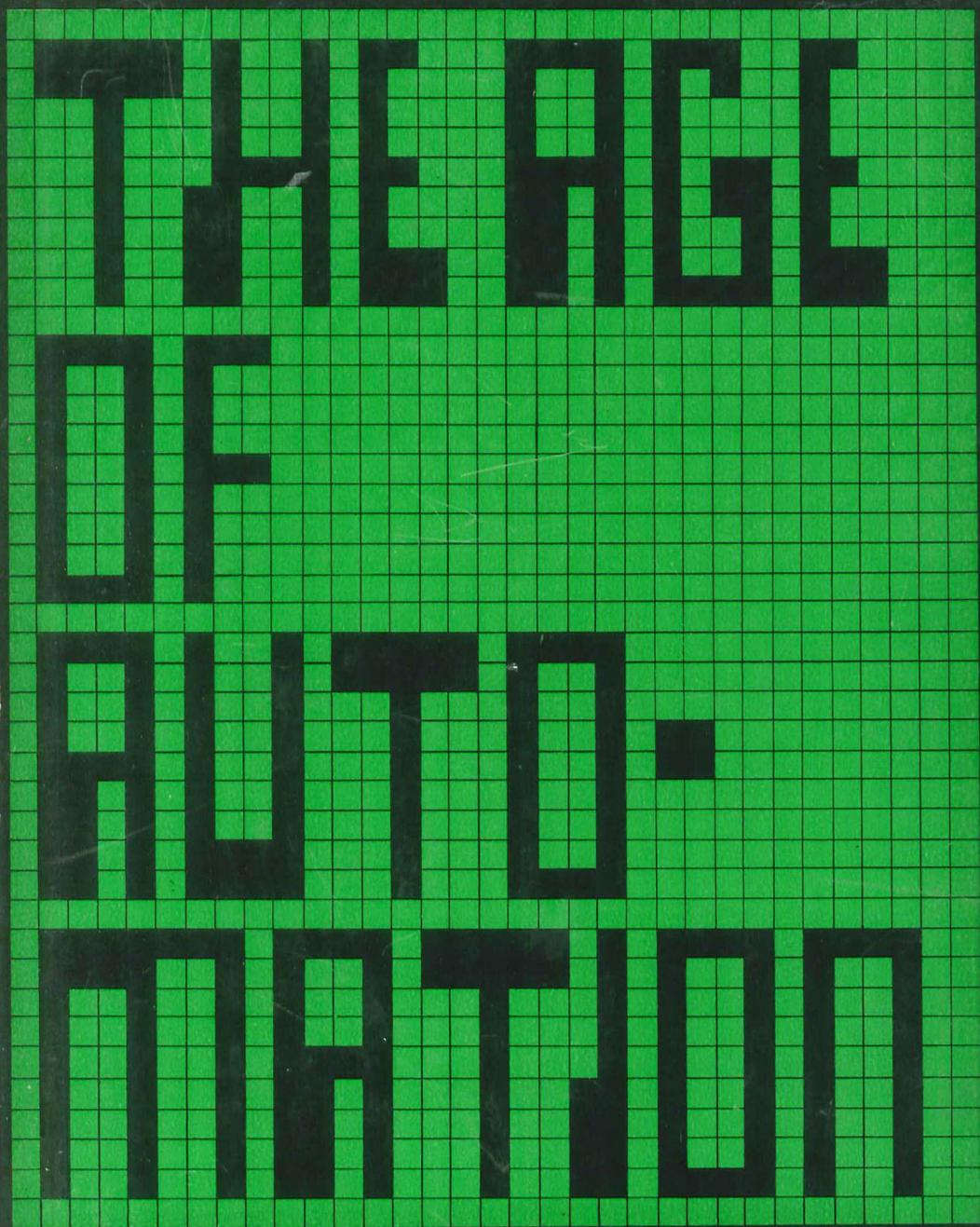


THE BBC REITH LECTURES 1964

SIR LEON BAGRIT



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The Age of Automation

THE BBC REITH LECTURES 1964

Sir Leon Bagrit

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'L Bagrit'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L' and a stylized 'B'.

WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON

20 New Bond Street London W1

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FOREWORD

THE BBC showed courage in asking me, a 'non-Academic' and with limited experience of broadcasting, to undertake these lectures. I am grateful for this impressive act of faith, and I can only hope that the result has to some extent, at any rate, justified their confidence. In particular, I am more than grateful to Mr Frank Gillard, Director of Sound Broadcasting and Mr George Camacho, Head of Talks and Current Affairs.

My task has been greatly helped by the BBC's willingness to agree to the rather 'individualistic' conditions I had to make when I accepted their invitation to be the Reith Lecturer for 1964—that I should be allowed to develop the lectures on the basis of recorded and transcribed discussions with a sympathetic but critical Producer. I should have found it impossible to tackle the job in any other way.

From my point of view—and I hope also from that of the BBC as well—the experiment worked admirably. To fit this unconventional condition the BBC, with a shrewd and admirable understanding of what was required, made an unconventional choice of Producer. Mr Kenneth Hudson, the Corporation's West Regional Industrial Correspondent, quickly grasped the ideas I was hoping to convey and why I felt the subject was so important. Without the many hours I spent arguing and thinking aloud with him, these lectures would never have found their way into broadcasting form.

THE BBC REITH LECTURES

The Reith Lectures, inaugurated in 1947 and named after the BBC's first Director General, are broadcast annually. Each year the BBC decides the broad area of the subject to be treated and invites a person of authority in the chosen field to undertake a study and to give the results of his work in a series of broadcasts. Sir Leon Bagrit's six lectures on *The Age of Automation* were broadcast in the BBC Home Service between 8th November and 13th December and repeated by the BBC Third Programme. They have also been translated into a number of languages and broadcast on the European and Overseas Services of the BBC.

The first Reith lecturer of them all was Bertrand Russell who spoke on *Authority and the Individual*. Since then, Sir Leon Bagrit's distinguished predecessors have included Lord Radcliffe on *The Problem of Power*; Professor A. J. Toynbee on *The World and the West*; Professor J. R. Oppenheimer on *Science and the Common Understanding*; Sir Oliver Franks on *Britain and the Tide of World Affairs*; Professor Nicholas Pevsner on *The Englishness of English Art*; George F. Kennan on *Russia, the Atom and the West*; Professor Bernard Lovell on *The Individual and the Universe*; and Professor A. E. Sloman on *A University in the Making*.

Weidenfeld and Nicolson