addition, she had modelled for Kokoschka and was Wind's long-time friend. Her invitation led Wind to his first radio lectures: in July 1950, he gave three talks entitled 'Observations on Renaissance Imagery'; in March 1952, three lectures on Leonardo da Vinci; in 1957, he spoke about the contrasting artistic views of Sir Joshua Reynolds and William Blake; in that same year, his inaugural lecture in Oxford, 'The Fallacy of Pure Art' was recorded for a further broadcast, which did not happen. In 1960, Kallin was the chief advocate for Wind as that year's Reith lecturer and her suggestion was successively approved by the corporation's high-level officials.

Given that the Reith Lectures was one of the BBC's most prestigious programmes, the deliberative process ran across its highest echelons: decisions started with producers (counselled by *ad hoc* consultants), ascended to controllers, went on to directors, then to the BBC's Director-General – in 1960, the progressive Hugh Greene (1910-1987), Graham Greene's brother –, and finally to BBC's Board of Governors (a body designated by the elected government, as stipulated by the Royal Charter that regulated the corporation's statute). Thus, the choices of theme and lecturer for each Reith Lecture was the result of a complex, hierarchical, and ultimately establishment-friendly decision. The Reith Lectures that preceded Wind's were almost exclusively focused on scientific subjects, thus reflecting the fascinations and fears of a post-nuclear society.²²

Lowbrows, Voracious Omnivores, High, Low, and High-Lo', in Micki McGee, ed., *Yaddo: Making American Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, 106. The hypostatization of the three-way slip is evident in internal BBC memoranda leading the discussions on its programming in the transition to the model of Light Programme, Home Service, and Third Programme. The polemic reverberates in *Art and Anarchy*, where Wind found himself compelled to refute critics of his Reith Lectures as elitist. According to these critics, his negative perspective on mechanical reproduction expressed a highbrow vision of artistic appreciation. See Roberto Gerhard, 'Thoughts on "Art and Anarchy"', *The Listener* 65, 1669, March 1961, 519-520; for Wind's refutation, see Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, Northwestern University Press, 1985, 88.

²¹ See Jean Seaton, 'Broadcasting History', in James Curran and Jean Seaton, eds, *Power without Responsibility: The press, broadcasting, and new media in Britain*, London: Routledge, 2003, 154-157.

²² In 1956, the winner of the Nobel prize for Physics, Edward V. Appleton, commented on the state-of-art of scientific studies in Great Britain in *Science and the Nation*. In 1957, George F. Kennan, American historian and diplomat focused on United States-Soviet Union relations, explored the possibilities for peace between the Soviets and the Western World in

When the editorial board of the Talks Department gathered on 14 October 1959 to discuss the 1960 Reith Lectures, generalised fatigue towards scientific issues prompted a collective wish to avoid subjects of the sort in the near future.²³ The end-of-month list of suggestions presented different thematic possibilities: the rule of law, the West's responsibilities, changes in British social structure, problems in institutional growth, democratic structure and popular will, education and society, contemporary literature and society, abstract art, free will, and the function of philosophers in modern society.²⁴ Writing in response to a consultation by John Green, Talks Department controller, the controller of the Third Programme, Percy H. Newby (a later winner of the Booker Prize), suggested that the subject of the arts 'should not be treated too narrowly,' but be subject to certain fundamental questions: 'What is the relationship between the artist and the society he lives in? Why is modern painting and music so baffling except to an inner circle of initiates? Are we at the end of an age when the artist was thought of as a rebel?' Suggesting the turbulent relationship between art and society as the theme for the 1960 Reith Lectures, Newby inquired: 'Is there some fundamental conflict between the fullest democracy and art? Can there be art without religion?'²⁵

On the same day as Newby's answer, and in response to a consultation by Green, Kallin criticized many of the suggestions.²⁶ Concerning abstract art, for example, she said: 'heavens, haven't we *had* it? an inflated subject and passé?' Instead, she suggested two of her friends as lecturers – Marx's biographer Isaiah Berlin on the contemporary understandings of Marxism, and Edgar Wind, 'who for the last two years has drawn greater audiences to his lectures than any other lecturer in – I am told in the history of – but let us say in the last decades in the two great universities [Oxford and Cambridge].'²⁷ Wind's lectures at Oxford, where he

Russia, the Atom, and the West. In 1958, Sir Bernard Lovell, British physicist noted for his activity in the radio-astronomy field, debated the current state of astronomic studies in *The Individual and the Universe*. In 1959, Peter Medawar, the witty British biologist, dubbed 'the father of transplanted' and a notable scientific populariser, talked about the continuity of evolution in humanity in *The Future of Man*. Wind, however, was not the first art historian to give the Reith Lectures – Nikolaus Pevsner, also a German émigré, was the 1955 speaker, with a talk referring to the character of British national art and architecture, in *The Englishness of English Art*.

²³ D. Stewart (Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting (A.H.R.B.)) to C.R. McKay (Head of Religious Broadcasting (H.R.B.)), memorandum, October 19, 1959. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.

²⁴ J. Soupham (Head of Educational Broadcasting (H.E.B.)) to J. Green (Controller, Talks (Sound) (C.T(S.))), memorandum, October 28, 1959. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.

²⁵ P. H. Newby (Controller, Third Programme (C.T.P.)) to J. Green, memorandum, November 19, 1959. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.

²⁶ J. Green to A. Kallin, memorandum, November 18, 1959. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.

²⁷ A. Kallin to J. Green, memorandum, November 19, 1959. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.



Fig. 1. Unknown photographer, *Members of the University queuing for the lecture on Picasso, given by Prof. Wind at the Taylor Institution yesterday.* *Oxford Mail*, 13 February 1957.

had founded the History of Art chair in 1955, attracted legendary audiences and caused jams of parked bikes (fig. 1). Constantly reported in Oxonian newspapers with fascination and astonishment, such audiences invariably completely filled the theatre where the lectures were held (often forcing Wind to repeat them). Four decades later, James McConica, who had attended those lectures, commented that 'the student lines formed all over Beaumont Street, seeking to ensure a place in the opening theatre, would be conceivable today only for a rock star.'²⁸ Many of the contemporary reports on these lectures do not hesitate to employ supernatural epithets in their description,²⁹ and their impact on the audience in the form of intellectual stimulation and academic galvanisation was profound.³⁰ Wind was then a celebrity at Oxford.

²⁸ 'Selbst dort mußten die Vorlesungen häufig wiederholt werden, und die Schlangen von Studenten, die ganze Beaumont Street hinab anstanden, um bei Öffnung des Theaters einen Platz zu ergattern, wären heute nur bei eine Rockstar denkbar.' James McConica, 'Edgar Winds Oxforder Jahre', in Bredekamp, ed., *Edgar Wind – Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph*, 7.

²⁹ Describing Wind's lectures, Isaiah Berlin commented: 'nothing like as fascinating as the Cagliostro-like performances of the great magician Wind.' See Berlin's letter to Rowland Burdon-Miller on 13 December 1953 in Isaiah Berlin, *Enlightening: Letters, 1946-1960*, Chatto & Windus, 2009. An Oxonian student commented, somewhat jokingly, that Wind was an Olympian lecturer: 'You might be amused by an encounter I had in the 60's with an Oxford student. I asked him if he knew Dr. Wind. The answer came back that of course he knew Dr. Wind, that Dr. Wind dwelt on Olympus. Because I looked puzzled he explained that any Oxford professor who can fill an auditorium at 8 a.m. dwells among the gods.' D. Frisch to M. Wind, July 5, 1984. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 9, file 3. When about to take on the Oxonian chair of History of Art in 1967, Francis Haskell commented he would renounce lecturing in the theatre Wind used, preferring to avoid public comparisons: 'I am totally convinced that I cannot carry such an audience myself, and that the prospect of comparative humiliation is now actively hindering me.' F. Haskell to E. Wind, June 12, 1967. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 13, file 6.

³⁰ Among the academics stimulated by Wind's lectures in Oxford, we can name Caroline Elam, Adrian Rifkin, Jon Whiteley, John Gage, V. A. Kolve, and Peter Burke. Students from

John Green complied with Kallin's suggestion and handed it over to Sir Reginald Wellington, Director of Sound Broadcasting at the time. On 17 February 1960, persuaded by Green's arguments, Wellington decided to submit only Wind's name and the theme of the artist in society to the final decision of BBC's Director-General and Board of Governors (rather than the usual three or four suggestions). In the dispatched memorandum, he commented that, to his mind, 'the one really exciting possibility is Professor Edgar Wind ... I hear from a number of people that he has an interesting and vivid mind. It seems to me that he might give us something distinguished and unusual if he could be persuaded to tackle the job.'³¹ Given his set of qualities, the suggestion of Wind can be presumed to have pleased both the 'old' BBC – Oxonian, professorial, erudite – and the 'new' BBC that emerged under Greene's directorship – liberal, progressive, multicultural. Wind held great academic status as Oxford's first Professor of History of Art, and his teaching activities were celebrated by colleagues, students, and professors alike. His growing prestige was consummated in 1960: that year, Wind was also called to talk to the Royal Institution scientists about 'The Academy of Leonardo da Vinci,' lecture on 'Michelangelo's Prophets and Sybils' at the British Academy and give Cambridge's renowned Rede Lecture on 'Classicism'. The causal relationship between his success as an academic lecturer and the BBC's invitation was made explicit in the article 'Maestro from the Playhouse,' where it was observed that 'Professor Wind, who gave the first of this year's BBC Reith Lectures on "Art and Anarchy" on Sunday – a typical Wind topic – is a lecture hall maestro. The first holder of the newly created Oxford chair of the History of Art, he has certainly proved the right man for the job.'³² The article also noted that Wind '[was] clearly within the tradition of impeccable and comprehensive German scholarship, for he combines a knowledge of art, psychology and philosophy,' and that, 'well aware of the effect of his intelligence, he is not averse to back stairs manoeuvring, and his beaky face wreathes with smiles at the prospect of a coup.'³³ Thus, Wind wedded prestige at Oxbridge, German philology, and a polemic's playful speculation in his oratory performance, embodying attributes that pleased the BBC's mandarins and met the Reith Lectures' ideals.

Wind's Reith Lectures, entitled *Art and Anarchy*, were transmitted by the Home Service over the course of six Sundays, from November to December 1960, each lasting 30 minutes. They pushed a critique of the production and reception of modern artistic expression through a vast range of topics: reiterating the Hegelian prophecy that post-romantic art would no longer force its public to genuflect, Wind weighed in against Heinrich Wölfflin's formalism and Clive Bell's significant form, analysed Morelli's connoisseurship technique and criticized *non finito* as an artistic form, denounced the Romantic prejudice against knowledge, and explored

The Ruskin School of Art were also present in the lectures, the most famous among them being the painter Ronald B. Kitaj, who would become a kind of informal pupil to Wind. See Edward Chaney, 'R.B. Kitaj (1932-2007): Warburgian Artist,' in *emaj* 7:1, November 2013, 7.

³¹ R. E. Wellington (Director of Sounds Broadcasting (D.S.B.)) to H. Greene (Director-General (D.G.)), memorandum, 17 February 1960. BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), R51/926/6.

³² 'Maestro from the Playhouse,' *Time and Tide*, November 1960.

³³ 'Maestro from the Playhouse,' *Time and Tide*.

mechanization's possibly harmful effects on creative processes. His sixth and last lecture, supported by James's seminal work 'The Will to Believe', culminated in a critique of the artist's social isolation, in which Wind defended a paradoxical relationship of positive feedback between excessive creative freedom and the iterative ambitions of a mechanical era. The dense and multifaceted texture of his arguments and references were not merely erudite exhibitionism. They responded both to a methodological ideal guided by Peircean pragmatics – 'to trust rather the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusiveness of any one'³⁴ – and to the adisciplinarity of the School of Hamburg. Wind aimed to bring up what he considered the central problem of modern art: according to the German historian, contemporary artistic expressions were incapable of providing existential danger, be it in their production or reception.

In a nutshell, Wind states that once modern science appropriated all material vision of reality (i.e. everything that can be transformed into scientific models and expressed in quantitative terms), objective reality has become the centre of human experience. The subjective world became a mere 'whim'. The artistic answer to this imbalance, initially introduced by the Romantics, followed two directions: the first was the nihilism of *l'art pour l'art*, formulating an autonomous and artificial aesthetic judgement; the other was escapism, that is, the negation of social reality in favour of a pure subjective vision, supposedly truer. These post-romantic solipsistic reactions, to Wind's mind, constituted a *cul-de-sac*, eliminating the artistic phenomenon's vital ties with society. The former, expelled from the centre of human experience to its margins, did not represent any further danger to the latter, a *sine qua non* condition of its previous production and reception. Society, in its turn, would no longer offer any resistance, either censorship or demand, markers of the past's artistic excellence. Addressing the unusual interest in art in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Wind paradoxically inferred that it did not express a genuine engagement with artistic phenomena, which he judged to be intrinsically marked by some sort of conflict, but the indication of superficial dilettantism. In his view, such an opening improved platonic censorship by inverting its vectors: instead of having his entrance in the *polis* hindered, the artist was accepted without reservations and restrictions. Modern artistic expression had progressively settled within this position of 'bourgeois idleness'; domesticated as a form of contemporary leisure, it was extirpated of its old remedy-poison, that is, of the capacity of instructing the human spirit through the inoculation of both the 'divine madness' and the 'sacred fear'.

Wind's considerations were not formulated in abstract but emanated from his observation of the concrete events of the time. In his first lecture, he affirms that the platonic fear became superfluous using the example of the possibility of a day-visit to a Picasso retrospective in London and, on the next day, to a Poussin

³⁴ Charles S. Peirce, 'Some consequences of Four Incapacities', in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, V, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934, 157. Wind cites this passage in a detailed replica to Erica Tietze-Conrat's review of his book *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*. See Edgar Wind, 'Mantegna's Parnassus. A Reply to some Recent Reflections', *The Art Bulletin*, 31:3, September 1949, 231.

exhibition in Paris. With rhetorical astonishment, he notes that the average sensibility did not face any crisis by being exposed to such an antagonistic group of works in such a short period. He infers that 'when such large displays of incompatible artists are received with equal interest and appreciation it is clear that those who visit these exhibitions have acquired a strong immunity to them. Art is so well received because it has lost its sting.'³⁵ In June 1960, the Tate Gallery inaugurated the biggest Picasso retrospective to date and the first great exhibition of the artist in England. Its tremendous public success consecrated the Andalusian painter in the country and generated the terms 'art blockbuster' and 'Picassomania'³⁶ – Picasso thus pre-dated the Beatles by a few years.³⁷ On the other side of the British Channel, the Louvre organized an influential Poussin exhibition from May to June, under the curatorship of Sir Anthony Blunt, one of Wind's opponents, and the protection of André Malraux, the energetic French *ministre des Affaires culturelles*.

Art and Anarchy was indeed abundant in explicit or implicit references to contemporary events. In the first, fifth, and sixth lectures, when Wind contests the current assumption that great artistic diffusion is necessarily beneficial and that aesthetic value transcends moral judgements and the consequent censorship, he is likely to have had in mind the controversial trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* that took

³⁵ Wind, Lecture 1: Art and Anarchy: Our Present Discontents. Accessed 29 May 2017, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1960_reith1.pdf. In a letter to Kenneth B. McFarlane, Wind comments: 'From what you say in praise of our easy transition from Picasso to Poussin, I would infer that you have been spared the experience of those vast exhibitions which, I think, engender vacuity (p. 3). Versatility alone would not worry me. Quite another matter is the wholesale absorption of impressions that ought to conflict but do not, because mass-presentation has levelled them out. I just saw in Paris another one of these monster shows. This time Delacroix was reduced to a vast zero, which would make transition to an equally neutralized Poussin only too easy. If this is (as you seem to suggest) "because we are all historians nowadays," then we are bad historians because these things were not neutral when they were produced.' E. Wind to K. B. McFarlane, 1 November 1963. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 98, file 1.

³⁶ Tim Adams, 'Picasso, Tate, 1960: the world's first "art blockbuster"', *The Guardian*, 29 January 2012. Accessed 30 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/jan/29/picasso-tate-1960-art-blockbuster>.

³⁷ Mania as a suffix applied to an artistic fad dates back to Frans Liszt's performances in mid nineteenth-century, which were characterized by the audience's frenzied reaction. The poet and literary critic Heinrich Heine, who coined the term *Lisztomania*, described said performances as "a veritable insanity, one unheard of in the annals of furore!" With regard to the Lisztomania's etiology, Heine defers to post-Kantian aesthetics and hypothesizes that the phenomenon belongs "to the domain of pathology rather than that of aesthetics", explaining it away by way of potential extra-aesthetical causes (e.g. Liszt's unique *mise en scène*). See Oscar G.T. Sonneck, 'Henrich Heine's Musical Feuilletons', *The Musical Quarterly*, 8:4, October 1922, 457-458. As noted by Dana Gooley, the difference between 'Lisztomania' and 'Beatlemania' (or 'Picassomania', for that matter) is that 'mania' in the nineteenth century was not a soft term merely signifying a strong fad, but had strong medical valence. See Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 203.

place on 2 November 1960.³⁸ The work was 'acquitted' of its standard accusations of obscenity based on the 'artistic value' argument. One of *Lady Chatterley's* defence witnesses was Edward M. Forster, a literary critic Wind had confronted in a symposium entitled 'Music and Criticism' that took place in Harvard, in 1948.³⁹ Cleared of the accusations, David H. Lawrence's book became an instant Penguin Books bestseller, contributing by and large to the paperback revolution spearheaded by the publishing house.

In the fourth *Art and Anarchy* lecture, 'The Fear of Knowledge,' Wind established a dialogue with Charles P. Snow. The English physical chemist's recent Rede Lecture on 7 May 1959, 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution', would lead to further debates on the contemporary nature of epistemology and pedagogy. In it, Snow verified the unfortunate partition between humanities and sciences, an inescapable question in the second half of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ In

³⁸ Though he does not explicitly refer to the Chatterley trial, he mentions approval of another judicial decision in the United States, with an opposite outcome, in which the discussion was the inter-relationship between the moral impact and aesthetic quality of a work. See Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 95, n. 9. However, given the journalistic controversy surrounding D.H. Lawrence's book, which occurred in London on the eve of his *Reith Lectures*, it is extremely unlikely that Wind was not fully aware of the fact.

³⁹ In that symposium, Forster defended the existence of a fundamental difference between the creative and the critical mental states, and thus between the artist and the art critic. Stimulated by his opposition to Forster's thesis, Wind reversed the argument, affirming that what Forster saw as an external and irreparable fissure between the two categories of individuals (artist and critic) was only the mirroring of an internal dialectic, fundamental to the artistic practice. That is, during the production process, every artist criticizes not only his own work but preceding traditions and practices of his artistic genre. See Richard F. French, ed., *Music and Criticism: A Symposium*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948, 9-34, 54-72.

⁴⁰For a reference to C. P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* in *Art and Anarchy*, see Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 130. Wind himself followed Snow as Rede Lecturer on 5 May 1960, when he discussed his anti-Winckelmannian conception of Classicism. In his lecture, Wind rejected the notion of Classicism as a cold and rational aesthetic paradigm, offering instead an opposite perspective. The classical idiom, in his view, would be the result of an irrational emulative drive in an obsolete ideal form. Given the impossibility of a perfect imitation, however, it should always be 'impure' (i.e. contaminated by the contingencies of the artist's time). A strong example of this passionate drive towards the classical idiom was, according to Wind, that the revolutionaries of the 1700s were ardent classicists. Thus, Wind suggests, the formal harmony they desired would be the precarious result of spiritual conflicts conformed artistically, and not an abstract aesthetic ideal (as von Hildebrand, for instance, suggests). Hence, the classical idiom would have been sought by artists in periods of great political turmoil, as a kind of protection in relation to conflicting social forces. Refuting the Romantic dogma which opposes creation and imitation, Wind also criticized its conceptual poverty, grounded on an ontological formal unity (according to which every emulation would be a fragile concession to appearances and ultimately detrimental to the projection of the subject's expressive will). Wind's reply to what he considered a romantic fallacy employed a myth: rescuing the opposition between Eros-Anteros, he defended a view of human formation based on the clash with contemporaries (our fellow human beings) and with the ancient (our dissimilar

'The Fear of Knowledge', Wind criticised the vulgar separation between artistic expression and modern scientific thought. For effect, he contraposed the timid interest of artists like Paul Klee and Henry Moore in, respectively, microscopy and geology with the vigorous interaction between art and science in the Italian Renaissance. According to Wind, Leonardo da Vinci's solids for Luca Pacioli's *Divina Proportione*, Jan van Calcar's macabre illustrations for the *Anatomy* of Vesalius, and *The School of Athens* by Raphael were crowning moments of optimal interaction between intellect and imagination, with obvious benefits for both spheres.⁴¹

The fifth lecture – 'The Mechanization of Art' – criticises the excessive and fashionable trust in the restoration of paintings and architectural façades. Supposedly abusive restorations undertaken at the National Gallery between 1936 and 1946 generated a fierce polemic between restorers and historians, intensified in 1947 by the exhibition 'Cleaned Pictures' in the British Museum. Subsequent articles and editorials published in the *Burlington Magazine* sustained the quarrel until the 1960s.⁴² The restoration of historical buildings in Oxford, initiated in 1957, was also

ones), in which imitation and mimicry are fundamental. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 142, file 4, 5.

⁴¹ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 49, 59-61, 131-132.

⁴² In 1949, Cesare Brandi published a polemical article entitled 'The Cleaning of Pictures in Relation to Patina, Varnish, and Glazes' (see *Burlington Magazine*, 91:556, 1949, 183-188). Here, Brandi sought to define the antagonisms of the limits of cleaning pictures and, in so many words, accused the National Gallery's restorers of material, aesthetic, and historical ignorance. Based on historical documentation, he argued that the works' dark surfaces were closer to the Old Masters' original intentions. In July 1950, the *Burlington Magazine* published a vigorous technical refutation to Brandi (see *Burlington Magazine*, 92:568, 1950, 189-192). Articles throughout the 1950s continued to debate the issue, producing a myriad of comments and digressions on technical and terminological details regarding the practice of artistic restoration. The edition of February 1962 renewed the debate by publishing important contributions from historians such as Ernst H. Gombrich (director of the Warburg Institute from 1959-72) and Otto Kurz (librarian at the same institute). Gombrich approached the issue from the perspective of classical tradition with the article 'Dark Varnishes: Variations on a Theme from Pliny' (See *Burlington Magazine*, 104:707, 1962, 51-55; development of a letter sent by the author in 1950 as a response to the criticism of Brandi's article in *Burlington Magazine*, 92:571, 1950, 298). In that article, the Viennese historian defended the darkness of the glazing based on a passage where Pliny talks about Apelles, suggesting the modern cleaning of pictures – in his opinion, excessive – proceeded from a modern aesthetic preference for more lively colours. The edition of November 1962 published replies or comments from restorers linked to the National Gallery and other historians. In his article, Rees Jones pointed out that the heart of the issue was not the cleaning itself, but the limits of such operation (See 'Science and the Art of Picture Cleaning', *Burlington Magazine*, 104:707, 1962, 60). The edition of March 1963 contained Gombrich and Kurz's rejoinders. The historians' critiques questioned the supposed scientific objectivity of the restorers and their textual lack of knowledge of the great masters' aesthetic projects (See, for instance, the editorial of edition 104:707, 50). *Burlington Magazine's* quarrel revealed a dispute between two different, if not antagonistic, projects related to the approach to paintings as historical documents – on one side, the scientific position of the National Gallery's restorers, who judged themselves capable of returning the works to their initial states (an ambition which underlies a conception of

subject to intense discussion during the production of the Reith Lectures. In a passage added for the publication of *Art and Anarchy*, in 1963, Wind comments: 'Thus the refacing of Wren's Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford may be studied one day as a monumental example of the naïve obstinacy and self-delusion that bedevil a mechanical age.'⁴³

Thus, the 1960s' Reith Lectures criticised an optimistic view of artistic popularisation, bolstered by art's marginalisation and modern technological development. Malraux, for instance, had helped publicise such a vision in *Le Musée Imaginaire*,⁴⁴ one that Wind took as ignoring both Baudelaire and Goethe's reflections on the artistic experience's fundamentally unsettling nature, and Plato, Hegel, and Burckhardt's considerations concerning the antagonism between art and the State.⁴⁵

It should be noted that, by entitling his lectures *Art and Anarchy*, Wind did not impose an adversative or consequential value to the conjunction 'and', but an additive one, so that its constituent terms are positively inter-related. Artistic experiences are, or at least should be, essentially anarchic, meaning that their effectiveness comes from indomitable imagination, a mental capacity Wind judges to be fundamental in the artistic domain. He understands this faculty as a force alien to the moral sphere, of variable intensity. If immoderate, it is harmful to existence and hence able to abolish the abstraction interval between subject and object, eliminate civilising constrictions, and subdue the individual to unreality. The sober decrees of consciousness are unable to control its effects. Imagination and reason are thus opposed as innate and antithetical capacities, whose conflict in spirit is perennial – each epoch should solve it as it wishes, for happiness or tragedy. According to Wind, Plato, himself confronted with the irrational effects of his contemporaries' vigorous artistic imagination, would have opted for an ineffective form of censorship to contain the political bleeding in Athens. Wind believes the historical co-occurrence of artistic excellence and the complete fracture of a given society's political structure would argue on behalf of the platonic diagnosis. Given the possibility that such causality is misleading, Classical Athens and High Renaissance Italy are strong examples of this kind of connection between phenomena.⁴⁶ The terms 'art' and 'anarchy' are thus connected: creative and

history as measurable); on the other, the Warburgian position, respectful to historical knowledge and sceptical as to truth judgements coming from technical development. The unexpected theoretical controversy, stemming from the concerns of the *Burlington Magazine* editors about the suspicion of excessive cleaning of the National Gallery's paintings, resulted in important advances in the studies and guidelines for restoration and conservation techniques (See, for instance, Johannes A. van de Graaf's conciliatory propositions in 'The Interpretation of Old Painting Recipes', *Burlington Magazine*, 104:716, 1962, 471). In 1963, Brandi published *Teoria del restauro*, an influent work on artistic restoration's method.

⁴³ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 67.

⁴⁴ For Wind's critique to Malraux, see Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 69, 137.

⁴⁵ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 1-16.

⁴⁶ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 4-6. In a response to the critiques of K. B. McFarlane as to the degree of political turbulence of such periods, Wind observed: 'That Alcibiades (the artist turned statesman) leaves you cold surprises me, just as I cannot follow your suggestion that

disturbing aspects of the former tend, if immoderate, to create an anarchic state in the citizens' spirits and – as a corollary – in the socio-political sphere. Nonetheless, it is precisely this anarchic element – this 'demon of the imagination'⁴⁷ – that assures the value of the artistic experience, one that should not be entirely suppressed by any disciplining procedure (e.g. formalism, connoisseurship, mechanical reproduction, market demands, etc.).

While *Art and Anarchy* seem to be fundamentally mired in the artistic context of Cold War Europe, it is fair to ask – especially because it is a late work – how much it resumes or deviates from Wind's preceding thought. Assuming that there is a strong line of continuity connecting the theoretically obsessed Wind of the early 1920s, to the scholar of concrete artworks of the mid-1930s to the late 1950s, up to the extemporaneous Oxonian don of the 1960s, what does this line consist of? A growing body of scholarship is putting greater stress on his earliest phase, more specifically on the pragmatist Wind who came back from the United States to Hamburg in 1927, got in close contact with Aby Warburg and shocked his neo-Kantian elders with his heretical stance, claiming for metaphysical concepts to be tested by way of *experimenta crucis*.⁴⁸

the Italian Renaissance, "as centuries go," does not belong to "a particularly disturbed one". Florence at the time (say) of the Pazzi conspiracy or of the second expulsion, or the second return, of the Medici, Rome under the Borgias (even allowing that they were not as operative as Symonds believed), Naples under the reign and collapse of the Aragonese, Venice attacked by the League of Cambray, all of Italy invaded by the French, Milan during the usurpation of Lodovico il Moro – if these circumstances answer your definition of relative quietude, then your demands on history are far more cataclysmic than Burckhardt's or Plato's. They did not ask for quite so much to feel disturbed. As Gide once said to Maritain [sic]: "Viewed *sub specie aternitatis*, this may be nothing, but for us it is enough".' E. Wind to K. B. McFarlane, November 1, 1963. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 98, file 1.

⁴⁷ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 8.

⁴⁸ Following Wind's death in 1971, critical attention to his work was generally dismissive (especially in British academia); see, for example, Charles Hope, 'Naming the Graces', *London Review of Books* 6:5 March 15, 1984, 13. A more nuanced and sophisticated appraisal of his work emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, mostly due to the interest of German and North American art historians such Horst Bredekamp, John M. Krois, Bernard Buschendorf, and Elizabeth Sears; the fundamental work in this regards is *Edgar Wind – Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph* (1998), the result of a series of lectures delivered in 1996 at the Einstein Forum dedicated to Wind. Concurrent with the growing interest on Wind's mentor, Aby Warburg, from the 2000s onwards scholars have focused on Wind's early career; in this regard, see Schneider, 'Begriffliches Denken – verkörpertes Sehen. Edgar Wind (1900-1971)', in Jörg Probst and Jost P. Klenner, eds, *Ideengeschichte der Bildwissenschaft. Siebzehn Porträts*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009, 53-74. More recently, German art historians and philosophers have dedicated themselves – following Bredekamp and Krois' turn toward *Bildwissenschaft* – to the pre-Warburgian Wind and his contributions to the notion of embodiment (*Verkörperung*); in this regard, see Tulio Viola, "'Ein geistvoller Amerikaner". The relevance of Charles S. Peirce to Debates on the Iconological Method', in Sabine Marienberg and Jürgen Trabant, eds, *Bildakt at the Warburg Institute*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014, 117-137. For a recent comparison between the philosophical premises of North American Pragmatism and German neo-Kantism and their reverberation in art historical hermeneutics, see C. Oliver O'Donnell, 'Two Modes of Midcentury Iconology', *History of Humanities* 3:1, 2018, 113-136. Michele

While not superficially evident, *Art and Anarchy's* conceptual armature was indeed forged in those years, as is evident in Wind's inaugural lecture as *Privatdozent* at Hamburg University in 1929 (published in 1932 as "Θεῖος Φόβος"), when he spoke about the historical and supra-historical nature of platonic artistic censorship and its misconstruing by eighteenth-century aesthetics.⁴⁹ It is in this essay that Wind is most eloquent about his proposed relationship between 'divine madness' (θεῖα μανία) and 'sacred fear' (θεῖος φόβος), ending his reasoning with a warning, a logical consequence of the arguments developed throughout the paper: the human spirit must surrender to the (de)formative excesses of the artistic experience in accordance with the limits (*Maße*) set by its insight in the form of humanity (*Einsicht in die Form des Menschen*). That is, one ought to surrender to art's divine madness, but just as long as a well-developed sacred fear remains active, a sort of constraint clause.⁵⁰ The fundamental problem, however, is to discover precisely where this limit lies, and therefore what that form is. Avoiding theological adjectives, the task here is to define why Wind assembles geometrical, spiritual, and pathological vocabularies. The prescribed limits are those of the human form, which is not cognitively apprehended as an object nor open to figuration. Thus, mere introspection does not ensure self-knowledge, as consciousness treats itself as something other than itself, self-alienating in the attempt to self-determine. It is therefore imperative that it surrenders to an experience of exception, in which it identifies with something other than itself to apprehend its true measure. However, as full identification would be equivalent to mere absorption of the consciousness into something other

Dantini has written extensively about the cultural landscape of Weimar Germany that gave rise to the Warburgian *Kunstwissenschaft* and the Panofskyan iconology in the first two chapters of his *Arte e sfera pubblica: Il ruolo critico delle discipline umanistiche*, Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2016; in his book, Dantini calls much attention to Wind's often neglected role in the inception of the so-called iconological method and his fruitful relationship with Panofsky, Wind's former supervisor (in this regard, see especially pp. 269-271, n. 32-33). Wind's pivot work in the 1920s is his *Habilitationsschrift* from 1929 done under Ernst Cassirer's supervision, later published, in 1934, as *Das Experiment und die Metaphysik: Zur Auflösung der kosmologischen Antinomien*. The book was republished in German in 2001 by the Suhrkamp Verlag; in the same year, an English translation was published fronted by an incisive introduction by Matthew Rampley (*Experiment and Metaphysics: Towards a Resolution of the Cosmological Antinomies*, Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2001).

⁴⁹ The inaugural lecture entitled 'Das Historische und das Überhistorische in Platons Kunstphilosophie' was published as 'Θεῖος Φόβος – Untersuchungen über die Platonische Kunstphilosophie' in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, 36:4, 1932, 349-373. The text was republished in English in *Eloquence of the Symbols*, and more recently republished in German in Wind, *Heilige Furcht und andere Schriften*, Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts, 2009.

⁵⁰ 'Die Kunst zu verdächtigen hat Platon gelehrt: – nicht weil sie an sich etwas Schlechtes wäre, sondern weil sie den Menschen gefährdet. Freilich was er der Sinn seiner Lehre, daß wir uns dieser Gefährdung aussetzen sollen – in dem Maße, in dem die Einsicht in die Form des Menschen es zuläßt. Dieses Maß und damit eine Form des Menschen zu finden, das ist das Problem, mit dem wie zu ringen haben. Aber gerade in diesem Kampf müssen wir der Platonischen Warnung gedenken, daß nur sofern wir die göttliche Furcht in uns wachhalten, wir bereit sein können für den göttlichen Wahn.' See Wind, *Heilige Furcht*, 81.

than itself (i.e., 'divine madness' through mimetic means), an impact is necessary to improve its self-consciousness, so that the 'insight' of its form is perfected. It requires 'sacred fear,' which prevents full suppression in the contemplated object, for its function is to resist the infinite analogical plasticity of the process. In this manner, full immersion is avoided, thus resisting the possibility of unbounded plasticity (which is the danger implicit in the artistic experience, that which Wind deems its 'sting'). In this conflictual dialogical process, the form of humanity is slowly revealed in an ever-perfecting, never-ending process akin to an asymptote curve. And here Wind seems to strongly agree with Plato, who states in *Laws*: "in our view, choristry [i.e. rhythmic dance and singing] as a whole is identical with education as a whole"⁵¹

This fear of the artistic excesses, however, are germane to Wind's early years in Hamburg. Thirty years later, what he worried about was, in a sense, just the opposite: Plato's 'sacred fear' was nowhere to be seen. Not on account of its obsolescence though, but because modern civilisation forgot that the so-called anarchic forces of imagination even exist (which does not mean they are not operative). It is by the end of *Art and Anarchy*, however, in the William James-inflected last chapter titled 'Art and the Will', that the true target of Wind's critique comes to the fore. Here Wind notices the conformity between vanguard artists and neoliberal entrepreneurs: both must be autonomous, free from societal pressures, forward-thinking, and, above all, protean, engaged in an endless plasticity of means and products. He also notices that, despite these pretensions, they are both subject to the ideology of the machine. At least in the case of the artist, the conflicted relationship between critical analysis and imaginative wildness gave way to artistic decisions made by rote, as is arguably the case with the Abstract Expressionists.⁵² Wind affirmed his idiosyncratic humanistic conception of the arts in opposition to this modern individual, which he deems automaton-like. Humankind's subjective propensities should not be 'soaked up into nothing' in the name of progress,⁵³ but developed through the interplay of intuition and knowledge and the integration of diverse epistemological spheres, by means of cultural maturation, critical judgement, and self-discipline, and via the agonistic equilibrium between individual freedom and collective needs. In this sense, said subjective propensities should not be put at the service of pure aesthetic delight, but constantly challenge the existing state of affairs and be porous to societal demands. In this regard, *Art and Anarchy's* initial statement is a warning to its readership as much as a declaration of intention:

⁵¹ *Laws*, 672e. Stuart Hampshire recalls in a letter a *disputa* on Plato's censorship he once entertained with Wind at Oxford: 'after dinner one evening [...] we chose to speak for and against Plato's proposition about the expulsion of the poets, he for and I against Plato ... Edgar launched into the most brilliant disposition that I have heard him give, about the charlatanism and bohemianism and corruption of intellect which always surrounds the cultivation of the arts ... the drop of a pin could have been heard, and I think it was the most brilliant performance that I have heard in Oxford; one felt at the end that he *did* agree with Plato.' Stuart Hampshire to Colin Hardie, January 20, 1972. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 21, file 3.

⁵² Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 84-85.

⁵³ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 88.

'I hope that the word 'anarchy' in the title of these lectures does not suggest that I shall speak in defence of order. I shall not. A certain amount of turmoil and confusion is likely to call forth creative energies.'⁵⁴

Broadcast in six thirty-minute instalments each Sunday from November 13 to December 18, 1960, *Art and Anarchy* was an iconoclastic success. The 1960 Reith Lectures problematized specific ongoing conceptions concerning the artistic phenomenon that Wind judged fundamentally problematic, especially as they disregarded a long tradition of critical reflection on the subject. According to one of his commentators, the effects on the public were devastating: Wind had demolished 'one after another of popular conceptions about art.'⁵⁵ Challenging the 'sacred cows' of English cultural sensitivity and offering critical resistance to certain tendencies of the time, *Art and Anarchy* was indeed a 'tract for the times.' Not only did the positive connotation given to the word 'anarchy' subvert the expectations of the English audience – used to the term's negative sense – but, one can surmise, it held an ironic reference to Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. Given the lack of documentary evidence, it is impossible to say whether this allusion was intentional; however, given the works' similar titles and the antithetical character of their propositions, the association would have been almost inevitable to British ears. *Culture and Anarchy's* argument was broadly acknowledged in British society due to Arnold's enormous influence on the nation's educational system. *Art and Anarchy* subverted the Victorian pedagogue's view – which sustains that high culture guarantees political stability – by asserting both the conflicting relationship between art and the State and a view of culture as a social practice and not as an ideal. In this sense, the two books are fundamentally opposed. As the BBC itself was in line with Arnold's ideals via Reith, Wind also seems to be advancing a surreptitious and ironic critique of the corporation's ambitions of cultural diffusion; and in particular of Reithian paternalism, which aimed to reach every British household with 'the best of culture and ideas,' imposing on society an elevation of standards in taste and behaviour.

Reith's ideal, however, would not come through the paradigm crisis of the 1960s unscathed. In 1967, the corporation extinguished the ascending split of Light Programme, Home Service, and Third Programme, replacing it with a democratic numeric division: Radio One, Radio Two, Radio Three, and Radio Four. The main factors in catalysing the programming restructure were the growing success of pop music, so far excluded by the BBC as a vulgar phenomenon, and the simultaneous appearance of pirate radio stations in international waters. The most famous of these clandestine stations, Radio Caroline, started operations in March 1964. Its founder, the young Irish entrepreneur named Ronan O'Rahilly, baptised it as a homage to a picture published by *Life* in 1962, in which a young Caroline Kennedy – the so-called Princess of Camelot – dances with her brother in the Oval Room⁵⁶ (fig. 2). To Ronan, the image expressed a festive interference in the government's rigid

⁵⁴ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 1.

⁵⁵ Andrew Forge, *The Critics*, December 11, 1960, transcript of radio transmission. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 95, file 3.

⁵⁶ Simon Garfield, 'When pop pirates ruled Britannia's airwaves,' *The Guardian*, 8 March 2009. Accessed May 28, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/mar/08/pirate-radio-johnnie-walker>.

conduct, an attitude that should guide his own radio station. The tension between artistic excess and political continence, as well as the contestation of every authority, was indeed one of the main force vectors in the 1960s.⁵⁷ In his Reith Lectures, Wind seems not only to resist his time but to predict it, acting both as a historian and as a seer.



Fig. 2. Cecil Stoughton, ST-441-10-62. President John F. Kennedy Watches Children Dance in Oval Office, 10 October 1962. Black and white negative film, 5,71 x 5,71 cm. White House Photographs. Accessed 27 June 2017. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKWHP-1962-10-10-G.aspx>.

Here we can perhaps detect an inherent temporal dualism in *Art and Anarchy*. It is perhaps symptomatic that, after the publication of the Reith Lectures as a book in 1963, Wind dismissed it not just as a 'tract for the times' but also as '*vieux jeu*';⁵⁸ that is, either as a discourse irredeemably dependent on its context or as

⁵⁷ Much of the vitality of Wind's heuristic approach stems from the propaedeutic awareness that the investigator is part of the investigated process. In 1936, Wind wrote in the *Festschrift* that paid homage to Ernst Cassirer: 'Nor does pure mind study history. For that purpose, one must be historically affected; caught by the mass of past experience that intrudes into the present in the shape of "tradition": demanding, compelling, often only narrating, reporting, pointing to other past experience which has not as yet been unfolded.' (Wind, 'Some Points of Contact between History and Natural Science', in Raymond Klibansky and Herbert J. Paton, eds, *Philosophy and History. Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936, 259).

⁵⁸ In a letter to a French editor, Wind comments: '[*Art and Anarchy*] is clearly not a historical book but a tract for the times. Its problems, if there are any, are therefore quite different from those of the two other books [Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance and Bellini's Feast of the Gods].' Edgar Wind to Jean-François Revel, February 25, 1964. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 105, file 1. With regard to '*vieux jeu*', Wind notices in a letter to his Oxonian colleague, the Medieval historian Kenneth Bruce McFarlane: 'Incidentally, I must decline both the glory and the shame of being the first to have made these observations. I tried to show in the notes how many others had made them before me. In fact, I expected the book to be dismissed as *vieux jeu*. I am amazed, but not elated, that it should seem paradoxical and perverse.' Edgar Wind to K. B. McFarlane, November 1, 1963. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 98, file 1. It is possible, however, to find Wind's *vieux jeu* argument already present in *Art and Anarchy*'s main text: 'It ought to be obvious by now that in connecting the word 'art' with the word 'anarchy' I was completely unoriginal. I merely continued to reflect on a thought which had

a rephrasing of quasi-axiomatic statements about artistic phenomena, which have been stated over and over since the times of Plato. What are we to make of this dualism? We can certainly ascribe these oscillatory judgements to the author's changing whims or as adjustments to the rhetorical arguments presented to each addressee (which may well have been the case). But do we extend our diagnostic ambitions too far if we detect in this ambivalent assessment a symptom of higher-order processes? Perhaps these expressions are not as antipodal as their superficial interpretation implies, and the wager to be made here concerns the possibility of both temporalities being understood as verse and obverse, as the subtle interplay of chronological and kairological modalities enmeshed in *Art and Anarchy's* text. In this regard, can we, so to say, un-flip the coin?

Let us then double our initial question, for the answer is probably twofold: to what degree are we still confronted with the set of cultural problems that afflicted not just post-war Europe, but also its interbellum period? And is the reserve of knowledge tapped into by Wind, despite its alienness, part of our common fate? A possible solution to these quandaries lies not in the text itself, but in the rhetorical silences enacted by it. As discussed above, one of the starting points to *Art and Anarchy's* argument is the recognition that both fifth-century B.C.E. Athens and sixteenth-century A.D. Italian city-states were afflicted by analogical fates: great artistic excellency concurrent with dramatic political doom. The implied thesis here is that sudden uprushes of artistic imagination may have a disturbing effect, putting at risk not just the soul of each person, but the stability of a given society. While this proposition may sound *prima facie* too oppositional, too facile even, it was germane to Wind's lifetime. His was an intellectual age which responded to an increasingly bipolar worldview by means of major debates on the uneasy balance between individual liberties and social cohesion. Seen in retrospect, this fratricidal conscience has informed much of mid twentieth-century North Atlantic intellectual output (e.g., Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty*), and *Art and Anarchy* can well be said to be a member of said club (even though the book never openly addresses these issues, outwardly focused as it is in the aftermath of post-Romantic aesthetics). However, a more significant, tragic elision lies elsewhere. When Wind mentions Classical Athens and Renaissance Italy as examples of 'the most splendid release of artistic energies ... attended by political disintegration',⁵⁹ one omission strikes the observant eye: what about the Weimar Republic, that ever-crepuscular era once defined by Peter Gay, its most famous eulogist, as poetry-ruled?⁶⁰

Despite never openly addressing the issue, Wind did not shy away from referencing Weimar-era characters in *Art and Anarchy's* main text and endnotes: he freely mentions intellectual and artistic figures who arose – or whose fame was restored – during this period, referring to a list of characters that goes far beyond the usual suspects such as Stefan George, the messiah of a secret Germany, or

occupied Plato, Goethe, Baudelaire and Burckhardt; and many other authors could be named, equally different from each other and equally close to the sources of art, who have made the same observation.' See Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 6.

⁵⁹ Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, 6.

⁶⁰ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, London: Penguin Books, 1992, 68-69.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the prophet of the disenchanting masses.⁶¹ Moreover, the ghost of Heidegger, whom Wind blatantly despised, haunts the pages of *Art and Anarchy* (even if the philosopher is never explicitly mentioned).⁶² The Weimar Republic omission is particularly glaring if one takes into account Wind's biography: his *Bildungsroman* takes place mostly in Germany from 1918 to 1933, and his whole later career hinged upon the aftermath of this political age. In this regard, *Art and Anarchy* acts as a sort of intellectual testament, exposing heuristic ambitions never fully developed while shedding retrospective light on past discourse⁶³ and Wind's own biographical experiences, a life once deemed by Isaiah Berlin – one of Wind's few friends – a 'terribly wasted' one.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Many other Weimar Republic artists and intellectuals are cited in *Art and Anarchy*; in literature, we have Walter Mehring, Hermann Broch, Georg Büchner, Heinrich von Kleist, Hölderlin, and Christian Grabbe; in the case of painting, Max Beckmann, Wassily Kandinsky, Max Ernst, Ernst Kirchner, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff; in drama, Bertold Brecht, Ernst von Wolzogen, Kurt Hiller, August Stramm, Walter Hasenclever, and Frank Wedekind; in music, Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern. Siegfried Kracauer, author of the seminal work on Weimar-era filmography *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947), wrote to Wind after reading *Art and Anarchy*: 'I profit this opportunity to tell you how greatly I enjoyed your ART AND ANARCHY. Not to mention the text itself, the appendix is a veritable treasure trove.' Siegfried Kracauer to Edgar Wind, March 3, 1965. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 46, file 7.

⁶² In a vitriolic article against Sartre, Wind compares Heidegger's philosophy to a disease and declares it 'thoroughly evil'; with regard to the philosopher himself, Wind states: 'When I heard, some fifteen years later, that Heidegger had become a convicted fascist, it seemed to me a natural development. Contrary to many who "joined the party", he was predestined to it.' See Edgar Wind, 'Jean-Paul Sartre: a French Heidegger', *SCAN (Smith College Associated News)*, 40:31, March 1946, 2-4. In 1970, when discussing the French translation of *Art and Anarchy*, Wind dismissed L'Herne as publishing house, noticing that 'the firm is run by a somewhat reckless young nobleman M. de Roux, who has made a name for himself as a political writer of an extreme right-wing bias. As a publisher he is reputed to be not too reliable in his payments and to engage, behind a façade of literary luxury editions, in the propagation of illiberal political views. It would indeed be impossible for me to appear under an imprint whose list includes The Political Writings of Martin Heidegger, an official collaborator of Hitler and still alive. It could be said in mitigation that Stalin is also represented on this list, but that does not make the Herne's nest any better. Art and Anarchy does not belong into this sort of company.' Edgar Wind to Helen Rogan, September 18, 1970. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 105, file 1. For an analysis of Wind's contempt for Heideggerian phenomenology, see Horst Bredekamp, 'Falsche Skischwünge. Winds Kritik an Heidegger und Sartre', in Bredekamp et al., eds., *Edgar Wind*, 207-226. See also Dantini's comment on pre-diasporic Panofskyan iconology with regard to Heideggerian hermeneutics in *Arte e sfera pubblica*, 25-57.

⁶³ In a posthumous discourse in honor of Edgar Wind, Colin Hardie, an Oxonian colleague of his, mentions Wind's retrospective pleasure in the writing of *Art and Anarchy*: 'He enjoyed his Reith Lectures on Art and Anarchy, in which he could recast the philosophy of his youth in the light of experience.' See Colin Hardie, 'Edgar Wind – A personal impression'. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wind 21, file 3.

⁶⁴ Isaiah Berlin to unknown addressee, September 21, 1971. MS. Berlin 271, fol. 76.

What the above enounced set of questions and allusions fully demand is a still to be seen in-depth study of Wind's engagement with post-eighteenth-century philosophical landscape (Anglo-Scottish empiricism, Goethe's theory of symbols, Nietzsche's untimeliness, North-American pragmatism, and Humboldt's *Bildungsideal*), a more balanced appraisal of his role in the development of the Warburgian Tradition and his relationship with its *dramatis personæ* (Warburg, Cassirer, and Panofsky certainly, but also Saxl, Bing, Wittkower, *et multis aliis*), and a resettling of his early thought – more philosophical than critical art historical – vis-à-vis the strong connections that a once burgeoning, properly a-methodical Hanseatic *Kunstwissenschaft* had with other academic realms, such as the philosophy of science, ethics and, religious studies. Since a more grounded analysis and stronger conceptual bridging still lie in the horizon, the above-raised questions about *Art and Anarchy's* inherent temporal dualism have to be answered somewhat intuitively: Edgar Wind wrote his Reith Lectures with the full weight of his own diasporic life on his back; but instead of curbing to bitterness or resentment, he made a step back, took a breath, and chose to hear beyond the sound and fury, for those echoes that can only be heard while the mind is still and yet probing, inquisitive whilst surrendering to a proper care for the world's past. It is at this point, where hatred is beyond the pale, that Wind was able to say that *Art and Anarchy* is '*vieux jeu*'. An 'old game', however, not because it is merely a matter of restating a body of meaning learned by rote, but of playing with it, of enacting it, of testing this ancient, pristine corpus against the hardness of one's age, thus grafting by way of skirmish the alien pelt of bygone heuristics onto oneself. When this fondness for the historical other becomes self-love, then the writing of a 'tract for the times' is a matter of fighting for one's own skin.

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