

Breaking the shell of the humanist egg: Kenneth Clark's University of London lectures on German art historians¹

Matthew C Potter

When Kenneth Clark (1903-1983) delivered a set of two lectures at London University some time in 1930 an interesting confluence of art historiographical currents occurred. It provided an opportunity not only for a select university audience to hear about the talents and potential problems attending recent German scholarship in the field of art history, but also an occasion for a 27-year-old art historian, only just entering his field as a professional, to contemplate what kind of practitioner he would himself become. This article explores the reflective process Clark undertook in his close reading of the work of two of the most important art historians of the previous half-century – how he explained, critiqued and suggested supplementary processes for augmenting the theoretical machinery supplied by Alois Riegl (1858-1905) and Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945).

The background to the London University lectures

Despite his ability to unintentionally offend or appear aloof, as an early-career art historian, Clark was obviously singularly adept at engaging, entertaining, and retaining the confidence of leading figures in the contemporary art world – academic, connoisseurial, and commercial.² Whilst at Oxford, Clark had developed a close relationship with Charles F. Bell (1871-1966), the Keeper of Art at the Ashmolean Museum. It was through Bell that Clark gained an introduction to Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) in 1926, opening a new mentoring relationship that would be the most consummate example of Clark's active management of his options in order to keep them open as long as possible, but also the most difficult juggling act to attempt.³ Berenson was impressed both by Clark's eye and mind, and

¹ The quotes by Kenneth Clark are from the Tate Archives and are reproduced by permission of the Estate of Kenneth Clark c/o The Hanbury Agency Ltd, 28 Moreton Street, London SW1V 2PE. Copyright [1930] © Kenneth Clark. All rights reserved. I would like to thank Professor Richard Woodfield for inviting me to contribute this article on the Clark lectures and for his editorial comments.

² Meryle Secrest, *Kenneth Clark: A Biography*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984, 86; William Mostyn-Owen, 'Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark: A Personal View', in Connors and Waldman (eds.), *Bernard Berenson: Formation and Heritage*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; Villa I Tatti, 2014, 232, 234: Mostyn-Owen refers to the friction caused by the perceived arrogance of Clark amongst the Villa I Tatti set and National Gallery curators.

³ David Piper, 'Clark, Kenneth Mackenzie, Baron Clark (1903-1983)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004: 60 Vols., vol. 11, 817.

had recruited him the same year to help in revisions for a new edition of *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, although this would not come to fruition as Clark's work on his own book project *The Gothic Revival* (1928) intervened.⁴ The rift caused by this defection was compounded by the domestic issues surrounding Clark's marriage – Jane Martin broke off her previous engagement to the son of an intimate friend of the Berensons.⁵ Clark consulted his mentor when he was offered the Ashmolean job in 1931, but Berenson's professional jealousies and dubious dealings with the Duveen brothers (as their *de facto* agent in Italy) may have served to distance the two, especially around 1934 when Joseph Duveen and Berenson were involved in selling the National Gallery Sassetta paintings of questionable authenticity during Clark's first year as the Director (1934-45).⁶ William Mostyn-Owen has credible doubts, however, about the reality of any 'break' between the two men.⁷ Whatever the case may be, by 1938 Berenson's cessation of his thirty-year association with the Duveens over a disagreement on the attribution of Lord Allendale's *Nativity* would no doubt have brought them closer together.⁸ Clark had taken his revenge upon Duveen over the Sassetta incident by blocking his reappointment as a Trustee of the National Gallery.⁹ Clark found it difficult to arrive at anything other than a damaging conclusion regarding Berenson's money-driven

⁴ Secret, *Clark*, 49, 68, 88, 145. Meryle Secret, *Being Bernard Berenson: A Biography*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, 331. The work that Clark was employed to help in revising was Bernard Berenson's *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters, Classified, Criticised and Studied as Documents in the History and Appreciation of Tuscan Art, with a Copious Catalogue Raisonné*, London, Murray, 1903. The revised edition eventually appeared in three volumes (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1938). Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste*, London: Constable, 1928. Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, ix, 29 n.4: Berenson noted how Clark had aided him over two winters and generously acknowledged that 'my loss was the public's gain' with Clark's move to the Ashmolean then National Gallery. He also freely acknowledged Clark's aid in connoisseurial observations where it was decisive.

⁵ Secret, *Berenson*, 332-3.

⁶ Colin Simpson, *Artful Partners: Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen*, New York: Macmillan, 1986, 246-8; Rachel Cohen, *Bernard Berenson: A Life in the Picture Trade*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013, 117, 184, 237-9; Kenneth Clark, *Another Part of the Wood: A Self-Portrait*, London: Murray, 1974, 227-8.

⁷ Mostyn-Owen, 'Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark: A Personal View', 234, 237: in his correspondence with Clark, Berenson was open about his doubts over the authorship of the works but felt their aesthetic merits meant they were worth purchasing. Rather than a subsequent break, Mostyn-Owen sees the lapse in the Berenson-Clark correspondence as due to the distraction of other business and the lack of necessity for direct business dealings between them. Furthermore the idea of a break is undermined by the continuum of four to five letters a year between the two, excluding the war years.

⁸ Secret, *Berenson*, 333, 351; Secret, *Clark*, 97-8; Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 255-9, 264; Ernest Samuels and Jayne Samuels, *Bernard Berenson, the Making of a Legend*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, 436; Kenneth Clark, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait*, London: J. Murray, 1977, 103: in Clark's account of the Allendale *Nativity* affair curiously he is more sympathetic to Duveen than Berenson.

⁹ Piper, 'Clark, Kenneth Mackenzie, Baron Clark (1903-1983)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 11, 818; Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 247.

actions in the art market and, on Berenson's part, there was a certain sensitivity to their different situations regarding the privileges of the 'moneyed' social set to which his some-time acolyte belonged, but Clark did help manage his former mentor's reputation by advising a judicious annihilation of Berenson's business records on his death.¹⁰ Long before these transactions, Clark's University of London lectures may have caused some form of offence to Berenson's sensibilities and the tribal politics of the contemporary London (and global) art world came into play here.

Colin Simpson suggests that it was through Joseph Duveen's influence that Clark was given the opportunity to act as co-organizer of the 1930 exhibition of Italian art at the Royal Academy (1 January to 8 March): the dealer using this as an opportunity to showcase works he had sold to his clients.¹¹ Clark began his lecturing career in the spring of 1930 in relation to this Italian exhibition. His first lecture was on Botticelli at the British Academy on 17 January. He gave the same or a similar talk at (probably Charles Henry) St. John Hornby's house in Chelsea, and other lectures on Giotto and Bellini as well.¹² As a lecturer in the Royal Academy series, Clark was in the company of Roger Fry (1866-1934) and it was no doubt he who introduced the young art historian to Tancred Borenius (1885-1948). Clark idolized Fry: as an undergraduate student at Oxford University he had heard Fry lecture and this built upon the bedrock of respect constructed on his reading of *Vision and Design* (1920).¹³ It is clear that Clark's career as a lecturer began under the influence of these highly-placed patrons within the art establishment. Borenius was a friend of Fry and had benefitted from the latter's introduction into the London art world himself. It was Borenius' invitation that led to Clark's talks on German art historians which are under scrutiny in this article. In his autobiography, Clark posited that 'One might have supposed that Fascism and the British Foreign Office would have exhausted Mr Berenson's powers of vituperation, but he always had some left over

¹⁰ Secret, *Berenson*, 251, 332, 385; Mostyn-Owen, 'Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark: A Personal View', 245: Clark too encountered money problems later in life and was obliged to sell some of his art to remain solvent.

¹¹ Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 244; Royal Academy [Lord Balniel and Kenneth Clark (eds.)], *A Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition of Italian Art Held in the Galleries of the Royal Academy, Burlington House London, January-March 1930*, London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1931, vii: the 'selection committee' of the British Executive Committee included Lady Chamberlain, Lord Balniel, the Viscount Bearsted, Kenneth Clark, W.G. Constable, Lady Colefax, Campbell Dodgson, Roger Fry, Henry Harris, A.E. Popham, Charles Ricketts, Archibald Russell, Lord Gerald Wellesley, and Sir Robert Witt. Roger Fry provided the Introductory Note (xxi-xxvii).

¹² Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 183; Christine Shaw, 'Hornby, (Charles Harold) St John (1867-1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 28, 128-9; Royal Academy of Arts, *Italian art; an illustrated souvenir of the exhibition of Italian art at Burlington House, London*, London: published for the Executive Committee of the Exhibition by W. Clowes, 1930, iv-v. See: http://www.racollection.org.uk/ixbin/indexplus?record=VOL6228&_IXp=8&_IXz=2 and http://www.racollection.org.uk/ixbin/indexplus?record=VOL6228&_IXp=9&_IXz=2 accessed 9.11.2014.

¹³ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 109.

for colleagues, especially Roger Fry and Tancred Borenius and, of course, the execrable Strykowski [sic].¹⁴

The reasons for this animosity are easily discerned. Fry had not only beaten Berenson to the post of curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1905 but went on to provide a critical appraisal of Berenson's *North Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (1907) which caused offence to the author.¹⁵ Berenson might presumably have felt that Clark's move into such circles was a personal betrayal, although it may have been orchestrated by Joseph Duveen, an intermediary figure to whom Berenson would have readily deferred. According to Simpson, Duveen used his influence to secure Clark's appointment at the Ashmolean and the National Gallery, and he was also the employer of both Berenson and Borenius.¹⁶ From the point of view of his professional development Clark no doubt appreciated the opportunity to spread his wings at such a high profile venue as the British Academy. Furthermore these lectures also afforded him the chance to hone his opinion of the masters of the Italian Renaissance. It was clear to him that lecturing occupied a particular position within the scholarly repertoire. Despite the money and reputation garnered by his performances at the lectern, Clark gave careful consideration in his first autobiography as to whether his 'career as a lecturer ... was a mistake or not' and that perhaps he would have been better served by avoiding that medium entirely:

The lecture form encouraged all the evasions and half-truths that I had learnt to practise in my weekly essays at Oxford. How can a talk of fifty minutes on Giotto or Bellini be anything but superficial? I was conscious of this at the time and wrote two serious lectures on Wölfflin and Riegl which I gave, at the instigation of Tancred Borenius, in an enormous hall in London University. When I mounted the rostrum there were about fifteen pupils in the hall. "Wait", said Tancred, "the students will come in their thousands". In fact no one else came. This sobering experience cured me temporarily of my itch to lecture, but not for long. The fact is that I enjoy imparting information and awakening people's interest; and in the arts this can be achieved more successfully by a lecture than by the printed page. But historical truth is usually complex and frequently dull, and anyone with a sense of style or a love of language is tempted to take short cuts and omit the qualifications that would make a statement less telling. The practice of lecturing not only ended my ambition to be a scholar (this might never have

¹⁴ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 153.

¹⁵ Cohen, *Bernard Berenson*, 164; Roger E. Fry, 'The Painters of North Italy', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* vol. 12, no. 60 (March, 1908), 347-349: Fry's assessment was that Berenson's book was something of a curate's egg. He saw the rich material it contained and its attempt to encyclopaedically classify the authorship of North Italian works as providing a great service to students and scholars. However, Fry felt that overzealousness had led to attributions best left 'anonymous' and that the brevity of the volume had produced weaknesses in its essays. Berenson's typological formula of 'prettiness and triviality' for North Italian art was dangerously reductive and 'led to a certain amount of distortion and exaggeration'.

¹⁶ Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 244, 246.

succeeded, as I am too easily bored), but prevented me from examining problems of style and history with sufficient care.¹⁷

Yet despite this rather cavalier and dismissive judgement of his early accomplishments as a lecturer, even this recollection carried with it major significance. In 1930 Clark was aware of the need to find a requisite 'balance of effort and delight' between deep scholarly enquiry and the beguiling art of the public-speaker aided by his slides – a craftsmanship which had been nurtured in him by the high tempo bravura methodology of the Oxford tutorial system. Tellingly, the considered but nevertheless light touch style of the Italian lectures were in stark contrast in Clark's eyes to his bookish and 'serious lectures on Wölfflin and Riegl'. As an introduction to the first of these Clark posited that:

Perhaps the best way of understanding the methods of an historian of art is to study one of them at work, & Professor Borenius has suggested that I should take as an example Wölfflin's classical book, the *Kunstgeschichtliche grunbegriffe* [sic] – the fundamental conceptions of art history. On the whole, this is much the best choice because Wölfflin is what is rare in German speculative writers – perfectly sane & level headed.¹⁸

But why study German art historians in 1930? Despite the advent of the First World War, from the nineteenth century through to the rise of the Nazi party in 1933 Anglo-German relations in the cultural arena had remained relatively healthy. During the naval arms race of 1905-6 German artists, art scholars and art museum workers had been key signatories in a declaration of friendship to the British, in the years before 1914 the Bloomsbury set toyed with German formalist aesthetics, whilst Vorticist artists including Percy Wyndham Lewis and Edward Wadsworth visited Germany and responded to German ideas and art forms.¹⁹ Connections went deeper than art practitioners: English art patrons like the Sadler family travelled to Germany to buy art before the outbreak of the First World War, writers like D.H. Lawrence and Rupert Brooke travelled to Germany in the interwar years, and in 1933 Herbert Read would advocate the values of Modern German art to a British audience in *Art Now*.²⁰ Additionally, in 1927 Read translated Wilhelm Worringer's *Formprobleme der Gotik* (1912) (published as *Form in Gothic*) and wrote an engaging introduction to this.²¹ Read later also penned the introduction to the 1952 translation of Wölfflin's *Classic Art*. On that occasion he squarely set out the methodological

¹⁷ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 183-4.

¹⁸ Tate Gallery Archive, Papers of Kenneth Clark, TGA 8812/2/2/1131: Kenneth Clark, 'Wölfflin: London University Lecture', 1.

¹⁹ Matthew C. Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012, 203, 222-3, 237-8, 249-50.

²⁰ Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 227, 235, 261.

²¹ Andrew Causey, 'Herbert Read and Contemporary Art', in David Goodway (ed.), *Herbert Read Reassessed*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998, 125; Paul Street, 'Perception and Expression', in David Goodway (ed.), *Herbert Read Reassessed*, 256; David Thistlewood, *Herbert Read: Formlessness and From: An Introduction to his Aesthetics*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, 41; Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 261.

achievements of Wölfflin: his greater 'precision' of visual analysis compared to the wider 'historical insight' of Burckhardt, the five antitheses of the *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915: translated as *Principles of Art History* (1932)), and his influence over Fry and Berenson, such that 'his great distinction is that he did perfect such a scientific method in art-historical criticism' that 'there is no art critic of importance after his time who has not, consciously or unconsciously, been influenced by him'.²² Yet Clark had trodden a similar path over twenty years earlier in his London University lectures.

Borenus was a Finnish art historian who after studies and travels in Germany and Italy became an established expert on Italian Renaissance art. Borenus was befriended by Fry and succeeded him as Lecturer in the History of Art at University College, London, in 1914 before becoming the inaugural Durning-Lawrence Professor of the History of Art at the same institution in 1922.²³ Borenus was one of Duveen's second-string advisors and also co-edited *Apollo* with Duveen (its owner).²⁴ Despite their obvious antipathy, the Fry-Borenus and Berenson camps agreed on the values of Wölfflin's scholarship.²⁵ Berenson had been inspired to undertake close readings of images by his study of the Austrian and Swiss art historians Riegl and Wölfflin.²⁶ Berenson took Wölfflin's sense of the tactile to develop a more nuanced psychological reading of the response of the individual to a work of art in *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1896).²⁷ Meanwhile Fry had warmly reviewed Wölfflin's *The Art of the Italian Renaissance* for *The Athenaeum* in 1903. Wölfflin had worked out his thesis 'with striking originality, with a rare freshness of observation and brilliant powers of analysis'.²⁸ The book also offered 'an interesting indication of a possible revolution in taste – a revolution which would bring us back almost to the point of view taken by Reynolds in his discourses, and which would substitute for the minute criticism of the detailed qualities of design the consideration of those large and general effects which are distinguished in the first total impression' and 'expressive power' visible in Quattrocento draughtsmanship. However, Fry

²² Herbert Read, 'Introduction', in Heinrich Wölfflin, *Classic Art: An Introduction to the Italian Renaissance*, translated by Peter and Linda Murray from Basle 1948 edition, London: Phaidon, 1952, v-viii; Patricia Emison, *The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 104.

²³ Dennis Farr, 'Borenus, (Carl) Tancred (1885–1948)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 6, 657.

²⁴ Simpson, *Artful Partners*, 246.

²⁵ Jill Burke, 'Inventing the High Renaissance, from Winckelmann to Wikipedia: An Introductory Essay', in Jill Burke (ed.), *Rethinking the High Renaissance: The Culture of the Visual Arts in Early Sixteenth-Century Rome*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012, 22, n.54.

²⁶ Elizabeth Chaplin, *Sociology and Visual Representation*, London: Routledge, 1994, 48; Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006, 58.

²⁷ Nicholas Stanley Price, Mansfield Kirby Talley, and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro, *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1996, 24.

²⁸ [Roger Fry], 'Fine Arts', *The Athenaeum*, No. 3974, 26 December 1903, 863, col.a.

reserved criticism of the early Cinquecento style about which Wölfflin was writing, for the loss of detail that occurred in its parts ('no one of the sacred personages represented has any definite individuality') and the preponderance for artificially addressing its audience ('One feels, moreover, that they are arranged entirely with a view to the effect to be produced on the spectator').²⁹ Fry's 1921 assessment of Wölfflin's *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* was equally positive.³⁰ Fry reused his *Athenaeum* review in his essay on the 'Seicento' in *Transformations* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932), which was heavily influenced by Wölfflin's *Renaissance und Barock*.³¹ Berenson's enthusiasm was equally long-lasting for in the second edition of the *Drawings of the Florentine Painters* he remarked 'would that our studies had more Wölfflins! [I repeat this in 1935 with increased fervour.]'³² Berenson drew particular attention to the valuable analysis of the 'Titanism' of the work of Michelangelo undertaken by Wölfflin in *Die Jugendwerke des Michelangelo* (Munich: T. Ackermann, 1891), and urged students to consult his reconstruction of Michelangelo's *Sistine Chapel* frescoes scheme in the *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* (1892).

Obviously, from the preliminary passage of Clark's second lecture quoted above, it was at the suggestion of his new mentor Borenius that Wölfflin's book *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* was taken as a case study.³³ However it is clear also that the German school of art history these German-speaking art historians represented was familiar to Clark long before he entered the London lecture circuit. Clark's first biographer, Meryle Secrest, suggested that although art history was not offered at British universities whilst he was an undergraduate, the alternative of studying *Kunstgeschichte* in Germany would have left him non-plussed as 'his mind would have recoiled from the German fondness for an accumulation of factual detail at the expense of critical values'.³⁴ Clark may well not have harboured any desires to become a full-blown *Kunstforscher* (art researcher) but this does not mean he was either ignorant or ill-disposed towards German ideas.³⁵ During the time he spent at the Ashmolean as an Oxford undergraduate (1922-6), Clark mined the

²⁹ [Fry], 'Fine Arts', 862, col.b., 863 col.a-c.

³⁰ Andrew Hopkins, 'Riegl Renaissances', in Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witte (eds.), *The Origins of Baroque art in Rome (by Alois Riegl)*, Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2010, 73 n.13.

³¹ Caroline Elam, 'Roger Fry and Early Italian Painting', in Christopher Green (ed.), *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, London: Merrell Holberton, 1999, 88 n.2.

³² Berenson, *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, vol. 1, 188-9,197.

³³ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 1; Secrest, *Clark*, 95, 137-8: Interestingly Clark's relationship with Borenius was soured by professional jealousy similar to the tensions that had existed between Clark and Berenson previously. Both had applied for the post of Surveyor of the King's Pictures but the appointment committee disliked Borenius' intention to charge for his services. Clark therefore secured the position. Secrest suggests Borenius served his revenge cold with the part he played in the *Daily Telegraph's* (20 October 1937) critique of the dubious Giorgiones purchased for the National Gallery under Clark.

³⁴ Secrest, *Clark*, 50.

³⁵ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 200: Interestingly Clark used this German term to describe Campbell Dodgson who visited the Ashmolean during Clark's tenure: Dodgson was 'almost the only English *Kunstforscher* of the date who was respected on the Continent'.

library stock and the subject of his first University of London lecture appears in connection with this activity for: 'I had read, with immense difficulty, the works of Riegl and had formed the ambition to interpret every scrap of design as the revelation of a state of mind. I dreamed of a great book which would be the successor to Riegl's *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie*'.³⁶ It is quite possible that Clark had some German from his schooldays at Wixenford and Winchester although there are no records of his taking classes in modern languages. Even so Clark would have been compelled to read Riegl in German as English translations were not available of his major works until the 1980s, and *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna: Kaiserlich-Königlichen Court and State Press, 1901) was particularly hard-going fare.³⁷ Fittingly Clark had been inspired to undertake a trip to Germany by the reproductions of expressionist works brought back from Berlin in 1922 by his friend Eddy Sackville:

Partly under his influence I made my way to Berlin, where I spent my time in museums and galleries, and so saw nothing of the ferocious depravities which made so great an impression on Eddy, and later on Stephen Spender. I learnt a lot. But I must confess, that Germany is very much not my 'spiritual home'. Realising that almost all writers on philosophy and the history of art who had influenced me deeply – Hegel, Schopenhauer, Jacob Burckhardt, Wölfflin, Riegl, Dvůřák [sic] – had all been German or German-trained, I later made a determined effort to soak myself in German culture, and spent almost the whole of one long vacation in Dresden and Munich.³⁸

This second trip, lasting three weeks, took place in 1926. The art he saw on that occasion was mostly Italian Renaissance work in the German collections. He visited the *Gemälde Galerie* in Dresden and the Nymphenberg Palace in Munich, and also attended performances of Anton Walbrook's plays and Richard Wagner's operas but the trip was also aimed at providing him with the opportunity to perfect his

³⁶ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 108.

³⁷ Saul Ostrow, 'Introduction Alois Riegl: History's Deposition', in Richard Woodfield (ed.), *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*, London: Routledge, 2013, 3, 9 n.5; Richard Woodfield, 'Reading Riegl's *Kunst-Industrie*', in Richard Woodfield (ed.), *Framing Formalism*, 56; Martin Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', *Representations* (Summer 1989), vol. 27, 172-3, 176: the scholarly responses to Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* did not really occur until 1917 and then were affected by the insular patriotism that dominated art historical discourse in Germany at the time (and in fact cause and effect were reciprocal in that Wölfflin's formalism was motivated by a desire to depoliticize his work). Interestingly Warnke argues that the *Principles of Art History* can be seen as an equivalent to 'military service' for Wölfflin. Similarly Riegl's work may be contextualized by the rise of Prussian cultural nationalism and the need for Habsburg visual culture to assert its own 'national character': see Diana Graham Reynolds, *Alois Riegl and the Politics of Art History: Intellectual Traditions and Austrian Identity in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, PhD Thesis: University of California, San Diego, 1997, xi, 101-212; later published as Diana Reynolds Cordileone, *Alois Riegl in Vienna 1875–1905: An Institutional Biography*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

³⁸ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 114.

German language skills.³⁹ Yet he invoked E.M. Forster to express where his true sympathies laid, for: 'yet, in spite of this, I was unhappy in Germany. "Only connect". I never connected, as I did from the first minute I set foot in Italy'.⁴⁰ It is quite possible that Clark's misgivings were imparted during his student days by Bell, his mentor at the Ashmolean, who entertained a great animosity for Germans.⁴¹ His work in the year prior to the London University lectures gave opportunities to encounter the works of other German art historians. In 1929 when undertaking his research for the catalogue of Leonardo drawings in the Royal Collection he was obliged to consult Jean Paul Richter (1847-1937) on the *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci* (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883) with its survey of the five thousand extant manuscript fragments, and his careful reconstruction of the texts these formed or were intended to form. While Clark found this the best work in its field, Richter failed to relate the writing of the artist to that of his contemporaries.⁴² Whilst Richter, like Berenson, was heavily influenced by the ideals of Giovanni Morelli, Clark was able to develop a more well-rounded view of possible art historical approaches by attending a lecture delivered by Aby Warburg (1866-1929) in Rome in January 1929 which encouraged him to abandon the connoisseurial mode of Morelli and Berenson in favour of a more ambitious approach couched in the history of ideas.⁴³ This lecture, delivered on 19 January 1929, was one of Warburg's last public outings and took as its subject 'Die römische Antike in der Werkstatt Ghirlandaios (Roman antiquities in the workshop of Ghirlandaio)'. Warburg magisterially linked Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Dürer, Rubens and Rembrandt in his plea for a more interdisciplinary and ambitious form of art historical scholarship.⁴⁴ Its impact on Clark was immense and he recalled how Warburg literally 'directed the whole lecture at' him for two hours and, despite his imperfect German, he 'understood about two thirds' of it.⁴⁵ The intellectual trajectory this imparted on Clark can be traced from *The Gothic Revival* (1928) to *The Nude* (1956).

In the preface to *The Gothic Revival* Clark declared that art historians had a choice of alternative approaches to their subject: 'Instead of making a great work of art his central theme and trying to explain it by means of the social and political circumstances of the time, the historian may reverse the process, and examine works of art to learn something of the epochs which made them, something of men's

³⁹ Secret, *Clark*, 71.

⁴⁰ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 115.

⁴¹ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 105.

⁴² Kenneth Clark, *A Catalogue of the Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci in the Collection of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935: 2 Vols.; Jean Paul Richter (1847-1947), *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883: 2 Vols., vol. 1, xv.

⁴³ Secret, *Clark*, 80; Karen Ann Lang, *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006, 255, n.122.

⁴⁴ Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 70-1. This lecture is known as the Hertziana lecture due to its delivery at the Biblioteca Hertziana in Rome.

⁴⁵ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 189-90.

formal, imaginative demands which vary so unaccountably from age to age'.⁴⁶ Martin Kemp sees this ambition as being 'closer to German *Kunstwissenschaft* than to traditional British art criticism'.⁴⁷ Clark's insistence that his chapter on 'Pathos' in *The Nude* was 'entirely Warburgian' puzzled William Mostyn-Owen in his recent reminiscences.⁴⁸ Kemp's assessment of this particular conundrum is more revealing for he sees Clark working as a cultural historian using images to reveal the thoughts of an historic age as 'Warburgian in a general way' without necessarily engaging with the 'philosophical and psychological intricacies of Warburg's approach' citing his perplexity at metaphysics as further proof.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, as Nicolas Penny writes, 'Into it one may feel that much of the best German writing on the history of art during the previous half-century has flowed' drawing inspiration for his comparative studies from Wölfflin, transmigration of forms from Riegl, and the sense of an emotional reinvention of classical art during the Renaissance from Warburg.⁵⁰ Clark's appreciation of Hegel's engagement with visual culture and Walter Pater's indebtedness to German aesthetics did however gain notice in his *Moments of Vision* (1954).⁵¹ In reviewing the interplay of descriptive and analytical components of art criticism in another section of the same book, Clark paid homage to 'the penetrating eye of Ruskin, Wölfflin or Riegl', which provide 'perhaps the most enlightening in all criticism', picking out specifically Wölfflin's critique of Baroque architecture, and the comparison of the genre painter Gerard ter Borch (1617-81) and the history painter Gabriël Metsu (1629-67) as incidents of 'real aesthetic pleasure'.⁵² Ultimately Clark would make few references to German art historians in *The Nude*, in fact only Wölfflin received explicit reference in that text. The same rationale was at play here as in *Moments of Vision* from two years earlier. Wölfflin was praised for his formal analysis of Baroque art – a matter Clark explored in detail in his London University lectures.⁵³

⁴⁶ Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste*, London: John Murray, 1928 [1962], xx.

⁴⁷ Martin Kemp, 'Clark's Leonardo', in Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, London: Folio Society, [1988] 2005, 13.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 190; Mostyn-Owen, 'Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark: A Personal View', 234.

⁴⁹ Kemp, 'Clark's Leonardo', 15-16; see Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 35: where Clark confesses to being 'as perplexed by metaphysics as a Trobriand islander'.

⁵⁰ Nicholas Penny, *London Review of Books*, vol. 3, no. 21 (19 November 1981), 20.

⁵¹ Kenneth Clark, *Moments of Vision*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954 [1981], 63, 89, 135; see also Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 112-13.

⁵² Clark, *Moments of Vision*, 87.

⁵³ Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art*, London: J. Murray, 1956, 135: While Clark did not find Wölfflin's methodology practical to apply to Peter Paul Rubens he did nevertheless acknowledge the importance of the conception intellectually, for 'Wölfflin in his masterly analysis of baroque form spoke of a change from tactile to a painter-like, or, visual, approach'.

The make-up of the London University lectures

Having provided some contextualization for how and why Riegl and Wölfflin presented themselves as apt material for his lectures, their format can now be considered. The manuscripts of the two lectures are to a varying degree incomplete: the first literally, for while it is typed up with hand-written annotations and corrections it is missing its first three pages; the second is wholly in manuscript with the final three (unnumbered) pages providing an alternative draft to pages twenty-one to twenty-two. Together the work may further be seen to be unfinished, given its author's desire to take the project further. In a later note that he appended to the first lecture, added presumably when Clark was undertaking the housekeeping of his files, he remarked that: 'A lot of thought has gone into it, & I hesitate to throw it away. But I don't know what to do with it!'⁵⁴ It is understandable that Clark's initial attempt at an intellectual history of this kind was frustrated given, firstly, the extreme limitations of the parameters of two hour-long lectures, and that, secondly, to paraphrase Zhou Enlai, it was perhaps still 'too early to say' what the impact of the German school would be on art historians.⁵⁵ In his self-conscious reflection upon the methodology and theory of art historians, Michael Podro's *The Critical Historians of Art* (1982) might fittingly be seen as a realization of Clark's project. Yet if Podro undertook the task with greater academic rigour and extended the chronological boundaries (ranging from the late 1820s to the late 1920s) and number of German-speaking art historians covered, it also confirmed an important issue which Clark had no doubt already perceived. Notably that the intellectual history of these German ideas was too rarefied and abstract, too self-contradictory to make for easy working into a book. Perhaps more so for Podro than Clark, due to his greater scope, the Laocoön-like struggle to master the serpentine Germanic school of thought was a formidable challenge. Anyone was likely to be brought down and drawn back into the convoluted mass from which they were attempting to separate themselves in order to gain an objective and exterior view. The critical responses to this book confirm such a perspective. Whilst Alex Potts welcomed the book as both 'very important and timely', and a valid attempt to carve out a separate tradition of thought from that suited to contemporary fashions for Marxist social art history, he also saw the book's success as 'partly stem[ming] from Podro's own peculiar position neither quite inside nor quite outside the discipline'.⁵⁶ This issue of the author's membership of the tradition which he was critiquing was carried through into other reviews. Mark Cheetham was less forgiving of Podro's inferred failure to reflect upon the impact of such thinking on his own practice and that of his contemporaries, whilst David Carrier not only marvelled at the 'major achievement' represented in the 'lucid history of this tradition' provided by *The Critical Historians*

⁵⁴ Tate Gallery Archive, Papers of Kenneth Clark, TGA 8812/2/2/11, Kenneth Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 1.

⁵⁵ Dean Nicholas, 'Zhou Enlai's Famous Saying Debunked', *History Today website*, posted 15th June 2011, 11:30: <http://www.historytoday.com/blog/news-blog/dean-nicholas/zhoulais-famous-saying-debunked> accessed 9.11.2014.

⁵⁶ Alex Potts, 'A German Art History', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 127, no. 993 (December, 1985), 900, 903.

of Art, but was also more sympathetic in his evaluation of Podro's adopted vantage point, suggesting that Podro might become a chapter in the extended narrative of future histories of his subject.⁵⁷ Before passing back from heir to art historiographical forebear, it is worth commenting on one aspect of conceptual consistency between Podro and Clark. Although *The Critical Historians of Art* is formally divided into two parts, Potts rightly identifies a more meaningful three-way division in its sets of case studies: a first phase of a history of art flavoured by the idealism of the early nineteenth century; a second phase of consolidation through a focus on stylistic analysis; and a third phase signalling a return to Neo-Kantian scientific definitions of art.⁵⁸ Independently Podro and Clark had come to similar conclusions regarding the discrete character of the middle-period, and identified Riegl and Wölfflin as its key practitioners.

The two lectures Clark produced worked independently to elucidate the useful contributions of these two writers to the field of art history, and collectively to trace their shared vision for an art history that modelled changes in style over time. Throughout the two lectures, Clark hinted at the threads that ran between them. When discussing Riegl's *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin: Siemens, 1893) in his first lecture, Clark paused. Following the natural flow of his narrative, he had begun to consider material factors that affected the evolution of styles. In a display of critical discipline, however, he halted that particular refrain in order to resume it in its proper place for 'that aspect of his book must be considered in my second lecture; we are at present concerned with the point of view which his method implies'.⁵⁹ The two talks worked in careful collaboration – the first was depicting the ideas in a broad-brush manner (the conceptual framework), the second explaining with detailed examples how the Germans saw the evolution of style (with evidence of the German 'history of style' methodology in Wölfflin's practice).

The first lecture: Riegl and the philosophy of art history

As a young-blood, Clark was no doubt enthused by the revolutionary nature of the Post-Impressionist polemic of the Fry set, and was seeking to use Riegl and Wölfflin as media for carrying his equally ground-breaking ideas on how art history needed to change. Clark saw the eighteenth century as shackled to 'the circle of humanism' generated by the ancient cultural traditions of the West as represented by Jonathan Richardson (1694-1771).⁶⁰ Clark argued for the need to cultivate a more refined sensibility amongst art historians for 'Instead of the old navigable inland sea of humanist culture, there is a stream of ocean vaguely encircling the known world &

⁵⁷ Mark A. Cheetham, 'Review: "The Spectator and the Landscape in the Art Criticism of Diderot and His Contemporaries" by Ian J. Lochhead; "The Critical Historians of Art by Michael Podro"', *Art Journal*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Winter, 1983), 421, 423; David Carrier, 'Review: The Critical Historians of Art by Michael Podro', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Autumn, 1983), 95-6.

⁵⁸ Potts, 'A German Art History', 901.

⁵⁹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 15.

⁶⁰ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 5-6.

washing up on its shores amazing evidences of its continuity. On the limits of this uncharted sea, I will stop. There is hard work awaiting the future historian of art'.⁶¹ It was his adamant belief that the key shifts in styles from Classical to Byzantine (and by extrapolation from Romanesque to Gothic, or Renaissance to Baroque) did not involve changes in absolute value (i.e. producing better or worse art) but rather represented subtle shifts in the artistic will of a people. Clark singularly rejected any possibility of teleological development in art history for this implied an absolute zenith to which all art aspired. Rather Clark was careful to use the concept of 'a continuous process of evolution' in a nuanced manner 'without the idea of blind progress which biologists have attached to it'.⁶²

Ideas of cultural evolution were legion in the nineteenth century and thrived on the ideological and typological models produced by Darwin's followers: T.H. Huxley and Herbert Spencer. In art – and in Germany especially – artists and critics were attracted to drawing connections between evolutionary theories and artistic forms, especially in the work of mythological and Symbolist artists like Arnold Böcklin, Max Klinger and Gabriel Max.⁶³ Yet Clark was more interested in conventional historical narratives of continual change through mechanisms integral to creative processes, and he found these in Riegl:

By his incredibly close analysis, Riegl was able to show that in the history o[f] ornament there were no breaks, no catastrophes, but a steady, continuous development, showing change for no outside or material reasons, but from the nature of the ornament itself and from the spiritual desires of the people who made it. The force of this theory was only shown when, in 1901, Riegl applied it to the figure arts.⁶⁴

The theory of evolution in Riegl's *Die spätromische Kunst-Industrie* was nuanced such that the idea of the decadence of late Roman art was roundly rejected – based on the assumption that all art 'is the result of intention, not of accident' of the 'artistic will' (which Clark mistranscribed as 'Kunstvollen' rather than *Kunstwollen*).⁶⁵ Yet bearing his Berensonian training in mind, Clark was unhappy to abandon all value-judgements regarding quality and felt that 'In one way the theory of the *Kunstvollen* [sic] is dangerous. Like an extreme determinist theory of morals it seems to annihilate all standards of value' for even without the moral connotations of 'decadence' and 'incompetence' it was still possible for an art historian to evaluate the finish and craftsmanship of two works of art or two periods.⁶⁶ For Riegl the

⁶¹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 23.

⁶² Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 16.

⁶³ See Marsha Morton, 'From Monera to Man: Ernst Haeckel, Darwinismus, and Nineteenth-Century German Art', in Barbara Jean Larson and Fae Brauer (eds.), *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms, and Visual Culture*, Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2009, 61, 67, 74-8, 90.

⁶⁴ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 15.

⁶⁵ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 16.

⁶⁶ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 16-17; Mostyn-Owen, 'Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark: A Personal View', 242-3: Clark later recycled this point in his 'Apologia of an Art Historian', Presidential Address to the Associated Societies of University of Edinburgh, 1950.

Kunstwollen helped explore the intellectual realms of creativity for they provided 'interpretative forms of expression' and established an "'optic" or "subjective" ideal of art' in opposition to historicist modes of visual culture fashionable in Vienna at the time.⁶⁷

As the reviewers of *The Critical Historians of Art* concluded, the two leitmotifs of this tradition of German intellectual history were the 'autonomy' and 'retrieval' theses, as Paul Crowther termed them: the first proclaiming art's evolution as an internal process, the second, explaining how the art of the past was evaluated and used in the present.⁶⁸ Clark was attuned to these features and mused upon the philosophical implications of Riegl's work: 'I think there are two chief ways of trying to account for a change of style. We can either seek to explain it by the laws of development inherent in the forms themselves, or by the changes in the spiritual conditions which these forms express'.⁶⁹ That Clark should have vocalized such a thought is unsurprising given his musings in the preface of *The Gothic Revival* two years earlier (see above, p. 9). Perhaps it was the influence of Warburg or maybe the less intense form of cultural history as advocated by Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) which caused Clark to step back from the logical extreme of such a thesis for in bringing the 'spiritual conditions' back into the frame Clark was placing a check on the 'autonomy' thesis. Borenius was similarly an enthusiast of the cultural historical manner of Jacob Burckhardt.⁷⁰ Famously Burckhardt hardly mentions individual works of art in *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860: translated into English in 1878).⁷¹ Also by invoking 'spiritual conditions' – rather than socio-economic contextual factors – Clark was displaying his awareness of the importance of *Geist* (translatable as Mind or Spirit) within the German traditions of *Geistesgeschichte* and *Kunstgeschichte* which had gained an audience amongst Britons during the previous century through the writings of Hegel and, more recently, Wassily Kandinsky.⁷² Wölfflin had only been able to create an internally logical model for stylistic change by excluding historical contexts.⁷³ Yet it is clear that the appeal of the *Kunstwollen* as an explanation of the

⁶⁷ Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1993, 12, 30, 35, 43; Reynolds, *Alois Riegl and the Politics of Art History*, x-xi: Reynolds explores the origins of the *Kunstwollen* in the philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer.

⁶⁸ Paul Crowther, "'The Critical Historians of Art": Michael Podro (Book Review)', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1983), 363. See also: Cheetham, 'Review: "The Spectator and the Landscape in the Art Criticism of Diderot and His Contemporaries" by Ian J. Lochhead; "The Critical Historians of Art by Michael Podro"', 421; see also Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', 179-81, on the 'emancipatory' expressive potential of art (and its history) as autonomous.

⁶⁹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 18.

⁷⁰ Dennis Farr, 'Borenius, (Carl) Tancred (1885–1948)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 6, 657.

⁷¹ Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 46.

⁷² Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 37, 70, 109, 120, 221, 230-1.

⁷³ Harry Francis Mallgrave & Eleftherios Ikononou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-1893*, LA: Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, 1994, 51; see also Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', 172: Warnke argues that the conceptualization

cause of change was, in Clark's mind, better suited as a philosophy rather than a methodology. It was at this juncture that Clark undertook a serious logistical appraisal of Riegl's methodology as applied to the *Stilfragen* and *Die spätromische Kunst-Industrie*:

In the change which Riegl set himself to examine, the change from Classical to what we may call Byzantine art, the first explanation carries us even less far. Riegl himself was very fond of this method and used great ingenuity in showing how great a part was played by purely artistic aims such as the development of the idea of space and of the pictorial sense in sculpture; and of the inevitable application of colouristic ideas to a plastic style, and so forth. But he was bound to admit that the fundamental change of style was due to a change of spirit – the change from a materialism to a transcendentalism, from an anthropocentric to a theistic conception of life.⁷⁴

Clark's reference to 'plastic style' is interesting, for the German theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a more basic understanding of this concept. Rather than reflecting a visceral creative evaluation of the sensibility and possibility of formal characteristics, for Germans like Adolf von Hildebrand and Riegl, plasticity 'designated the densely textured, opaque two-dimensional shape that distinguished itself from the relative emptiness of the visual field surrounding it when the perceptual apparatus differentiated figure from ground'.⁷⁵

Another point of methodology raised by Clark in his first 'philosophical' lecture involved the effect rendered on the minds of art historians by their use of photography as a support for their research. Whilst Walter Benjamin would later reflect on the potential damage caused by photographic reproductions to visual perception and valuation in his famous essay on 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), six years earlier Clark passed equally insightful comment upon the potential of high quality photographic reproductions of art works to transform the perspective of art historians. The new photographic visions (of magnified close-ups and simultaneous study of paintings in different collections) allowed art historians to undertake a panoptic view of the creative history of mankind, with a two-fold impact on scholarship: philosophic and historic affecting the accuracy of perception and chronicling respectively.⁷⁶ Yet a model for both Clark and Benjamin had already been provided by Riegl. Benjamin inverted Riegl's precepts 'making modern perception tactile or haptic rather than optic'.⁷⁷ Clark had seen the potential of such work in Warburg's use of magnified photographs to

of Wölfflin's 'ahistorical aestheticism' helped the discipline to develop 'a heightened awareness of the historical dimension of aesthetic forms'.

⁷⁴ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 19.

⁷⁵ Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, 125.

⁷⁶ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 8-10.

⁷⁷ Iversen, *Alois Riegl*, 15-16; Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art*, University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, 182.

illustrate his concept of the *Mnemosyne* or *Bilderatlas* (picture atlas) at the Hertziana lecture in Rome.⁷⁸

As with all points in Clark's commentary, the observation of the features in the art historiographical landscape were a means to another end. Clark's seismic conclusion was that beauty as a concept commonly used in the Western tradition was no longer fit for purpose and required wholesale renovation, for 'Clearly none of these conditions of beauty apply to our Scythian plaque or even, to take a less esoteric example, to a piece of Romanesque sculpture. Yet these objects arouse in us sensations which, with our limited powers of psychological analysis, seem to be identical with those aroused by the frieze of the Parthenon'.⁷⁹ Photography could enable this new eclectic vision. In the case of Riegl's shortcomings, Clark concluded that change in style must occur when a new spirit evolved in a cultural consciousness, and that the 'almost magical event' of creating new forms meant artists and designers would borrow from types available from elsewhere.⁸⁰ Clark demurred at the unpredictability of Riegl's model of spontaneous artistic creativity for 'I believe it is often possible to know what form an art-will [i.e. *Kunst-will*] will assume by relating the change of spirit which lies behind it with the available material by which these changes can be expressed. And that it is really what we are doing when we say that one culture has influenced another'.⁸¹ Clark was clear that his conclusion was 'obviously opposed to the theory of *Kunstwollen*' but he was sure that Riegl had 'underrate[d] outside influence'.⁸² The influence of Greek artistic spirit was important, but Clark also referred to that of historically remote influences such as the impact of the artefacts of the Sasanian Empire (c.224-651) on medieval Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸³

In his conclusion to the 'Lecture on Aesthetics' Clark nailed his colours squarely to the mast. Previously he had referred to the 'execrable Strzygowski [sic]'. In *Moments of Vision* (1954) Clark would later reminisce upon the animosity Berenson had felt for Josef Strzygowski (1862-1941):

To this complex amalgam of love and hate was added the precipitant of pure hate for a scholar named Strzygowski, who was for Mr Berenson the Hitler of art historical studies, the arch-enemy of humanist culture, who must at all costs be destroyed. The fact that to many of us Strzygowski's name may no longer be familiar proves that even with such an evolved character as Mr Berenson, prejudices must be personalised in order to become dynamic.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, x, 69.

⁷⁹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 11-12. See also Clark, *Moments of Vision*, 127: Clark uses the Scythian plaque again here as a restorative 'cocktail' to the weary visitor to the Vatican sculpture galleries or the Museo Torlonia.

⁸⁰ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 21.

⁸¹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 20.

⁸² Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 21.

⁸³ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 21-2.

⁸⁴ Clark, *Moments of Vision*, 127-8.

This enmity was passed on from Berenson to Clark and under the context of the rise of fascism in Europe of the 1930s it is understandable. Strzygowski was one of the Austrian intellectual historians who seized upon the *Sonderweg* thesis of Germany's chosen path to glory, and sought to explain artistic schools according to their manifestation of racial purity. The association of such theories with an artist like Böcklin had a deleterious effect upon his reception in Britain at least.⁸⁵ Despite the ideological associations of Strzygowski's theories, even in 1938 Berenson acknowledged his formal analytical skills, citing him in the *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*.⁸⁶ Long before this Clark could be found expressing a similar mixture of political distaste and connoisseurial respect in his *Lecture on Aesthetics*:

And here I cannot but mention the name of a writer whose works I would not recommend anyone to read – Professor Strygowski [sic]; for when all has been said against him – ~~and no doubt more will be said than ever after the Persian Exhibition~~ – he was the first art historian to crack the shell of the humanist egg. No wonder he began to crow rather prematurely. None the less what Strygowski [sic] saw really did exist.⁸⁷

The Persian Exhibition which Clark referred to here was the *International Exhibition of Persian Art* held at the Royal Academy between 7 January and 7 March 1931 which helps to further secure the dating of the lectures on the German art historians.⁸⁸ Strzygowski's contribution came in *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1901) and its importance was in his anti-humanist methodology exploring the Oriental origins of Western architecture.⁸⁹

Interestingly, Clark's first lecture shared something of the constitution of Burckhardtian art history. Of the text in the twenty remaining pages of the manuscript only three works of art are mentioned: Nicholas Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* (c.1634), the twelfth-century manuscripts of Cîteaux, and Reims Cathedral (1211-75).⁹⁰ Additionally only nine artists are named: Giorgione, Phidias, Poussin, Raphael, Giulio Romano, and four sculptor-architects who appear in one clause (Giuliano da Sangallo (1443-1516), Giacomo da Vignola (1507-73), Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), and Francesco Borromini (1599-1667)).⁹¹ This was perhaps unsurprising given the adjustments he made to Riegl's model, as well as the fact

⁸⁵ Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 209.

⁸⁶ Berenson, *Drawings of the Florentine Painters* (1938, 3 Vols.), vol. 1, 170, n.2.

⁸⁷ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 22.

⁸⁸ Royal Academy, *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art*, London: Royal Academy, 1931, i (see http://www.racollection.org.uk/ixbin/indexplus?record=VOL6202&_IXp=5&_IXz=2) accessed 9.11.2014. See also Barry D. Wood, "'A Great Symphony of Pure Form": The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Influence', *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 30 (2000), 113-130.

⁸⁹ Talinn Grigor, 'Orient oder Rom? Qajar "Aryan" Architecture and Strzygowski's Art History', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 89, no. 3 (September, 2007), 563-4.

⁹⁰ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 5, 13, 21.

⁹¹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 4, 5, 9, 14, 19.

that Borenius entertained sympathies for the Burckhardtian method. Clark praised the 'great history' of Jacob Burckhardt and Wilhelm Lübke (i.e. *Geschichte der neueren Baukunst* (Stuttgart: Ebner and Seubert, 1867)).⁹² It is intriguing to see that, just as Podro unknowingly retraced the steps first taken by Clark in his lecture, others have rehearsed Clark's juxtaposition of Burckhardt and Wölfflin. In *Past Looking* (1996), for example, Michael Ann Holly undertakes a similarly-spirited project of 'contrasts: not just between Burckhardt's contextualist and Wölfflin's formalist history of art, but also between Renaissance and baroque art as each of their stories becomes emplotted in the confrontation between Renaissance and baroque historiography', surveying Wölfflin's *Renaissance und Barock* and *Die klassische Kunst*, albeit coming to different conclusions to Clark (such as the possibility of an 'anonymous history of the history of art').⁹³ Even so, within such contexts Clark can be seen to have partially fulfilled his ambitions, if not in writing the sequel to Riegl's *Die spätromische Kunst-Industrie*, then at least in occupying similar conceptual territory to the established modern authorities in intellectual art history and its historiography.

The second lecture: Wölfflin's microscopic vision

The following week Clark delivered the second part of his overview. On this occasion, as previously mentioned, his aim was microscopic where it had previously been macroscopic. His interest was now in 'methods by which we study a stylistic change with tactics, as last week we were concerned with strategy', and more so, Borenius' suggestion of Wölfflin was helpful for he was 'an observer & a stylist, not a thinker'.⁹⁴ Clark approached his subject respectfully for he acknowledged that 'Heinrich Wölfflin is by common consent the best living writer on art, & at least four of his works should be familiar to anyone who intends to study the history of art'.⁹⁵ His prescribed reading list consisted of *Renaissance und Barock: eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1888), *Die klassische Kunst: eine Einführung in die italienische Renaissance* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1899), *Die Kunst Albrecht Dürers* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1905), and *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neuen Kunst* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1915). Clark noted that only the first of these had been translated (as reviewed by Fry: see above), that he was taking the last *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* as the main subject of the lecture, and that this created logistical difficulties:

In lecturing today I am therefore faced with the difficulty of there being no accepted English words by which to render Wölfflin's rich & complicated

⁹² Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 10.

⁹³ Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996, 97, 110. Interestingly both Clark and Holly's interest in the change from High Renaissance to Baroque art were part of a wider 'renaissance' in analysis of this paradigm shift in response to Wölfflin's work: see Emison, *The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory*, 5 n.10, 148 n.41.

⁹⁴ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 1.

⁹⁵ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 2.

terminology of art criticism; & it is particularly difficult to give English equivalents of his critical terms because the German language has compound forms which are barbarous in a literal translation.⁹⁶

It did not take Clark long to describe the pattern by which Wölfflin set out his thesis on stylistic change across all types of art via four distinct methodological innovations: firstly, his expression of five antitheses of analytical awareness; secondly, his departure from biographical conventionalities of art history; thirdly, the suspension of value judgements (Clark notes how Wölfflin is not interested in the individual lives of artists but rather comparisons between works); fourthly, the synthetic approach of using well-known examples rather than new research to support his arguments; and, finally, Wölfflin's acceptance of Riegl's idea of the *Kunstwollen*.⁹⁷ Already before going into detail there was evidence of points of disagreement between Clark and Wölfflin – in relation to the third of these we have already witnessed Clark's reluctance to forego aesthetic judgement (see above), and, in connection with the second and fourth, Clark felt Wölfflin was too extreme in his application of a narrow focus on the material history of style for 'in the *Grundbegriffe*, he treats of style in isolation – in too great isolation, I think we shall find'.⁹⁸

In contrast to the first lecture, the second gave Clark the opportunity to undertake more free-ranging visual explorations. He followed Wölfflin's innovative technique of dual projection which allowed easy comparison and contrasting of different images, and promoted formal analysis as valid visual evidence.⁹⁹ However, in transforming Wölfflin's written text into a lecture Clark inevitably encountered difficulty. The year after Clark's lecture, Wölfflin would articulate in the preface to *Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1931) how the dual projection technique was ill-suited to use in books perhaps reflecting upon the difficulties he had encountered in writing the *Grundbegriffe*.¹⁰⁰ As *The Nude* would be generally 'Warburgian' in the attitude it adopted to cultural history, Clark's Wölfflin lecture was Wölfflinesque in its visual analysis without dogmatically sticking to the text of the *Grundbegriffe*. Clark was obliged to 'back-engineer' Wölfflin's book into the workable form of lecture. So for example, to illustrate the first antithesis ('between the tactile & visual apprehension of form'), Clark displayed paired slides of Raphael's 'Squinting Cardinal' (i.e. *Portrait of Tommaso Inghirami* (Fig. 1: c.1514-16)) and Diego Velázquez, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (Fig. 2: c.1650); Benedetto da

⁹⁶ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 2.

⁹⁷ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 3.

⁹⁸ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 5.

⁹⁹ T. Fawcett, 'Visual Facts and the Nineteenth-Century Art Lecture', *Art History*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1983), 455-6; Frederick N. Bohrer, 'Photographic perspectives: photography and the institutional formation of art history', in Elizabeth Mansfield (ed.), *Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline*, London: Routledge, 2002, 250-1, 256; W. Freitag, 'Early Uses of Photography in the History of Art', *Art Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2 (Winter 1979/80), 122; Warnke, 'On Heinrich Wölfflin', 176.

¹⁰⁰ Heinrich Wölfflin, *The Sense of Form in Art: A Comparative Psychological Study*, New York: Chelsea Publishing Co., 1958 [Translation from *Italien und das Deutsche Formgefühl*, Munich: F. Bruckmann A G, 1932], 3-4.

Maiano's *Bust* (c.1475-1500) and Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Portrait of Cardinal Scipione Borghese* (1632); Michelangelo's *Medici Tomb* (Fig. 3: 1520-55) and Bernini's *St. Terese* (Fig. 4: 1647-52); the *Palazzo Rucellai* (Fig. 5) and *Palazzo Odescachi* (Fig. 6); and Botticelli's *St. Sebastian* (Fig. 7: 1474) and Raphael's *Portrait of Agnolo Doni* (Fig. 8: c.1505).¹⁰¹

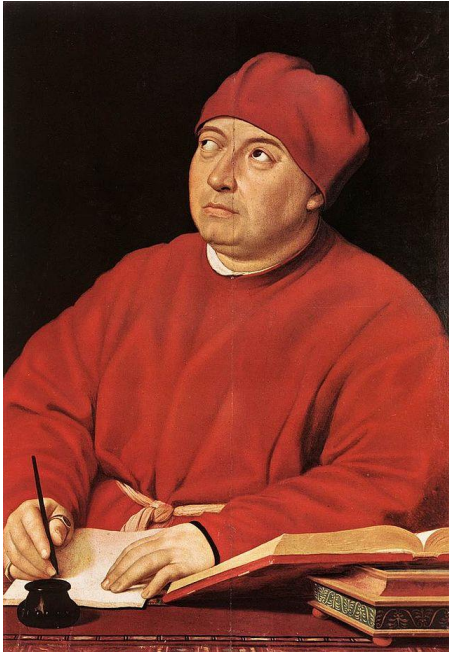


Fig. 1: Raphael, *Portrait of Tommaso Inghirami*, (c.1514-16), oil on wood, 90 x 62 cm, Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence [[source](#)].*



Fig. 2: Diego Velázquez, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (c.1650), oil on canvas, 141 x 119 cm, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome [[source](#)].

Wölfflin used many different examples in his discussion of his first antithesis. In terms of the graphic arts, he contrasted drawings by Albrecht Dürer of *Eve* (1504: [click to view](#)) and Rembrandt of a *Female Nude* (c. 1637: [click to view](#)); Heinrich Aldegrever's *Male Portrait* (c.1530s?) and Jan Lievens' *Portrait of the Poet Jan Vos* (first half of the seventeenth century: [click to view](#)); as well as Dürer's *Portrait of Bernard van Orly* (1521: [click to view](#)) and Franz Hals' *Portrait of a Man* (1646-8: [click to view](#)).¹⁰² In the final sphere of architecture, Wölfflin used two examples from Rome: Baccio Pontelli's *SS. Apostoli* (late fifteenth century) and Carlo Rainaldi's *Sant' Andrea della Valle* (1655-1663).¹⁰³ However, Clark did use some of the same images that appeared in Wölfflin's text. In terms of sculptural examples, Wölfflin had used both the contrast of Benedetto da Maiano (Wölfflin used *Portrait of Pietro*

¹⁰¹ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 6.

¹⁰² Heinrich Wölfflin (tr. M. D. Hottinger), *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, London: G. Bell and Sons, and New York: Dover Publications, Ltd, 1932, 33-6, 42-3.

* In this and subsequent captions [[source](#)] and ([click to view](#)) connect to the image's location on a remote webpage (e.g. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> and others), accessed 9.11.2014. Readers will appreciate that such links may be unstable.

¹⁰³ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 68-70.

Mellini and perhaps the same bust was shown in Clark's lecture) and Bernini's *Cardinal Borghese*, and Michelangelo's *Medici Tomb* and Bernini's *S. Teresa*.¹⁰⁴ The *Palazzi Odescachi* and *Rucellai* were also used by Wölfflin, but to illustrate the fourth antithesis of multiplicity and unity.¹⁰⁵

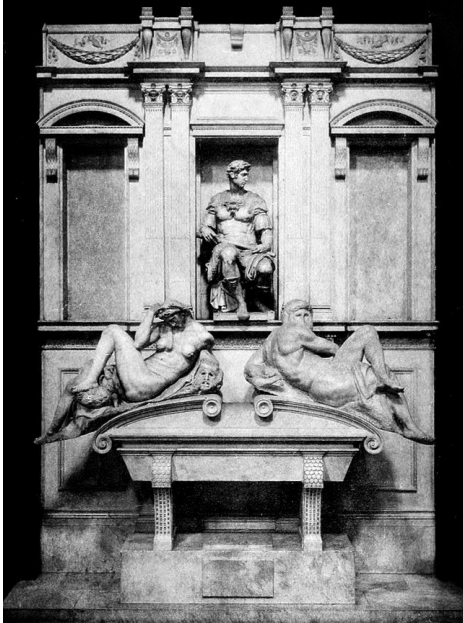


Fig. 3: Michelangelo (1520-34) (and assistants 1535-55), *Tomb of Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici* with *Dusk* and *Dawn*, marble, 420 x 630 cm, Church of San Lorenzo, Florence [source].



Fig. 4: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647-52), marble, 350 cm (h), Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome [source].

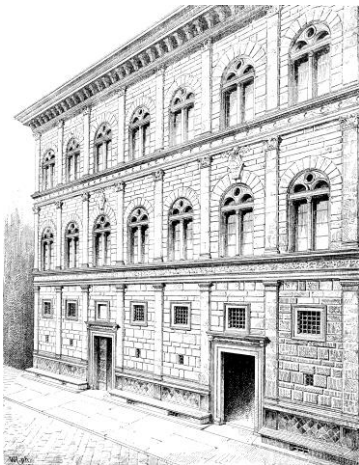


Fig. 5: Leon Battista Alberti and Bernardo Rossellino, *Palazzo Rucellai* (1446-1451), Florence [source].



Fig. 6: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Facade of the Palazzo Odescachi* (c.1665), Rome [source].

¹⁰⁴ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 56-8, 61-2.

¹⁰⁵ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 187-191.



Fig. 7: Detail from Sandro Botticelli, *St. Sebastian* (1474), tempera on panel, 195 × 75 cm, Staatliche Museen, Berlin [source].



Fig. 8: Detail from Raphael di Sanzio, *Portrait of Agnolo Doni* (c.1505), oil on panel, 63 × 45 cm, Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence, [source].

In these pairings the first image often presented more restrained naturalism rendering the individual parts as ends in themselves in contrast to the latter examples which showed the play of greater effects or more highly developed uses of colour and tone. This contrast Clark saw as having its origins in the theories of the painter Hildebrand as expressed in his book *Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg: Heitz and Mündel, 1893).¹⁰⁶ Clark disagreed with Hildebrand's formulation of differing ways for artists to perceive their subject matter – and this may have been the product of Clark's own continued subscription to humanist principles and especially the 'universalizing' concept that all people see and think the same way.

In treating Wölfflin's first 'antithesis' – between the linear and painterly – Clark saw the real issue as being one of the expression of an independent motif or one subordinate to the sense of the composition as a whole – or a spirit of 'unity'.¹⁰⁷ Clark described Wölfflin's second antithesis, between 'Fläche und Tiefe' (surface and depth), as demonstrating the greater affinity for depth perception that existed in Baroque art compared to Renaissance art, using the examples employed in the *Grundbegriffe*, such as Palma Vecchio's *Adam and Eve* (1504), and works by Titian and

¹⁰⁶ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 6; Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, xxv, 66, 119: interestingly Podro similarly remarked upon Wölfflin's debt to Hildebrand. Wölfflin adapted the observations Hildebrand made on the relationship between subject matter and formal treatment in relief works to inform his own discussions of the contrasting linear and planimetric style (which correspond to his second antithesis of 'Fläche und Tiefe' (or surface and depth). The practice of borrowing and developing from others was common amongst the German theorists. Riegl borrowed from Gottfried Semper's motif theory for his *Stilfragen*, for example.

¹⁰⁷ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 9.

Rembrandt (with passing reference to ter Borch, Hobbema and Ruysdael).¹⁰⁸ Clark traced how Wölfflin was forced to accommodate the fact that 'depth' had been extant in works before the Baroque but hurdled this impediment by articulating a subtle difference – that the Quattrocento artists created a planar layering of fields of depth whilst the Cinquecento artists portrayed objects more successfully in the round through devices like diagonal compositional lines and 'uninterrupted series of curves'.¹⁰⁹ Clark judged this distinction as 'true & valuable' but felt that, in explaining effects rather than causes, Wölfflin was missing an important trick that would have provided greater enlightenment had it been pursued, an argument he repeated in later sections of the talk.¹¹⁰ Rather than focussing on the shift between the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (the shift from Renaissance to Baroque style) Clark felt it necessary to criticise Wölfflin on his implication that a retrogressive step existed from the Quattrocento (fifteenth) to the Cinquecento (sixteenth) centuries with loss of depth. For while the abstraction of the human form under the influence of neo-Classical humanism had produced the effect of increased superficiality, an important by-product of these creative gymnastics was also the increased appreciation for the plastic potential of figures. This of course fed Baroque developments in such a way that Clark suggested a supplementary medial stage between the linear and painterly periods in Wölfflin's theory – where artists like Botticelli, Raphael and Leonardo balanced these impulses in a 'plastic period'.¹¹¹

Clark's discussion of Wölfflin's third antithesis between 'geschlossene und offene form' (closed and open form (or bounded and boundless composition)) provided another two-way filter through which to view Renaissance and Baroque art. While the former was constrained by the parameters of compositional frames the latter was liberated from the same. Reconstructing Clark's visual steps again demonstrates his close following of Wölfflin's text. Clark's notes refer to 'Durer Death of Virgin', a Rubens Portrait and 'della Valle' and these most probably relate to Dürer's *The Death of Mary* (1510: [click to view](#)), Ruben's *Portrait of Dr. Thulden* (c.1615-17), and the church of *S. Andrea della Valle* used by Wölfflin to illustrate the first, third and fourth antitheses.¹¹² Tiepolo's *Finding of Moses* (e.1730s) from the National Gallery was an innovative introduction of Clark's own.¹¹³

Before considering the final two antitheses Clark broke his stride to return to the philosophical manner of his first lecture. Considering the cumulative effect of the first three antitheses, Clark felt that Wölfflin's essential issue was that of the 'conception of space' and that ultimately the *Geistesgeschichte* model had to be returned to in order to make sense of this. For the humanistic view of the universe was that man was at the centre of an enclosed space, whilst the combined efforts of Giordano Bruno and Galileo Galilei between 1600 and 1604 had overthrown this. Thus 'vision was no longer to be enclosed but was to sheer off into infinity. And that, I think, is also the shortest possible definition of baroque art' so that 'You see

¹⁰⁸ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 11; Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 76-7, 98-9, 170-2.

¹⁰⁹ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 10-11.

¹¹⁰ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 12, 15.

¹¹¹ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 13.

¹¹² Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 70, 137, 159.

¹¹³ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 14.

that all the points which Wölfflin made in the last two sections – are contained naturally in this sentence. The effort to achieve continuous depth, & to annihilate the picture frame, & the conscious rejection of geometrical framework'.¹¹⁴ Once again Clark detected aspects of brilliance in his subject and suggested subtle adjustments which he believed could make the generalizations of Riegl and Wölfflin more effective. Clark invoked the concept of 'revolution', albeit one fettered by rational progress, for 'When I say that the Baroque architects aimed at annihilating the wall I do not, of course, mean that they anticipated Le Corbusier'.¹¹⁵ Clark traced the progression from the flat and ordered surface of the *Palazzo della Cancelleria* (Palace of the Chancellery, 1489–1513, Rome, [[click to view](#)]), via the midpoint of the *Palazzo Farnese* (1515-89) where the central door punches through the surface of the façade, to the complete Baroque expression of the *Palazzo Odescalchi*, where non-uniform columns, porticos and shields break up the different planar levels of the façade, and where different decorations appear above alternate windows [[click to view](#)]. Again the *Palazzo Farnese* was a new component added by Clark. This progression demonstrated how 'the Baroque artists adopted a device which had for some time been practiced in painting. They forced the spectator to look at their façades from an angle, thus achieving the diagonal recession, the sheering off into infinity which was otherwise denied them by practical necessities'.¹¹⁶



Fig. 9: Antonio da Correggio, *The Nativity* (also known as *The Holy Night* (or *La Notte*)), (c.1529–1530), oil on canvas, 256.5 × 188 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden [[source](#)].

¹¹⁴ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 16.

¹¹⁵ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 17.

¹¹⁶ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 17-18; Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 187-9, 191.

In another departure from Wölfflin, Clark offered two examples of Italian painting, both from Correggio's oeuvre, which offered important examples of the use of 'open form'. His notes on *The Nativity (La Notte)*, (fig. 9: c.1529–1530) referenced the fact that the Virgin was no longer in the centre, and that the line created by the extended left leg and foot of the angel at the top of the composition pushed the vanishing point of the picture far outside the right hand limits of the frame.¹¹⁷ The National Gallery's *Agony (After Correggio, The Agony in the Garden)* (c.1640-1750), oil on poplar, 38.1 x 41.9 cm, National Gallery [[click to view](#)] employed a similar device. The figure of Christ visited by an angel is placed on the left half of the canvas, and the angel's leg performs the same telescoping role as the equivalent figure in *The Nativity*. Wölfflin did discuss Correggio's work but without reference to specific works.¹¹⁸

In treating Wölfflin's fourth antithesis of 'Veilheit und Einheit' (multiplicity and unity), Clark returned to the issue of photography (see above) describing how Professors Yukio Yashiro and Clarence Kennedy used photographic details of paintings by Botticelli and Settignano to perform their analysis.¹¹⁹ However, Clark argued that this methodology could not be employed on later Baroque art for the isolation of parts from the whole in these canvases rendered them meaningless.¹²⁰ Clark used the illuminating potential of close study of details throughout his publishing career, for example, in *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery* (1938) and *Looking at Pictures* (1960).¹²¹ In the first of these publications Clark reflected on the benefits of showing 'two details [which] must face one another when the book is opened' as it allowed for the appreciation of 'certain analogies and contrasts' as 'epigrammatic summaries of the history of art' especially in showing both the differences between Northern and Mediterranean painting, and points of commonality between images. He was also true to his observation eight years earlier regarding the unsuitability of photographic details and visual contrasts for Baroque painting, for 'pictures in a style based on firm delineation, a style requiring equal finish in all the parts, yields far better details than pictures in what may be called an impressionist style, where the degree of finish grows less as the eye moves away from the focal point'.¹²²

Returning to the text of the second lecture, there followed a sequence of further images inspired by but departing from Wölfflin's text: Rubens' *The Descent from the Cross* (Fig. 10: c.1616-17) and Rembrandt's, *Descent from the Cross* (Fig. 11:

¹¹⁷ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 19.

¹¹⁸ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 30-1, 105, 121, 147, 182, 212, 220.

¹¹⁹ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 45, 168, 250: Yashiro was friends with Clark since they first met in Italy in 1927.

¹²⁰ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 20-1. See: Clarence Kennedy, *The Tomb of Carlo Marsuppini by Desiderio da Settignano and Assistants: Photographs*, Northampton, Massachusetts: Carnegie Corporation, 1928; Kenneth Clark, *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery with an Introduction and Notes*, London: National Gallery, 1938, vii: Clark refers to Yashiro again here.

¹²¹ Clark, *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery*; Kenneth Clark, *Looking at Pictures*, London: John Murray, 1960, 35, 39: this text was richly illustrated with numerous photographic details, for example, from Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656).

¹²² Clark, *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery*, v.

1634). In these works detail is sacrificed to general effect so that Baroque artists go beyond individual figures to give emphatic movement to the whole composition with strong diagonal axes. The artists orchestrated their figures in synchronized and coordinated movement. Clark suggested that this relationship between part and whole was central to the dual concepts of *Veilheit* and *Einheit*. The different role played by detail was decisive for 'coordinate detail & subordinate detail' produced division (or localized effects) and unity (or general effect) respectively.¹²³ Clark worked up an alternative version of this narrative – citing different examples, such as Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (after 1475), Bernini's *Saint Longinus* (1629-38), and Rubens' *The Assumption of the Virgin Mary* (1626) – only the last of which appeared in Wölfflin's text, whilst exploring centripetal and centrifugal interpretations of the contrasting Renaissance and Baroque configurations of movement.¹²⁴ It is unclear whether these sections were contemporary to the 1930 talk or reworked as part of possible publication plans. In any case, as part of the main text Clark chose to supplement the frame of Wölfflin's reference to the *Depositions* by Rembrandt and Rubens (Wölfflin only illustrated the former) with a third example, not used by Wölfflin, *Deposition from the Cross* (1504–7) by Filippino Lippi and Pietro Perugino (Fig. 12). Clark detected a rhetorical flair in this work that seemed to confuse its clear definition as Renaissance or Baroque. While stylistically the linearity and flatness of the painting was clearly appropriate to the High Renaissance (with clear and complete parts evident), the sinuous movement of the central figures shared affinities with Baroque ideals. Unity was achieved not through one dominant single motive but through the pattern of all the parts set against the sky.¹²⁵ The effect Clark here described is close to the concept of the artist's breaking through the picture surface in order to engage his audience in the narrative. This builds inevitably from his discussion of the third antithesis when he saw the purpose of looking at that series of images as an illustration of the subtly shifting perspectives of Baroque culture, for:

All these devices for securing infinite depth through [sic] some special obligation on the spectator: he has got to look at the picture from a certain position. The pictures of the Renaissance made no such demand. They seem to have a complete & independent existence. In short by a very slight extension of those already well stretched terms we may say that the change from Renaissance to Baroque reflects, or anticipates, the change from an objective to a subjective way of thought.¹²⁶

Despite having Wölfflin as his subject for this lecture, it is tempting to see Clark making connections here between the third and fourth antitheses, and Riegl's

¹²³ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 21-2; Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 157-62: Wölfflin reproduced an etching of Rembrandt's *Deposition* and Ruben's *The Bearing of the Cross*. He discussed Rubens in relation to Rembrandt and Dürer's *Depositions* at 158.

¹²⁴ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 161-2.

¹²⁵ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 21.

¹²⁶ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 19.

discussion of Dutch group portraits.¹²⁷ In 'Das holländische Gruppenporträt' (*Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses XXII*: Vienna, 1902) Riegl developed his thesis concerning the importance of subjective consciousness, where artists construct a malleable artificial universe to offset the impotence they experienced in the real world. The external observer was integral to the functioning of this conceit. In a manner akin to Wölfflin's third antithesis of open and closed compositions, Riegl saw that group portraits could have an internal coherence without inviting audience participation, such as Dirk Jacobsz' *Militia Company* (1529), or alternatively a greater sphere of influence with an open form like Rembrandt's *Anatomy of Dr Tulp* (1632) where the surgeon at the peak of the compositional pyramid looks out to the audience, or *The Night Watch* (1642) where the captain gestures out to the audience.¹²⁸ No doubt mindful of Riegl's work, Wölfflin did not use any of these examples in the *Grundbegriffe*.



Fig. 10: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Descent from the Cross* (c.1616-17), oil on canvas, 425 x 295 cm, Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille [source].



Fig. 11: Rembrandt van Rijn's, *Descent from the Cross* (1634), oil on canvas, 158 x 117 cm, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg [source].



Fig. 12: Filippino Lippi and Pietro Perugino, *Annunziata Polyptych – Deposition from the Cross* (1504-7), oil on panel, 334 x 225 cm, Basilica dell' Annunziata, Florence [source].

Clark discussed the application of these ideas to architecture using Francesco Borromini's *S. Carlino*, Rome (Fig. 13: 1638-41) to illustrate the movement in Baroque façades, and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola and Giacomo della Porta's *Church of the Gesù*, Rome (Fig. 14: 1568-80) to discuss the orchestration of light effects to create unity. Again these examples were not cited by Wölfflin so indicate another example of Clark's suggestion of improvement to the theories of the German art historian.

¹²⁷ Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 7, 24.

¹²⁸ Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 83-4, 88, 89, 94; Iversen, *Alois Riegl*, 92-122; Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art*, 155-69.



Fig. 13: Francesco Borromini, *S. Carlino*, Rome (1638-41) [source].



Fig. 14: Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola and Giacomo della Porta, *Church of the Gesù*, Rome (1568-80) [source].

Clark's coverage of the last antithesis (Klarheit und Unklarheit (clearness and vagueness, or determinate and indeterminate form by Clark's translation)) is sparse as Clark deemed it superfluous, adding nothing to the understanding of stylistic change. In evaluating the theory as a whole, Clark was balanced in passing judgement. The first four antitheses were useful for, in overlapping, they enabled art historians to see objects from multiple perspectives, both literally and metaphorically speaking. However, as a whole, the method was misleading for it overplayed the importance of formal differences and it was partial in the sources it took as its inspiration:

One of the keystones of Wölfflin's argument is the stylistic coherency of all the arts. Now if you look through his illustrations you will see that whereas he takes by far the greater part of his examples of painting from Northern Europe = Rubens, Rembrandt, Dürer & so forth, he takes practically all his examples of architecture & all his examples of sculpture from Italy. Why? Because if he had taken Northern architecture his theories would not have worked.¹²⁹

Of the 125 illustrations in the *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* there were three examples of Northern architecture, eight of Northern graphic art, and none from Northern sculpture, compared to ten pieces of Southern architecture, twenty-four of

¹²⁹ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 23-4.

Southern graphic art, and eight Southern sculptures.¹³⁰ The percentage distribution of images between Northern and Southern Renaissance and Baroque examples bears out Clark's analysis of the biases of Wölfflin (See Table 1).

Table 1: Illustrations in *Principles of Art History* (1932: translated from 7th edition of *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1929))

	Architecture		Graphic Art		Sculpture		Total	
	No.	Proportion between Northern and Southern	No.	Proportion between Northern and Southern	No.	Proportion between Northern and Southern	No.	Proportion between Northern and Southern
Northern	3	23%	80	77%	0	0%	83	66%
Southern	10	77%	24	23%	8	100%	42	34%

What is more, outside the narrow chronological period of focus of the *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* these theories were, for Clark, virtually useless. Riegl's theory of the *Kunstwollen* was equally problematic for it was unclear whether it was meant to be inferred as a diachronic or synchronic process.¹³¹ Clark openly cited Wölfflin's admission on this particular shortcoming of his theory, but extrapolated further to point out that a period style is evident in essential forms regardless of theories of abstract shapes and the like, such that even from a detail of a painting, sculpture or drawing the nature of the whole would be inferable.¹³² It is at this point that Clark tied up his dismissal of the overall value of Wölfflin's theories by reference to its 'intellectual puritanism' and the need for a corrective spiritual context:

I said in my first lecture that the vagaries of the art-will were ultimately referable to a change in spiritual conditions; & this is especially true of the most arbitrary manifestation of the art-will – the shapes desired. Now Wölfflin considers the question of style in almost complete isolation; he does not attempt to relate it to contemporary events in the history of the mind – religion, science, literature & so forth.¹³³

It is perhaps telling that this dismissal of Wölfflin's 'Puritanism', was similar to Clark's rejection of modern German art as Protestant.¹³⁴

The *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* was perhaps a flawed masterpiece for Clark. However, Clark saw Wölfflin as offering a bridge between two rival art historical traditions in the treatment of objects. He contrasted the inaccuracies of Worringer's expressive interpretation of art forms to the archaeological approach of Adolph Goldschmidt which could not transcend beyond myopia. Wölfflin was

¹³⁰ Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, xiii-xvi.

¹³¹ Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 97.

¹³² Clark, 'Wölfflin', 25-6.

¹³³ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 26.

¹³⁴ Chris Stephens, 'Patron and Collector', in Chris Stephens and John-Paul Stonard (eds.), *Kenneth Clark – Looking for Civilisation*, London: Tate, 2014, 84.

engaging, persuasive and succeeded in getting people to look closely at art works in conjunction with each other. Even if it failed to produce a synthetic whole worthy of its parts in the final equation Clark felt these works were worth reading, for the best kind of art history would result from the combination of the:

receptive & interpretive power of one school with the candour, accuracy & assimilative power of the other. This direction has been followed by many German scholars – by Dvorak [sic], Dagobert Frey, Robert Longhi, up to a certain point most admirably by Wölfflin, &, above all, by Riegl. ~~Let me end by advising you to read their works, & if any of you cannot read German, to clamour for their translation.~~¹³⁵

Why Clark struck through these last lines is unclear – it may have been at a later date during the attempted revisions for publication, or inspired by wartime disaffection. However at the original point of writing these words it is clear that Clark was convinced of the merits of German art historians like Riegl and Wölfflin.

Aesthetics and the Bloomsbury context

The psychological aspect of Clark's art historiographical suggestions will be returned to in due course. However presently it is important to note the revolutionary implications of Clark's use of Riegl's work. At the heart of Clark's reading of the German art historian was a disavowal of the mimetic neo-classical criteria of Renaissance art. Interestingly Clark relied on an alternative non-German tradition to support his musings on the nature of beauty. In defining the oppositional concepts of beauty (*Schönheit*) and art (*Kunst*) as applied to the canonical and non-canonical forms of art according to humanistic criteria, Clark referred to the work of Thomas Sturge Moore (1870-1944). Sturge Moore moved in the circle of Charles Shannon and Charles Ricketts, Laurence Binyon and W.B. Yeats, but most relevantly developed ideas on aesthetics through his analysis of Renaissance art – primarily through works on Albrecht Altdorfer (1900), Albrecht Dürer (1904) and Antonio da Correggio (1906) which synthesized in his *Art and Life* (London: Methuen and Co., 1910).¹³⁶ Interestingly Sturge Moore's younger brother was George Edward Moore (1873-1958), the Cambridge philosopher and member of the select Apostles group. G.E. Moore's early philosophical inquiry followed the idealism of Bertrand Russell and J. M. E. McTaggart before he embarked upon an independent line that distinguished between the world of ideas and objects. He ultimately refuted idealism altogether via the recognition of the independent existence of objects in the works he produced between 1899 and 1903. Crucially G.E. Moore concluded his *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903) with a key polemical assertion regarding the value of art and the contemplation of beautiful objects, and was very much part of the Cambridge set who would go on to form the hub of the Bloomsbury group which Clark himself

¹³⁵ Clark, 'Wölfflin', 27.

¹³⁶ John Kelly, 'Moore, Thomas Sturge (1870–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 38, 1006.

would later encounter through Fry.¹³⁷ Clark would perhaps have accessed this alternative tradition of thought through Sturge Moore's *Art and Life*. If so, it is clear that French moral philosophy and aesthetics were a more formative influence on his speculative analysis of the 'historical evolution of stylistic characters' whereby sincerity in art was of primary importance, as was the 'admirable expression' of beauty and the need for an appreciative audience – all characteristics Moore traced, and that Clark would also see reflected in Riegl's analysis of Dutch art.¹³⁸ Ultimately despite his desire to shatter the authoritarianism of humanist aesthetics, Clark probably felt greater affinity for Sturge Moore's position which offered greater unity than the further fragmenting dichotomy of the Germanic *Schönheit/Kunst* division. As Clark put it, 'In English the question "should a work of art be beautiful?" is tautology – is nonsense' for, in his personal view, both classical beauty and craftsmanship represented valid forms of beauty, and in fact, the former was but a subset of the broader definition that was craft (as implied here by '*Kunst*').¹³⁹

The issue of the aesthetic value of non-canonical art was close to Clark's heart given his early work *The Gothic Revival*. According to his memoir, Clark originally embarked on that project with satirical intentions but 'was gradually, albeit inadequately converted to the Gothic revivalists'.¹⁴⁰ It comes as no surprise then that he would return to that subject in relation to Riegl and Wölfflin. In the preliminary comments for his first lecture, subjectivity was at the fore of Clark's mind as he was aware that up to the middle of the nineteenth century art historians were distracted from 'the possibility of subjective judgment' by obsessions with 'skin-deep antiquity'.¹⁴¹ Unsurprisingly given their affinities as art observers, Clark rejected archaeologically microscopic approaches to art as light work compared with John Ruskin's proper understanding of medieval art. Ruskin's influence on Clark had been great since starting his labours on the *Gothic Revival*.¹⁴² Thus in the 'Lecture on Aesthetics' Clark declared:

Among the English apologists for mediaeval art only one had any conception of art history as I am trying to make you see it: that was John Ruskin. Ruskin could not only interpret the monuments themselves, he could relate a style to preceding and following styles, and he could analyse it into the cultures which had produced it. He saw that each people had had its special gifts – the Romans of stasis, the Greeks of physical beauty, the northern wanderers of linear movement, the Etruscans of racy craftsmanship, and so forth. In short, he saw the history of art as a continuous whole. Unfortunately, Ruskin's numerous preoccupations, and in particular, his very natural and honourable interest in morals, prevented him from concentrating his gifts; and even his vision of the unity of art

¹³⁷ Thomas Baldwin, 'Moore, George Edward (1873–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 38, 936-7.

¹³⁸ T. Sturge Moore, *Life and Art*, 100, 106, 138.

¹³⁹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 12-13.

¹⁴⁰ Clark, *Another Part of the Wood*, 109.

¹⁴¹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 4.

¹⁴² Secrest, *Clark*, 180-1.

history did more harm than good. He rightly felt bound to refer to many cultures besides those of which he had made a detailed study, and, these references were often inaccurate. He generalised on too little evidence, partly, no doubt, because he half felt the thing wasn't worth doing, and partly because the evidence wasn't there for him to generalise on.¹⁴³

Clark also expressed his appreciation for Ruskin through other avenues. When Clark took up his post as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford (1946-50) he reflected on the teaching experiences of his predecessor before attempting to provide a workable history of art against the backdrop of 'the apparent wilderness of modern art' and 'intellectual defeatism of the time'. Despite his anti-humanist statements in 1930, by 1946 he was prepared to act as a bulwark for 'an ancient, humanist institution, where to abandon ourselves to the chaos of unrelated sensations would be to betray all that is implied in the idea of our foundation'. Clark felt better equipped than Ruskin could have been in his day with superiorly arranged archives, museums and galleries, and once again the stock of photographs. Clark was inspired by Ruskin to continue the latter's disavowal of German theory.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the contribution of German art historians was not to be denied for:

the history of art is one of the few branches of human study which have advanced during the last fifty years. The historical interpretation of form and composition by Wölfflin, Riegl's study of the art-will, Roger Fry's analysis of design, the Warburg Institute's study of the survival of symbols, the Croceian art historians of Italy – all of these have extended the possibilities of the subject, so that it is no longer divided between antiquarians and anecdotalists. And at the very source of this new conception of art history stands *The Stones of Venice*.¹⁴⁵

The Stones of Venice provided a forum for Ruskin to argue for a return to more traditional forms of labour (in preference to the reductive and repetitive nature of the industrialized division of labour), and that allowing artisans the freedom to create had a positive spiritual effect.¹⁴⁶ Such ideas would have been reflected in Clark's studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century German and British art historians and theorists. In exploring the sense of proportion in Dürer's work and writings, Sturge Moore highlighted the importance of authenticity and freedom of mind and vision, for 'The sense of proportion within a design is employed to stimulate and delight the eye' and 'the standard in works of art is not truth but

¹⁴³ Clark, 'Lecture in Aesthetics', 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ Potter, *The Inspirational Genius of Germany*, 58; Mark A. Cheetham, *Artwriting, Nation, and Cosmopolitanism in Britain: The 'Englishness' of English Art Theory since the Eighteenth Century*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, 89.

¹⁴⁵ Kenneth Clark, *Ruskin at Oxford: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford, 14 November 1946*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947, 14-15.

¹⁴⁶ John Ruskin, 'The Stones of Venice: Volume II', in E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (eds.), *The Works of John Ruskin*, London: George Allen, 1904, vol. 10, 198-9.

sincerity'.¹⁴⁷ Warburg meanwhile argued for the spiritual augmentation of the *Wunschbild* (or 'wish-image') for example in spiritualizing and internalizing cultural heritage and impressions of the world.¹⁴⁸ As Clark argued on a later occasion, 'there is one essential quality which runs through all the arts however the medium may vary; and the real problem is to find which means of expression will, at a certain period, allow that spirit to take form'.¹⁴⁹ The emotional and psychological register in art history – that which Riegl's 'Das holländische Gruppenporträt' essay touched upon but which Wölfflin rejected – was of central importance to Clark.¹⁵⁰ During his most philosophic musings within the London University lectures, Clark answered the 'why' question left unanswered by Riegl and Wölfflin in their accounts of the art history of stylistic change, and he did so with recourse to psychological rationale, and tied this back to the lessons learned from his study of Gothic art history:

How did this change come about? It was brought about less by the expansion of intelligence than by the expansion of sensibilities. That is a rule of all art history: appreciation must precede understanding – we must see that an object is a work of art, not a mere artifact, before we can begin to use it as a document in the history of the spirit. And so, no doubt, the first step towards the true understanding of art history was the revived appreciation of Gothic architecture. Without tracing the whole of that complete and fascinating process, we can say that by the middle of the 19th century the world of taste believed in two great periods of art, Gothic and Classic. But that was all. Outside these two periods and between them was darkness and decadence.¹⁵¹

The appreciation of the fullness of creative consciousness achieved in the Gothic period, as advocated by Ruskin, was sharply contrasted by the humanist neo-classical canon. Even though Riegl and Wölfflin did their bit to crack the humanist shell they did it unintentionally for while:

it was not until 1901 that the Austrian, Alois Riegl, worked out and formulated the historical implications of the new sensibility ... Riegl himself did not arrive at [a] theory of stylistic change so much through sensibility as through an uncanny, an absolutely appalling skill in analysing works of art but it was the new sensibility which confirmed and popularised his theory.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ T. Sturge Moore, *Albert Dürer* (1905), 18, 227.

¹⁴⁸ Aby Warburg, *Hertziana* lecture, quoted in Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, 71.

¹⁴⁹ Kenneth Clark, *Five Speeches: An Address at the Royal College of Art Convocation*, London: Lion and Unicorn Press, 1956, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, xxiv, 104, 107: Wölfflin's initial interest in empathy, following Semper, was abandoned in 1893 for the pursuit of 'visual ordering'.

¹⁵¹ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 6-7.

¹⁵² Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 14.

Conclusion

Clark's lectures on Riegl and Wölfflin from 1930 represent the first attempt at self-reflective engagement with the middle years of the tradition of German critical historians of art by a British scholar. As Podro's masterly survey of the same material over fifty years later helps reveal, Clark undertook an authoritative assessment of a set of complex untranslated texts. Crucially he was fair-minded and reasoned in his explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. Both Riegl and Wölfflin had made useful observations despite adopting approaches philosophically unsuited to Clark's perspective.¹⁵³ Clark perhaps imagined what might be possible when art historians embraced the new sensibility he had outlined in contrast to the German theorists in his London University lectures. He believed that 'Sensibility to the language of form and colour is not a universal endowment, and yet it is by this alone, now that the rules of humanist art are discarded, that we can read the historical implications of a work of art'.¹⁵⁴ A new age of empathy and relativism promised to open up art historical vistas if Clark's audience followed his advice to learn from the German art historians and then do better.

Matthew C. Potter is Reader in Art and Design History at Northumbria University. His research focuses on the role played by visual culture in the construction of national identity and wider issues of international exchange. He is the author of *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), and editor of and contributor to *The Concept of the 'Master' in Art Education in Britain and Ireland, 1770 to the present* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

matthew.potter@northumbria.ac.uk

¹⁵³ Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 104, 107.

¹⁵⁴ Clark, 'Lecture on Aesthetics', 23.