

Modernism in Mainstream Magazines, 1920-37

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Abstract

This thesis studies five mainstream British weekly magazines: *Time and Tide*, the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, the *Listener*, and the *New Statesman*. It explores how these magazines reviewed, discussed and analysed modernist literature over an eighteen-year span, 1920-37. Over this period, and in these magazines, the concept of modernism developed. Drawing on work by philosopher Ian Hacking, this research traces how the idea of modernism emerged into the public realm. It focuses largely on the book reviews printed in these magazines, texts that played an important and underappreciated role in negotiations between modernist texts and the audience of these magazines.

Chapter 1, on *Time and Tide*, covers a period from the magazine's inception in 1920 to 1926, and draws particularly on Catherine Clay's work on this magazine. It discusses the genre of 'weekly review' that this new magazine attempted to join, and the cultural place of modernism in the early 1920s. Chapter 2, on the *Nation and Athenaeum*, covers Leonard Woolf's literary editorship (1923-30), under the ownership of J. M. Keynes, and makes use of Keynes's archive at King's College, Cambridge, and Woolf's at the University of Sussex. Chapter 3, on the *Spectator*, covers Evelyn Wrench's editorship (1925-32), and explores the relationship between this magazine, ideologies of conservatism, and modernism. Chapter 4, on the *Listener*, focuses on the magazine's publication of new poetry, including an extraordinary 1933 supplement that printed W. H. Auden's 'The Witnesses'. This work revolves around Janet Adam Smith, literary editor in these years, and draws on Smith's archive at the National Library of Scotland as well as the BBC archives at Caversham. Chapter 5, on the *New Statesman* in the 1930s under new editor Kingsley Martin, explores a period when modernism was more widely recognized, and pays particular attention to a short text by James Joyce printed in 1932, 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer'.

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This thesis is dedicated to my father, Graham Dawkins (1960-2001).

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INTRODUCTION: MAKING UP MODERNISM

This thesis explores how modernism emerged into mainstream literary culture in Britain.

It argues that a concept of modernism developed as modernist texts and ideas were reviewed and discussed in the mainstream periodical press. In examining the reception of texts now accepted as modernist, rather than searching only for moments where they found a positive reception, I emphasize a need to attend to a range of critical responses to modernism, from disdain and scepticism to cautious optimism.

Critical responses to modernism are, of course, not only found in the periodical press. One might, for instance, turn to diaries (say, Virginia Woolf on *Ulysses* as a ‘mis-fire’), or letters (Lytton Strachey on *Jacob’s Room* as a ‘most wonderful achievement’), or early critical monographs (Edmund Wilson’s *Axel’s Castle*, perhaps).¹ Even within the periodical press, one would find modernism discussed across the full gamut of publications, from daily newspapers to expensive, short-lived little magazines.

But in order to explore how the concept of modernism entered into mainstream literary culture, this thesis focuses on a group of British periodicals most often described as the ‘weekly reviews’. These have a principal focus on politics, and a typical price of sixpence. There are chapters on each of five magazines: *Time and Tide*, the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, the *Listener*, and the *New Statesman*. In addition to the arguments made by this thesis, I hope that this research might also turn scholarly attention to these weekly reviews, a group of periodicals that offer rich yet largely unexplored ground for literary critics. Here, however, these five periodicals offer case studies that together show how the idea of modernism emerged tentatively, complexly and incompletely into mainstream British culture.

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¹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-1984), II, 199 (6 September 1922); *The Letters of Lytton Strachey*, ed. by Paul Levy (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 523 (to Virginia Woolf, 9 October 1922); Edmund Wilson, *Axel’s Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1890-1930* (New York: Scribner, 1931).

On 12 July 1933, the *Listener's* regular editorial discussed the contentious question of modernism. That week, the magazine had printed a supplement of nine poems, all previously unpublished, including work by W. H. Auden, Herbert Read, and C. Day Lewis.² The editorial ran with the heading “‘Modernist’ Poetry’, and reflected on the poetry that the *Listener* had been publishing since early 1931: a ‘new poem each week’. The poems had been ‘pretty widely noticed’, though the reaction was varied. ‘Some have liked our choices, others have most strongly disapproved.’ One reader is quoted at length.

‘A frequent blemish’ is the verdict of one correspondent, who goes on to accuse the poems as ‘extravagances’ that ‘may perhaps please certain inferior literary cliques who strain after novelty for mere novelty’s sake’, to condemn the ‘modernist cult of ugliness, but it finds no favour with the general public’, and to conclude ‘that there are certain fixed and agreed standards in poetic verse’ to which evidently the majority of our poets do not conform.³

It is difficult to know how to interpret this use of an anti-modernist reader. Should we see this reader as a hidebound critic to be mocked, or a respected voice of scepticism to which the periodical is apologising? The ambiguity is intensified by a long sentence in parentheses that follows immediately after.

(Observe the use of the word ‘modernist’: if a convenient label had to be found for the 140 odd poems we have published up to date ‘modern’ would probably do as well as any: but our critics prefer to call them ‘modernist’—that word which as applied to architecture, sculpture, painting and music as well as poetry, nearly always means quite simply something modern that the writer doesn’t like, and carries with it a flavour of abuse.) (p. 50)

The *Listener* identifies ‘modernist’ as a term of ‘abuse’, and places it in quotation marks. Yet the term is in the title, and the *Listener* continues to use it throughout—always in quotation marks. Towards the end of the piece, it shifts briefly to speak of ‘modernism’, which also remains in quotation marks.⁴ Here, the *Listener* takes a term of abuse and reclaims it. Negative reactions and abuse can of course define something just as well as adulation.

² This supplement is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

³ [Janet Adam Smith], “‘Modernist’ Poetry’, *The Listener*, 12 July 1933, p. 50. This editorial is unsigned, and is treated as such here. I attribute authorship to assistant editor Janet Adam Smith, as discussed in Chapter 4. Further references to this editorial are given after quotations in the text.

⁴ ‘It would be absurd to pretend that every one [poem] that is attacked for its “modernism” will survive’ (p. 50). It should be noted that the noun ‘modernism’ functions adjectivally in this unusual grammatical construction. While it is still important that the *Listener* uses the noun as well as the adjective ‘modernist’, this particular use closely links ‘modernism’ to ‘every one [poem]’, and thus restricts the extent to which ‘modernism’ can refer to a wider movement.

Crucially, however, this argument back against the sceptical reader is not entirely unkind, mocking, or dismissive. An anti-modernist reaction is taken seriously, and engaged with. There are, the magazine suggests, three main reasons for disliking modernist poetry.

In one sense, poetry is unlucky in its medium—the philistine ‘I don’t know much about art but I do know what I like’ is seldom heard in relation to poetry. Obviously, many think, if you have eyes to read Bradshaw you have eyes to read poetry: and so when they *do* come across a poem they are aggrieved if it does not immediately please—blandly unconscious of the fact that a fine sensibility to poetry is probably as uncommon a gift, and as hard an acquisition, as a fine sensibility to music or painting. Secondly, as was noticed by Wordsworth, most people read a good deal of poetry when young, seldom read it seriously again, and so are all too apt to judge the poetry they are faced with at forty by the standards of what they wallowed in at seventeen. It is the old trick of judging a thing by what it never intended to be. A. is condemned for bad rhymes—when A. is deliberately practising the use of half-rhyme. B. does not scan—but B., if they would only look, though he does not regularly hammer down his accents every second syllable, is using a metre where one stress can carry a varying number of unaccented syllables. The third common cause of antagonism to new poetry probably lies in an inadequate appreciation of the masters whose names are being constantly invoked to confound the moderns. The anthology habit is greatly to blame for this, a habit that invites the reader to regard poetry like chocolates, something that gives immediate gratification with the minimum effort, and gets him out of the way of reading poets in bulk. (p. 50)

The *Listener* offers three counterarguments familiar to any student of modernism: modernist poetry is difficult, and requires skill to be read properly; it must be judged on its own terms; it has a complex relationship to literary history. These arguments had been made before, and would be made again.

But if the rhetoric is familiar, the location and tone are important. The *Listener* was the highest circulating of the magazines covered by this thesis: in 1933, its average weekly circulation was 42,627 copies.⁵ Tonally, the piece replicates the ambiguity found in its appropriation of ‘modernist’. On the one hand, the sceptical reader is ‘blandly unconscious’, with ‘inadequate appreciation of the masters’. They have an ‘anthology habit’, and ‘regard poetry like chocolates, something that gives immediate gratification with the minimum effort’ The unpleasant comparison of inadequate reading practices with unthinking, fattening consumption had been made more famously by Q. D. Leavis in the previous year.⁶

On the other hand, this editorial directly addresses the sceptical reader, and values their as-yet ungained approval.

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932).

All this, we would ask our readers to believe, is no special pleading on behalf of the poems we have published. It would be absurd to pretend that every one that is attacked for its 'modernism' will survive like Wordsworth's to confound its critics in a century's time. But it is a plea for open and unprejudiced and informed reading of poetry—reading that will take into account what the poet is trying to do, that will contribute its fair share of effort and intelligence, that will commend or condemn a poem not because it is traditional, not because it is modern, but because it is good or bad in its own kind. (p. 50)

Significantly, that approval is sought for on the basis of an appeal to history, and the canon. Anti-modernist critics are compared to those who jeered at Wordsworth and Keats. The *Listener's* conclusion is that 'much of the writing which now seems wildly remote from tradition will be seen to have been only unconventional in surface effects, that though it is not like what was most admired in 1860, or in 1910, it has its own distinctive title to the name of poetry' (p. 50). Reading modernist poetry as legitimate, canonical literature is thus not a case of aesthetic fashion, so much as a chance for wisdom in hindsight.

This editorial is extraordinary, and is certainly one of the stronger voices for modernism discussed by this thesis. I discuss it here not to suggest that weekly reviews were always cheerleaders for experimental literature, but instead to contend that the way in which modern poetry was discussed here is profoundly significant. The natures of various modernist literatures were defined elsewhere: by writers and artists and thinkers across the globe, years prior to 1933. But it is at moments such as this that the *concept* of modernism—note the shift to singular—began to take shape in the public eye. The *Listener* takes issue with its sceptical readers and defends its record of publishing new poetry; from that debate, a clearer sense of precisely what the *Listener* defends emerges. While this editorial remains extraordinary, the process of emergence that it charts was not: it happened week in and week out, through the 1920s and 1930s, in a range of magazines similar to the *Listener*. This is the history that this thesis offers.

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It is not immediately clear that such a history has value for contemporary scholarship on modernism. After all, modernism as represented by the *Listener* seems not only familiar but old-fashioned: most clearly found in poetry, difficult, rejecting nineteenth-century models and constructing a new tradition. This is modernism as seen by the New Criticism at mid-century;

more than this, it is modernism as found in T. S. Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and 'The Metaphysical Poets'. When one reads a wider selection of these magazines, it becomes starkly evident that these periodicals, and the texts they discuss, are unapologetically Anglocentric; they see little of literary culture outside of London; they give far greater prominence to literature than to theatrical or visual art, or to music. They are overwhelmingly owned and written by men, and grant the majority of their coverage to male authors. When one reads modernism as seen by these periodicals, one sees a modernism that might have been extracted from university syllabi forty or fifty years ago: James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, (sometimes) Ezra Pound.

Naturally, I argue that the study of these magazines and of modernism in this way is highly relevant, even if it initially appears antiquated. In the last twenty years, scholarship on modernism has undergone wide-ranging pluralization. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz's 2008 essay in *PMLA* announced the 'new modernist studies', and suggested that the study of modernism is characterized by *expansion*.⁷ They named three axes: temporal, spatial, and vertical. Temporal expansion pushes the period boundaries of modernism and modernity well into the nineteenth century, and incorporates the late twentieth century. One has only to note the shift from Bradbury and McFarlane's excellent *Modernism* (1976), which runs from 1890 to 1930, to Peter Nicholls's *Modernisms* (1995, 2nd edn 2009), which begins with Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸ A 2014 conference organized by the British Association of Modernist Studies (BAMS) was entitled 'Modernism Now!'; Jacqueline Rose, one of the keynote speakers, read Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* (2013) in the titular context: a novel that was modernist, now.⁹ Perhaps more radically, Susan Stanford Friedman

⁷ Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA*, 123 (2008), 737-48.

⁸ *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature, 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976); Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: a Literary Guide*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). This comparison is rooted in Michael Whitworth's note that Nicholls's work 'seems likely to achieve the same status as Bradbury and McFarlane's 1976 volume'. *Modernism*, ed. by Michael H. Whitworth (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 297.

⁹ Jacqueline Rose, 'Modernism—The Unfinished Legacy', paper at 'Modernism Now!', London, 26 June 2014; Eimear McBride, *A Girl Is A Half-formed Thing* (Norwich: Galley Beggar Press, 2013).

has called for the abolition of period boundaries altogether. She argues for a ‘relational approach’ to the terms modern/modernity/modernism, one that ‘stresses the condition or sensibility of radical disruption and accelerating change wherever and whenever such a phenomenon appears’.¹⁰

With the words ‘wherever and whenever’ Friedman links an argument about periodization to the spatial expansion later identified by Mao and Walkowitz. This scholarship emphasizes that modernism took place in different places, as well as different times; as Friedman suggests, the two are often connected. This scholarship has been prolific: the *Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* ranges from Cuba to Vietnam, China to South Africa.¹¹ In a 2006 essay, Friedman emphasizes the radical potential of these twin expansions; her ‘planetary approach to modernism requires [...] jettisoning the ahistorical designation of modernism as a collection of identifiable aesthetic styles, and abandoning as well the notion of modernism as an aesthetic period whose singular temporal beginning and endpoints are determinable’. Instead, modernism is the ‘expressive dimension of modernity’; there is no ‘single period of modernism’, but instead the ‘plural periods of modernisms’.¹²

Mao and Walkowitz’s third axis—vertical expansion—again denotes a far-reaching shift.

The vertical reconfiguration exerts a kind or degree of disruptive force on modernist studies that it may not on any other period-based field, since for many years modernism was understood as, precisely, a movement by and for a certain kind of high (cultured mandarins) as against a certain kind of low (the masses, variously regarded as duped by the ‘culture industry’, admirably free of elitist self-absorption, or simply awaiting the education that would make the community of *conoscenti* a universal one).¹³

There are many instances of modernist artists envisaging themselves as masculine and vigorous, against a passive and feminized official culture, as argued by Andreas Huyssen.¹⁴ But this was not always the case, and Lawrence Rainey’s argument that modernism’s imagined isolation

¹⁰ Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism’, *Modernism/modernity*, 8 (2001), 493-513 (p. 503).

¹¹ See *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. by Mark A. Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹² Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies’, *Modernism/modernity*, 13 (2006), 425-43 (p. 432).

¹³ Mao and Walkowitz, ‘The New Modernist Studies’, p. 738.

¹⁴ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

from mass culture and the marketplace was, itself, a marketing strategy is a crucial precursor to more recent work.¹⁵ Mao and Walkowitz term this reconfiguration ‘vertical’ because rather than isolating modernism from wider cultural and social contexts, scholars now tend to perceive modernism as implicated in those contexts. Work on modernism and periodicals falls into this category, and is discussed below; while the overall scope of research in this area is too broad to be covered here, it can usefully be noted that in recent years winners of the annual Modernist Studies Association book prize have included monographs on modernism and the practice of collecting, Irish modernism and public utilities, modernism and speed, modernism and the nocturnal cityscape of New York.¹⁶ This in no way represents an adequate selection of recent work. Perhaps the best mark of the shift in critical thought over the past fifteen or so years is that Mao and Walkowitz’s analysis is still very useful, but the label *new* seems slightly outmoded.

Yet despite the expansion in modernist studies—stretching across the globe, across the centuries, across cultural forms—*modernism* and *modernist* have survived as the critical labels of choice. It is putting the case too strongly to say that this is surprising—there were many different modern movements, and modernism is nothing if not a flexible term—but it was hardly inevitable. Indeed, the recent expansion has led some scholars to question the use of the term altogether. Introducing his *Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, Mark Wollaeger asks the pertinent question.

Is it productive to discuss under the rubric of modernism literary movements that assigned themselves (or later were assigned) different names, be they *modernismo*, *futurisme*, *modanizumu*, *moderna*, *vanguardismo*, *chư nghĩa hiện đạ*, or *avant-garde*?¹⁷

Chris Baldick, writing a volume of the *Oxford English Literary History* on the early twentieth century, moves away from the term entirely. Instead, he uses ‘the modern movement’, arguing that ‘modernist’ overprivileges experimental writers, and that ‘there are many ways of being

¹⁵ Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Jeremy Braddock, *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Michael Rubenstein, *Public Works: Infrastructure, Irish Modernism, and the Postcolonial* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Enda Duffy, *The Speed Handbook: Velocity, Pleasure, Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); William Chapman Sharpe, *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁷ *Global Modernisms*, ed. by Wollaeger and Eatough, p. 3.

modern'.¹⁸ This is very true, but Baldick's clean rejection of modernism remains rare. It is far more common for writers to stretch the definitional possibilities of the word modernism, à la Friedman. When the word by itself will not do, prefixes or adjectives are used.¹⁹ Kristin Bluemel writes of 'intermodernism', writing that seems to slip through the cracks of even generous definitions of modernism.²⁰ Tyrus Miller's work on late modernism has been particularly influential.²¹

Thus the term remains useful. However, as modernist studies has undergone a welcome expansion, some critics have questioned whether modernism has lost definition: if all things can be modernist, then what specific value has modernism? Friedman provides an intriguing coda to her 2001 essay on modernism that both interrogates this problem, and is sympathetic to it. Rather than offering 'yet another definition of *modernity* and *modernism*', she attempts to 'shift attention to the processes and patterns of definitional contestation'.

Definitional dissonance matters. The fact of not only diverse but downright opposite meanings signifies. These differences should not be ignored as accidental or arbitrary, the ordinary product of disciplinary background or semantic disagreement. Nor should they be tamed with the deceptive inclusiveness of pluralism.²²

This is all well and good, but as Friedman herself notes in 2006, it is somewhat difficult to work with.²³ To emphasize the differences within modernisms and deny common ground may well lead one to the stark conclusions that Perry Anderson perceptively drew in 1984.

Modernism as a notion is the emptiest of all cultural categories. Unlike the terms Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Mannerist, Romantic, or Neo-Classical, it designates no describable object in its own right at all: it is completely lacking in positive content. [...] There is no other aesthetic marker so vacant or vitiated.²⁴

¹⁸ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford English Literary History: Volume 10, 1910-1940: The Modern Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 5.

¹⁹ The prefix 'post'—as in postmodernism—is clearly an exceptional case, and is not relevant here.

²⁰ Kristin Bluemel, *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); *Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain*, ed. by Kristin Bluemel (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

²¹ Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Questions of late modernism are discussed further in Chapter 5.

²² Friedman, 'Definitional Excursions', p. 510.

²³ Friedman, 'Periodizing Modernism', p. 433.

²⁴ Perry Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review*, 144 (1984), 96-113 (pp. 112-13).

I appreciate the theoretical worry that leads in this direction, but I cannot endorse this conclusion. Imperfect as twenty-first century definitions of modernism may be, those definitions have a history, and that history is worthy of study in its own right.

These definitional histories have not escaped criticism. Michael Whitworth's brief analysis usefully notes that 'In their aesthetic sense, "modernism" and "modernist" were used by actual artists and writers in the 1910s and 1920s, and were used increasingly in the 1930s'.²⁵ Whitworth makes the point noted in my own analysis of the *Listener* editorial, that the term was frequently deployed by anti-modernist critics. *Modernism: Keywords* (2014), inspired by Raymond Williams and written by Melba Cuddy-Keane, Adam Hammond, and Alexandra Peat, traces uses of 'modern' and 'modernism' from idiosyncratic moments in Hardy and Whitman to the gradually developing association with experimental art through the early twentieth century.²⁶ Both Whitworth and *Modernism: Keywords* note the fact that modernism had a technical use in Catholic theology around the turn of the century, a use that, as Finn Fordham argues, had an underestimated influence on the aesthetic understanding of the word.²⁷

As a term, modernism may now be most frequently encountered in the academy and the classroom, but its history is not limited to these locations. The creation of modernist art is entangled with manifold attempts to classify that art. I contend that there is significant space within these attempts for close scholarly exploration of how such classifications developed: how modernism took shape as a concept in the public sphere. At this point, it is useful to clarify the way in which I use the terms 'modernist' and 'modernism'. This thesis certainly pays attention to the varying—and sometimes highly unusual—terms used to classify literature or ideas about literature that we would now call modernist. Correspondingly, I am interested in early appearances of the words 'modernism' and 'modernist' in the periodicals under study. However, my primary focus is on how the *concept* of modernism took shape: not only how periodicals

²⁵ *Modernism*, ed. by Whitworth, p. 40.

²⁶ Melba Cuddy-Keane, Adam Hammond and Alexandra Peat, *Modernism: Keywords* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), pp. 139-46.

²⁷ Finn Fordham, 'Between Theological and Cultural Modernism: the Vatican's Oath Against Modernism, September 1910', *Literature and History*, 22 (2013), 8-24.

chose to name new literature, but the precise nature and influence of their analysis. This can involve consideration of ways of naming modern literature—in Chapter 1, I discuss Sylvia Lynd’s description of Virginia Woolf as a ‘mystic realist’—but often also explores other aspects of the literary criticism practiced by these magazines. In Chapter 2, I consider Vita Sackville-West’s review of Ernst Toller, and the way in which she openly connects Toller to T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* while also playfully echoing Eliot’s poem throughout her review.

As my target is thus the concept of modernism itself, and how it developed publicly, when I write of modernism and modernist literature in these magazines, it might be more proper to write of *that-which-would-later-come-to-be-called-modernism*. In the pursuit of brevity and simplicity, however, I refrain from continually restating these qualifications, and continue to use the terms ‘modernist’ and ‘modernism’, even when I write of how the concept that those terms refer to came into being. I judge this ultimately less confusing than the alternative.

There is something of this focus on how the concept of modernism took public form in Michael North’s *Reading 1922* (1999). In the first pages of that work, North argues for the value of a critical turn towards how readers experienced modernism in 1922.

The ‘matrix of modernism’, to take the title of one very accomplished study, is generally constructed in temporal terms, as a genealogy, and is restricted to literature and perhaps philosophy. Such a study produces, as a necessary effect of its interpretative method, a modernism that lives primarily in the deepest imaginings of its most radical perpetrators. But what of modernism as a social fact, as part of the lived experience of a reader of *The Waste Land* or *Ulysses*, who also lived in the world of incipient revolt[?] [...] What connections might have been made in the mind of such a reader between literary modernism and the other innovations of the same year?²⁸

North cites a 1985 study by Sanford Schwartz, but *The Matrix of Modernism* is only one example in a fine critical tradition of histories of modernism. To take just a brief selection, one might point to work from critics as diverse as Bradbury and McFarlane, Levenson, Calinescu, and Eysteinsson—and this is only selecting from works that tend to construct modernism in the most traditional sense.²⁹ North’s own project differs greatly from this one, but the purpose is

²⁸ Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 6.

²⁹ *Modernism*, ed. by Bradbury and McFarlane; Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of*

similar: not simply a focus on the culture and society of the early twentieth century that produced *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* (to take North's examples), but a search for the sense of modernism as 'social fact'; an emerging and almost tangible phenomenon, in the air of early twentieth-century modernity.

To be clear, this thesis does not fill this gap in the scholarship completely: there is much further work to be done. This thesis studies mainstream sixpenny weekly magazines, in the 1920s and 1930s. It opens with the founding of *Time and Tide* in May 1920, a date far later than most histories of modernism itself. The reasoning behind this is simply that as the focus is on responses to modernism in mainstream periodicals, rather than on modernism itself, modernism had to begin and continue happening in order to be discussed and represented in mainstream literary culture. While there are famous moments of public and publicized modernist shock and awe before 1920—the Post-Impressionist Exhibitions come to mind—it is in the twenties and thirties, I argue, that the concept begins to be taken seriously by mainstream culture.

On the other hand, this is not a history of wholly retrospective responses. It seems clear that the concept of modernism takes on a particularly clear and stable form once it seems to be in the rear view mirror, so to speak. As the discussion above on the temporal expansion of modernism makes clear, to place an end date on modernism is not easy and is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worthwhile to note that there is an extremely important difference between a 1934 essay by Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheyney, 'What is This Modernism?', and a 1960 essay by Harry Levin, 'What Was Modernism?'.³⁰ Levin's essay (one of the first to emphasize the importance of 1922 for the publishing of modernist texts) performs a clear analysis of modernism that seems to illustrate Hegel's famous argument that the history and philosophy of an era can only be written once it has ended: 'The owl of Minerva flies only

Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Ástráður Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

³⁰ Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheyney, *More Power to Poets: A Plea for More Poetry in Life, More Life in Poetry* (New York: Henry Harrison, 1934), pp. 106-110; Harry Levin, 'What Was Modernism?', *The Massachusetts Review*, 1 (1960), 609-30.

with the dusk'.³¹ Trent and Cheyney are excitable, brief, idiosyncratic and somewhat dictatorial: in many ways, everything that writers for mainstream weekly magazines were not. But their sense of attempting to explore something that is still in the process of coming into being—what *is* this modernism?—is just that which writers for (say) the *Spectator* try to do. As will become clear, the *Spectator* is duller and more cynical and more serious. Yet it is historically significant: these magazines explored modernism, and modernism came further and more securely into the public sphere. This thesis ends in 1937, at a point where modernism's public position approaches stability. At the same time, though, this date should not be taken as a clear historical break, a date after which modernism had an unarguably clear and stable form. As I argue in the final chapter, the very notion of an end date for modernism's public emergence is complex and unclear.

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My use of the term 'public sphere' is derived from Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was first published in German in 1962, but did not appear in English until 1989. Habermas famously argued that the bourgeois public sphere arose where 'the sphere of private people came together as a public', to engage in debate in a way that Habermas understood as unprecedented: 'people's public use of their reason'.³² He names this 'rational-critical public debate' (p. 28), and while it is clear in his responses to his critics that he acknowledges the many flaws in this model, Habermas ultimately does idealize this public sphere, and does regard it as a historical phenomenon.³³ Crucially—and promisingly, for the arguments posed by this thesis—Habermas suggests that bourgeois public sphere first arose in discussions about literature; particularly, in London coffee houses.

³¹ *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 13.

³² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 27. Further references to this volume are given after quotations in the text.

³³ See Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 421-61.

Literature had to legitimate itself in these coffee houses [...] This critical debate ignited by works of literature and art was soon extended to include economic and political disputes, without any guarantee [...] that such discussions would be inconsequential. (p. 33)

However, Habermas's account is oriented around the structural transformation of this public sphere—which is to say, its collapse. By the early twentieth century, it is quite clear that rational-critical debate is no longer possible. He writes of 'the disintegration of the public sphere in the world of letters'.

The sounding board of an education stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered; the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical. Consequently, it completely lacks the form of communication specific to a public. (p. 175)

In particular, Habermas scorns modern media, a grouping that clearly includes twentieth century periodicals.

The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only. By the same token the integrity of the public sphere which they promise to their consumers is also an illusion.

Before, 'private people interpreted this new form of existence' through the public sphere; now, 'the mass media [...] strip away the literary husks from that kind of bourgeois self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers' (p. 171).

At the very end of the text, Habermas offers the possibility of a future public sphere, but does not seem to hold out much hope.

There also exists the rare relationship between publicist organs devoted to rational-critical debate and those few individuals who still seek to form their opinions through literature—a kind of opinion capable of becoming public, but actually non-public. The communicative network of a public made up of rationally debating private citizens has collapsed; the public opinion once emergent from it has partly decomposed into the informal opinions of private citizens without a public and partly become concentrated into formal opinions of publicistically effective institutions. (p. 247)

Habermas's understanding here is heavily indebted to Adorno's model of the cultural industries, as Nicholas Garnham notes.³⁴ Certainly, it does not seem to bode well for a discussion of modernism in the public sphere, discussed by magazines: the public sphere has 'collapsed', there is no 'communicative network', but only 'formal opinions'.

³⁴ Nicholas Garnham, 'The Media and the Public Sphere', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. by Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 359-76 (p. 360).

Of course, one can disagree with the doom and gloom of Habermas's historical analysis, even if his model of a public sphere has proved consistently provocative. But in this case, I point out Habermas's understanding of the disintegration of the public sphere in order to emphasize that, in suggesting a public oriented around mainstream weekly magazines, I am not proposing that these magazines somehow hosted an idealized public sphere of unfettered rational-critical debate, as Habermas imagines it in the eighteenth century. Whether or not such a thing ever existed, I do not propose to argue that it happened here. The public role played by mainstream weekly magazines is derived from Habermas, but does not entirely resemble a fully fledged public sphere.

Put another way, the claims made by this argument are less radical than those made by Habermas. The five magazines discussed here printed texts that reviewed new books and the state of literary culture; sometimes, to a limited extent, those texts actively debated with one another, though those responses were not utopic rational-critical debate, but long textual dialogues characterized (inevitably) by long articles written by each participant, separated by weeks between them. One might also construct debates and dialogues between texts that appeared together in the periodical; while this is clearly important from a literary critical perspective, it is again not rational-critical debate as Habermas envisaged it. Thus while it was used above, I tend to avoid the term 'public sphere': the implications of a space of free-flowing, energetic debate go too far. Instead, I tend to refer to 'public culture'. This term still contains useful echoes of Habermas's public sphere, but lacks the more radical implications of 'sphere'.

These magazines, then, are worthy of study as periodicals, rather than as actors in a utopic public sphere. As periodicals, it is important to note that studying the weekly review in this way develops the burgeoning field of modernist periodical studies. It is almost now axiomatic to point out how important periodicals are seen to be to modernism; perhaps the best and most concise statement of the current state of the field is that of Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, who write simply that 'Modernism happened in the magazines all right, but

it didn't only happen in the little ones'.³⁵ Colloquialisms are telling: that 'all right' signals just how accepted and expected the role of the periodical now is. This is a sea change: Jason Harding noted in a recent talk that, when he wrote his thesis on Eliot's *Criterion* (at Cambridge, submitted 2000), he was asked whether it was actually possible to do one's doctorate on a magazine.³⁶

Scholes and Wulfman's signal that the study of modernism and magazines needs to move away from a focus on just the 'little ones' only underlines the extent to which the study of modernism and magazines has traditionally been understood as the study of modernism and the *little* magazine. Definition of what exactly constitutes 'little' has been a topic of critical debate, but Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible give a detailed and useful definition.

little magazines are non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or under-represented writers. Defying mainstream tastes and conventions, some little magazines aim to uphold higher artistic and intellectual standards than their commercial counterparts, while others seek to challenge conventional political wisdom and practice. These two approaches, aesthetic experimentation and political radicalism, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although this was often the case prior to the 1930s. Because of their often unorthodox contents, little magazines appeal to small, sometimes elite (or elitist) readerships willing to exercise their minds to comprehend aesthetic movements such as Futurism, Imagism, and Dada, or to contemplate political movements such as anarchism, socialism, and feminism. Although the term 'little' refers to the magazine's small audience (as compared to mass market audiences), rather than to its size, significance, budget, or lifespan, these journals are characteristically but not exclusively small-budget operations with short runs. Whatever the format, scope, or preferred topics of conversation, little magazines tend to share two features: a vexed relationship to a larger, mainstream public and an equally vexed relationship to money.³⁷

This understanding of little magazines has rung broadly true for several decades of scholarship. Churchill and McKible's definition also echoes Scholes and Wulfman's choice of verb ('modernism happened in the magazines'), in that it explicitly takes the periodicals themselves as active participants in the history of modernism. Modernism was not just found in periodicals, it happened in them.

³⁵ Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 41.

³⁶ Jason Harding, 'The Use and Abuse of Archives: Reading the *Criterion* and *Encounter* Magazines', paper at 'Modernist Magazines Research Seminar', London, 20 February 2014. Harding's thesis was later published; see Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁷ *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. by Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 6-7.

By contrast, the earliest scholarship on modernism and periodicals remains important in bibliographical terms but tends to treat magazines as useful merely for the important texts that they may have hosted within their pages. The landmark study of the mid-twentieth century, Hoffman, Allen and Ulrich's *The Little Magazines: A History and a Bibliography* (1946), betrays its intentions within its title, and begins by suggesting that the importance of the little magazine lies in the fact that they published 'about 80 per cent of our most important post-1912 critics, novelists, poets, and storytellers'.³⁸ Under this model, magazines have no power to act as agents of change themselves, but are mere receptacles for famous works and artists. The most famous modernist little magazines did appear in scholarship, but largely because of what or who appeared in them: Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST*, for instance, which ran for two issues and printed the Vorticist Manifesto, or the *Little Review*, which printed part of *Ulysses*.

In the scholarly eye, magazines move from a passive to an active role only in the last decades of the twentieth century. Lawrence Rainey's important *Institutions of Modernism* foreshadowed the thrust of much later work in a chapter on the publication history of *The Waste Land*, demonstrating how negotiations between Pound and the editors of the *Dial* and *Vanity Fair* shaped the poem's eventual appearance in 1922.³⁹ But one of the first and most important texts which can be recognized as fully engaged in the study of modernist little magazines is Mark Morrisson's *The Public Face of Modernism* (2001). Morrisson organizes his book 'not around individual authors, but rather around magazines', and is aware that he is doing something new, suggesting that, since Hoffman, Allen and Ulrich, 'almost no scholarship has explored the material practices and genre markers of the modernist magazines themselves as a field of study'.⁴⁰ Morrisson sees little magazines as 'forums', and argues that they brought modernism into public discourse; this key moment represents something of a paradigm shift for critical work on little magazines.

³⁸ Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: a History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 1.

³⁹ See Ch. 3, 'The Price of Modernism: Publishing *The Waste Land*'. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*, pp. 77-106.

⁴⁰ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), p. 10.

Since the turn of the century, the volume of scholarship that understands magazines along broadly these lines has exploded. It is perhaps even more important to acknowledge the still-developing Modernist Journals Project at Brown University and the University of Tulsa, which has digitized dozens of the most well-known and important modernist magazines and thus opened access to periodicals to a wider range of scholars. Beyond giving magazines an active role, recent work has explored an intimate entanglement between modernism and magazines; Churchill and McKible are again useful:

Little magazines provide a record of the large-scale conversation that became modernism, an odd and absorbing concourse that cannot be reduced to a single movement or coherent set of principles. These periodicals [...] reveal modernism to be a complex network of artistic, social, political, economic, and technological activities. Presenting multiple voices and perspectives, crossing disciplinary boundaries, and both resisting and engaging mass culture, little magazines collectively represent the development of modernist art and modern ideas at least as well as Prufrock's monologue.⁴¹

The range of scholarship is immense, and cannot be adequately summarized here. Scholes and Wulfman's work, discussed above, is a useful introductory overview; Churchill and McKible's edited collection similarly contains a number of key essays. Research on the importance of individual magazines includes Jason Harding on Eliot's *Criterion*, Faith Binckes on Mansfield and Murry's *Rhythm*, Suzanne Churchill on *Others*, Ann Ardis on the *New Age*.⁴² Cathryn Setz's work on *transition* is forthcoming. The field now has its own journal: the *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, published by Penn State University Press. Moreover, the influence of periodical studies is felt in works with a broader remit; Laura Marcus's work on cinema and modernism features a central chapter on a film periodical, *Close-Up*.⁴³ For Adam McKible, little magazines in New York offer a way to talk about the relationship between American modernism and the 1917 Russian revolution.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. by Churchill and McKible, p. 5.

⁴² Harding, *The Criterion*; Faith Binckes, *Modernism, Magazines, and the British Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Suzanne W. Churchill, *The Little Magazine 'Others' and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Ann Ardis, 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age*', *Modernism/modernity*, 14 (2007), 407-34.

⁴³ Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing About Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴⁴ Adam McKible, *The Space and Place of Modernism: The Russian Revolution, Little Magazines, and New York* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

However, in recent years the bulk of new work on modernism and magazines has been concentrated in a mammoth project led by Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker, the *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*.⁴⁵ The three volumes cover Britain and Ireland, North America, and Europe. The scope of the project is immense: taking just the first volume, covering Britain and Ireland from 1880 to 1955, the volume prints thirty-seven essays that, between them, cover eighty-four periodicals. In addition, Brooker and Thacker's 'General Introduction' is a lucid and incisive discussion of the nature of a modernist magazine, and introduces the concept of 'periodical codes' (adapted from Jerome McGann's bibliographic codes) that proves an valuable way to discuss the weekly reviews explored by this thesis.⁴⁶ As the breadth of such a project implies, the *Oxford History* covers not only the canonical British modernist magazines (*Rhythm*, *BLAST*), but periodicals from the thirties and later (*Scrutiny*, *Horizon*, *Poetry London*), magazines particularly interested in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, magazines focused particularly on the visual arts. Notably, there is significant discussion of some more mainstream periodicals, as J. Matthew Huculak writes on J. C. Squire's conservative *London Mercury*, and Jane Dowson writes on *Time and Tide*, one of the magazines discussed by this thesis.

The sheer breadth of Brooker and Thacker's work has intriguing theoretical consequences that have a direct bearing on this thesis. They are very aware that the study of modernism and periodicals has developed beyond a narrow focus on the classical little magazine, and think carefully both about the ways in which different types of magazine played different roles, and how those differences were not stable.

[There is a] distinction between the minority 'little magazine' and mainstream publications and their respective relations to dominant cultural attitudes, mores, and economies. It is a mistake clearly [...] to see this relation as a static binary opposition of distinct, homogenous areas. If mainstream or hegemonic culture, by definition, exercises power it does so for the most part by

⁴⁵ *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009-2013). Brooker and Thacker edited all three volumes; on the third volume covering Europe, additional editorial roles were taken on by Sascha Bru and Christian Weikop.

⁴⁶ Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 'General Introduction', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-26 (pp. 6-9). For McGann's bibliographic codes, see Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

gaining consent and through strategies of exclusion, negotiation, or assimilation. Magazines in their turn, existing on the margins, and as part of a stratified counter or subaltern public sphere, contest, appropriate, and negotiate with this dominant realm. [...] We need a flexible and dialogic version of this distinction between spheres to understand the dynamic of the avant-garde and the relative stability, over time, of a 'normalized' modernism, overtaken, side-stepped, or made new again by its inheritors.⁴⁷

Of course, Brooker and Thacker choose their terminology very carefully, and title their whole project a study of the *modernist* magazine, rather than of the *little* magazine. They argue that this term 'oversees a reflection on this very category and serves to introduce a set of case studies of magazines which participated in the *making* of a 'modernist' cultural aesthetic and the institution of modernism'.⁴⁸

These two things might relate to very different magazines: *Rhythm*, printing Mansfield's short stories next to reproductions of Picasso paintings, might be said to have made a modernist cultural aesthetic; more mainstream periodicals, by bringing these ideas to a wider and more general audience, might have made modernism as institution. Across the impressively broad range of essays in the collection, there is a slight looseness between this acknowledgement of diversity, and the tendency of the adjective 'modernist' to imply selection. If one can point to a modernist magazine, one must also be able to point to a *non-modernist* magazine, otherwise the adjective loses all descriptive value. Again, Brooker and Thacker are not unaware of the importance of this selective principle.

Our judgment over what to count as a 'modernist magazine' has centred upon an understanding of the dominant character of a magazine, of how it contains sufficient material to constitute some version of modernism or significant discussion of modernism, or is closely related to other important contemporary cultural formations or attitudes towards the newness of social modernity.⁴⁹

In other words, both editors are keen to emphasize that a 'judgment' has been made; that the magazines chosen deserve the adjective given to them.

The judgments made by the *Oxford History* are good ones, but it must be acknowledged that the overall impulse is inclusive, rather than exclusive. Brooker and Thacker's stated criteria for making judgments is broad and flexible, and it would indeed be possible to make a case for

⁴⁷ Brooker and Thacker, 'Introduction', p. 16.

⁴⁸ Brooker and Thacker, 'Introduction', p. 11.

⁴⁹ Brooker and Thacker, 'Introduction', p. 11.

the magazines considered by this thesis as ‘modernist magazines’, most easily under the argument that they ‘constitute [...] significant discussion of modernism’. However, I choose not to, and argue that while these magazines certainly discussed modernism, it is productive to reject the adjective ‘modernist’.

This argument should not be construed as a criticism of Brooker and Thacker’s selection criteria or choice of label. One of the many virtues of the *Oxford History* volumes is their breadth, a breadth that could arguably not have been achieved with more restrictive criteria. In attempting to write about modernism and periodicals after Brooker and Thacker, however, I argue for the importance of a turn towards mainstream periodicals and mainstream periodicals alone. To be blunt, these are not modernist magazines, but they matter to modernism still. In particular, I wish to drive a wedge between periodicals that ‘constitute some version of modernism’ and those that host ‘significant discussion of modernism’, and focus on the latter. In late 2012, in a short talk at King’s College London, Thacker referred to modernist magazines as primary texts of modernism.⁵⁰ He was making the point that *Rhythm* or the *Little Review* should be understood as primary texts in much the same way as a copy of *Ulysses* or *Mrs Dalloway*. I contend that the weekly reviews discussed here should be understood as some of the first (though not of course the only) *secondary* texts of modernism. Their ‘dominant character’ is not modernist, but they discussed and explored modernism in ways that demand critical attention.

*

To borrow Brooker and Thacker’s useful phrase, the periodical codes of these magazines were clear and consistent. They appeared—naturally—every week. More specifically, they were published at the end of the working week: *Time and Tide* and the *New Statesman* appeared on Friday, the *Spectator* and the *Nation and Athenaeum* appeared on Saturday.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Andrew Thacker, ‘The Textual Culture of Modernism’, paper at ‘BAMS Postgraduate Training Day: Research Skills’, London, 9 May 2013.

⁵¹ The *Listener*, tied to the BBC’s programmes rather than reporting the week’s news (although there is naturally a certain level of coherence between the two), was the exception, and was published on Wednesdays.

The page format was usually foolscap, though *Time and Tide* was slightly shorter and wider.⁵² The paper and printing was of higher quality than for a daily paper, but lower than that of an illustrated magazine, or a monthly; they did not tend to carry pictures.⁵³ They were printed in monochrome only, in two columns. They kept, by and large, to a traditional typeface with serifs.⁵⁴ They all carried advertisements interspersed throughout the magazine, though overall the number of advertisements was not high. Furthermore, the advertisements were broadly similar: tobacco, insurance, and—in particular—publishers were well represented.⁵⁵ All asked for subscriptions, but achieved the majority of their sales through non-subscribing, cash-paying customers.⁵⁶ Most were priced at sixpence (hence the ‘sixpenny review’), though *Time and Tide* was introduced at fourpence, rising to sixpence in 1928, and the *Listener* was introduced at twopence, increasing to threepence from 1931. The value of treating these differently priced magazines as sixpenny reviews is covered in the relevant chapters. Total circulations ranged between a few thousand (where a magazine was definitely failing, or very new) to around ten thousand (when it was not making a profit, but was usually making a sustainable loss backed by patrons) to circulations in the high teens and low twenties, where money—in small amounts—was being made.⁵⁷ The business of running a weekly review was not, by and large, a profitable one. The *Spectator* made money, as did the *New Statesman* from the mid-thirties onwards, but in neither case were fortunes being made, as they had been, for example, in daily papers. *Time and*

⁵² A page of the *New Statesman* (a representative example) measures $8\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Foolscap *paper* is sized at $17 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$ inches, equivalent to a double page spread. On paper sizes, see Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 224.

⁵³ The *Listener*, often the exception, was produced to a slightly higher quality and included more images, especially images of paintings in the weekly art column.

⁵⁴ *Time and Tide*'s sans-serif title was, for weekly reviews, the height of typographical experimentation.

⁵⁵ The *Listener* also frequently advertised wireless manufacturers. In its first years, *Time and Tide* carried a large volume of fashion advertisements; for further details, see Chapter 1, and Catherine Clay, “WHAT WE MIGHT EXPECT - If the Highbrow Weeklies Advertized like the Patent Foods”: *Time and Tide*, Advertising, and the “Battle of the Brows”, *Modernist Cultures*, 6 (2011), 60-95.

⁵⁶ In 1928 and 1929, the *Nation and Athenaeum* sold around twenty per cent of its total circulation to subscribers. The magazine was not doing particularly well at this point, and would soon be merged with the *New Statesman* (see Chapter 5), but there is no indication in its financial records that the *proportion* of subscribers was particularly low or high. Cambridge, King's College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, King's/PP/JMK/NS/4/2/110. For further detail on finances, see Appendix A.

⁵⁷ See Appendix B.

Tide, the *Nation and Athenaeum*, and the *Listener* never turned a profit, and were supported by patronage in the first two cases and the institution of the BBC in the third.⁵⁸

Even though this was not a profitable business, there were a good number of sixpenny weekly reviews in the British periodical marketplace. The five studied here represent the most significant members of the group, but they are not the only ones. Two additional possibilities were considered and dismissed. The *Saturday Review* was enormously influential in the nineteenth century, but declined in the 1920s and 1930s, shifting rapidly between different owners. From 1933, it was owned by Lucy, Lady Houston, who used the periodical to praise Hitler and Mussolini. The *Week-end Review* was founded in 1930 by members of the *Saturday Review* staff who refused to endorse that paper's support of the United Empire Party, but was itself not particularly successful and was amalgamated into the *New Statesman*, in early 1934.⁵⁹ While there may well be valuable scholarly work to be done on these two publications, I feel that they are more marginal members of the group of weekly reviews. Therefore, I pass over these two periodicals in order to maintain close attention on the five more central weekly reviews covered by this study.

In addition to periodicity, format, and price, the make-up of the sixpenny weekly reviews was consistent. They did not distort their form for important news: Appendix C reprints the front pages of each of these magazines as they commented on the Wall Street Crash of October 1929. Special issues were usually issued as a supplement—reviews of Christmas books, for example—and were often paginated separately, maintaining the overall form of the paper. The *Spectator's* celebration of its centenary in 1928 used higher quality paper, but did not alter the essential structure of the paper.

The structure itself was relatively simple. The first page featured a table of contents at the top of the first column, following this immediately with unsigned leading articles that

⁵⁸ The *Listener's* price was kept at an artificially low mark to encourage sales; as a result, its circulation was by far the highest, but it continually lost money.

⁵⁹ In the *New Statesman*, the merger of the two papers was announced in the issue of 6 January 1934. The following issue (13 January) was the first to include the *Week-end Review* on the title page.

reviewed the news of the week, with a strong focus on politics. Following this, the review would print longer articles on political or economic issues, which were frequently signed, and an editorial, which typically was not. There were letters to the editor, sometimes a short poem, and ‘middles’: lighthearted articles, usually by famous if anonymous columnists writing under a pseudonym. Following this, the cultural half of the paper begins, usually featuring articles on music, art, or theatre, though rarely all three (most weekly reviews rotated their non-literary cultural material). Then the literary editor’s page, which would review a group of books—not necessarily fiction—under a theme, followed by book reviews of varying lengths, some signed and some unsigned. The very end of the magazine was less clearly defined: some magazines had a finance section, some competitions, some articles on hobbies such as gardening or sewing.

The division into political ‘half’ and cultural ‘half’ is long-lived, but has murky origins. It is certainly true that the very first issue of the 1828 *Spectator* was made up in this way, printing its first half as ‘The Spectator’, and literary half as ‘The Literary Spectator’.⁶⁰ This structural division has important consequences that are explored through this thesis, but here it suffices to say that the assumption that the material that appears first has a higher priority holds true: these were political magazines that had a literary element, not the other way around.

Weekly reviews were published regularly and consistently, and they all looked broadly similar. But the material costs of the periodicals do not tell the whole story. The murkier question of cultural identity and reputation is more difficult to measure. However, an attempt can be made via the appearances of these periodicals in contemporary novels, where a distinctive cultural image becomes clear: as suggested by the material codes, sixpenny weeklies were dependable and uniform. Unlike little magazines, these are rarely exciting or provocative. Instead, they are serious, even boring; dependable in a way that almost seems dull.

Needless to say, I do not find this to be an accurate understanding of the weekly review. But it was, I think, a very real perception. Consider George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia* (1937),

⁶⁰ See the *Spectator*, 5 July 1828.

as he imagines an England undisturbed by the horrors of war in Spain, an England that will sleep until wakened ‘by the roar of bombs’.

Earthquakes in Japan, famines in China, revolution in Mexico? Don’t worry, the milk will be on the doorstep tomorrow morning, the *New Statesman* will come out on Friday.⁶¹

Virginia Woolf is more cutting, writing in *Night and Day* (1919) of ‘the dear old ladies in mittens, who read nothing but the *Spectator*, and snuff the candles’.⁶² In *Jacob’s Room* (1922), she depicts the lodgings of George Plumer, one of Jacob’s tutors at Cambridge.

Cold grey eyes George Plumer had, but in them was an abstract light. He could talk about Persia and the Trade winds, the Reform Bill and the cycle of the harvests. Books were on his shelves by Wells and Shaw; on the table serious six-penny weeklies written by pale men in muddy boots—the weekly creak and screech of brains rinsed in cold water and wrung dry—melancholy papers.⁶³

The image is evocative and brutal: these are not, one might think, promising locations for the study of modernism. Sixpenny weeklies are understood also in terms of what they are not—chiefly, they are not cheaper twopenny weeklies, hugely popular magazines such as *Punch* and *John Bull* that carried less political analysis and published more short fiction. In *Crome Yellow* (1921), Aldous Huxley stages a conversation between protagonist Denis Stone, and the popular, successful writer Mr Barbecue-Smith. Asked how quickly he writes, Stone admits that he can sometimes ‘do a twelve-hundred-word review in about four hours’.⁶⁴ Barbecue-Smith is not impressed: he claims 3800 words in two and a half hours. He promises to help Denis out.

What was the fellow going to do? Denis wondered: give him an introduction to the editor of *John O’London’s Weekly*, or tell him where he could sell a light middle for seven guineas? Mr Barbecue-Smith patted his arm several times and went on.⁶⁵

Stone snobbishly dismisses Barbecue-Smith’s journalism. Clearly associated with magazines such as *John O’London’s Weekly* (a popular twopenny), Barbecue-Smith’s writing is effortless and, by implication, meaningless.⁶⁶ Against this, Denis’s writing is careful and compact, perhaps destined for a sixpenny weekly. Barbecue-Smith does not seem to take literature very seriously;

⁶¹ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 187.

⁶² Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day*, ed. by Julia Briggs (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 5.

⁶³ Virginia Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, ed. by Kate Flint (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 43.

⁶⁴ Aldous Huxley, *Crome Yellow* (London: Vintage, 2004), pp. 25-26.

⁶⁵ Huxley, *Crome Yellow*, p. 26.

⁶⁶ On *John O’London’s Weekly*, see Patrick Collier, ‘*John O’London’s Weekly* and the Modern Author’, in *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1940: Emerging Media, Emerging Modernisms*, ed. by Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 98-113.

Denis Stone is quite earnest. He is not, however, particularly associated with modernism; he is instead a serious young critic, attempting to make his way in the literary world, and the sixpenny weekly is implied to be a natural home.

Finally, Rose Macaulay—a prolific journalist—explored the periodical press in quite some detail in her novels. When discussing the weekly reviews, she emphasizes their seriousness, and their position as arbiters of respectable, intellectual taste. In *Crewe Train* (1926), Arnold Chapel's novel comes in for review, and is at first received poorly.

The weekend was better. A serious weekly periodical said that Mr Chapel's first novel was one of brilliant promise, and teemed with ideas. It devoted half a column to it, and depreciated another novel by comparison.

Arnold justifies this positive review: 'The *Weekly Comment* review is important, of course [...] It's read by people who matter. It counts.' He goes on:

The people who matter, in an intellectual sense, are the intelligent readers and critics. And a paper is important, intellectually, if it's written and read by intelligent and thoughtful people. As to important...well, of course, it's a relative word; it doesn't stand by itself. Important for some people, I suppose it means. More coffee, darling, please.⁶⁷

Macaulay's satire illustrates a self-absorbed and self-important group of literary critics and writers who respond only to praise and treat people and experiences from outside their social and cultural milieu with disdain; throughout the novel Arnold refuses to conceive of anything more important than socializing in London with 'people who matter'. The passage above should be considered alongside a final example from Macaulay, in *Potterism* (1920), which discusses the establishment of a new weekly paper run by Lord Pinkerton:

The *Weekly Fact* had become, as people said, quite an interesting and readable paper, brighter than the *Nation*, more emotional than the *New Statesman*, gentler than the *New Witness*, spicier than the *Spectator*, more chatty than the *Athenaeum*, so that one bought it on bookstalls and read it in trains. [...] There was also the new Pinkerton fourpenny, the *Wednesday Chat* [...] Lord Pinkerton had, in fact, with his usual acumen, sensed the existence of a great Fourpenny Weekly Public, and given it, as was his wont, more than it desired or deserved. The sixpenny weekly public already had its needs met; so had the penny, the twopenny, the threepenny, and the shilling public. Now the fourpenny public, a shy and modest section of the community, largely clerical (in the lay sense of the word) looked up and was fed. Those brains which could only with effort rise to the solid political and economic information and cultured literary judgments meted out by the sixpennies,

⁶⁷ Rose Macaulay, *Crewe Train* (London: Virago, 1998), pp. 127-28.

but which yet shrank from the crudities of our cheapest journals, here found something they could read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.⁶⁸

Macaulay provides a humorous map of the periodical marketplace, with magazines for the penny, twopenny, threepenny, fourpenny, sixpenny and shilling publics. They are separated by degree rather than kind: reader might shy away from a sixpenny for a slightly easier fourpenny.⁶⁹ Again, however, the image is repeated: if the new *Wednesday Chat* is exciting, sixpennies are not so bright, not so emotional, not so spicy, not so chatty. They doled out ‘solid political and economic information and cultured literary judgments’. Hardly the stuff of modernist energy, one might surmise.

In these magazines, then, there are few surprises and—especially if one focuses on the unsympathetic caricatures—little excitement. Sixpenny weeklies are written by the serious, cultured youth, who write their book reviews with care and authority. Woolf’s evocative and unkind description of the ‘creak and screech’ of brains as men (and they all seem to be men) with ‘muddy boots’ write these papers might jar slightly with Macaulay’s more metropolitan writers, but the ultimate impression is similar: cultured young men, but hardly close to any type of avant-garde. To put it cruelly—and I suspect Woolf’s images are meant to be cruel—these papers seem to be written by men who were reading Bennett and Brooke rather than, say, Baudelaire and Mallarmé, let alone Eliot and Pound. The readers hardly fare better from these discussions: elderly, dependable, collecting the milk and never expecting the bombs. They are imagined as people who are sure of their own authority and knowledge, informed by their serious papers, yet never expecting to have their horizons tested or expanded. The prospect of studying these periodicals is not promising.

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⁶⁸ Rose Macaulay, *Potterism: A Tragi-Farcical Tract* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1920), pp. 251-52.

⁶⁹ Whether or not there existed actual journals analogous to Macaulay’s fictional fourpenny is not a particularly easy question to answer, though it does illustrate some of the pitfalls in sorting journals by price. *Time and Tide* was introduced at fourpence, but seems to have always modelled itself on sixpennies, and increased its price to the usual sixpence in 1928. Pinkerton’s *Wednesday Chat* is clearly imagined as a different affair; crucially, it appears not at the weekend, but in the middle of the week. In this, it slightly resembles the *Listener*, though this too wished to emulate (and become one of) the sixpenny reviews.

The comments made in these novels are largely satirical. But the image constructed by Orwell, Woolf, Huxley and Macaulay should be looked in the eye, rather than dismissed. I cannot claim that these magazines were, in fact, aesthetically radical and experimental, at least not for the vast majority of the time.⁷⁰ They were solid, dependable, regular and serious. Yet that very seriousness proves vitally important.

It should be noted—though it must also be expected—that these periodicals did not describe themselves as serious or dull. In Chapter 1, I consider the founding of *Time and Tide*, compared with the founding of a little magazine; where little magazines might often define themselves by printing a manifesto, mainstream weeklies are more circumspect. Indeed, it is not immediately apparent how these magazines pictured themselves, which itself signifies; reserve, rather than aggressive self-definition and promotion is usually the order of the day. One interesting moment of self-definition is however found in the *Newspaper Press Directory*, a annually issued listing of newspapers and periodicals, printed largely to provide advertisers with contact details and a sense of the character of each periodical. The entry for the *Spectator* in 1922 is particularly revealing.

Principles: Liberal Unionist. The *Spectator* has a singularly condensed arrangement in its news columns. Its original articles are written in a spirit of perfect independence, and evince the ability, as well as the honesty, of the writers. As a force in the political arena there are few, if any, weekly papers that can equal the *Spectator*. While maintaining its avowed policy at all times it is free from bias, and its articles being invariably the work of authorities, its word is respected in the highest circles.⁷¹

Of course, the *Spectator* has every reason to present itself as important and powerful. But the tone of this piece nevertheless suggests how the dull, serious image provided by Woolf and Orwell might relate to a cultural role: essentially, the *Spectator* is proposed as a paper that is concerned, above all, with respectability and cultural authority. When faced with a piece of new literature, one might expect a writer for the *Spectator* to ask whether that literature is worthy of admittance to a respectable, admired realm of great, canonical writing.

⁷⁰ Notable exceptions—the *Listener*'s poetry supplement in 1933, and the *New Statesman*'s publication of Joyce in 1932—are discussed in Ch. 4 and Ch. 5.

⁷¹ 'The London Newspaper Press', *The Newspaper Press Directory*, 77 (1922), 79-94 (p. 93).

Put another way, one does not expect these periodicals to be sympathetic towards avant-gardes. This term is particularly useful in terms of what it is often defined against. Peter Bürger's classic *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984) argued that the practice of certain art movements in the early twentieth century—Dada is the example he cites as the most extreme—was truly radical. These were the 'historical avant-gardes'.

The intention of the historical avant-garde movements was defined as the destruction of art as an institution set off from the praxis of life. The significance of this intention is not that art as an institution in bourgeois society was in fact destroyed and art thereby made a direct element in the praxis of life, but that the weight that art as an institution has in determining the real social effect of individual works becomes recognizable.⁷²

For Bürger, the avant-gardes thus did not destroy the institution of art, but made it firmly visible. Largely, Bürger does not use the term 'modernism', deploying it only when discussing its use by another critic.⁷³ But he does suggest that those that have come after the avant-gardes have maintained the status of art as an institution.

Art has long since entered a post avant-gardiste phase. We characterise that phase by saying that it revived the category of work and that the procedures invented by the avant-garde with antiartistic intent are being used for artistic ends. This must not be judged a 'betrayal' of the aims of the avant-garde movements (sublation of art as a social institution, uniting life and art) but the result of a historical process that can be described in these very general terms: now that that attack of the historical avant-garde movements on art as an institution has failed, and art has not been integrated into the praxis of life, art as an institution continues to survive on something separate from the praxis of life. (p. 57)

Jochen Schulte-Sasse, writing a foreword to Bürger, makes the implicit distinction clearer. Titling it 'Theory of Modernism versus Theory of the Avant-Garde', Schulte-Sasse argues that, for Bürger, one realises that 'the theoretical emphases of modernist and avant-garde writers are radically different' (p. xv).

As a historian of the avant-garde, Bürger is not particularly concerned with exploring the precise nature of 'art as an institution'. Indeed, this concept is largely discussed in a wholly

⁷² Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Michael Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 83. Further references to this volume are given after quotations in the text.

⁷³ For example, Adorno's use of modernism in *Aesthetic Theory*. See Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 59-63.

negative sense. Guy Debord, writing the manifesto of the Situationist International in 1957, speaks of a recognizably similar concept in his derision for ‘the rigged game of official culture’.⁷⁴

The ruling ideology arranges the trivialisation of subversive discoveries, and widely circulates them after sterilization. It even succeeds in making use of subversive individuals: when dead, by doctoring their works; when alive, thanks to the general ideological confusion, by drugging them with one of the blind mystical beliefs in which it deals. It so happens that one of the contradictions of the bourgeoisie in its stage of elimination is its respect for intellectual and artistic creation in principle, while at first opposing its creations and then making use of them.⁷⁵

Mainstream weeklies offer the opportunity to reclaim official culture, or at least to recognize that it should be of interest to scholars of modernism. Arno Mayer’s discussion of the *ancien régime* again argues for the perseverance of official cultures, their power, and their conservatism.

Despite or because of relentless challenges and gibes from the avant-garde, the producers and guardians of official academic traditions remained at once imperious and adaptive. Like kings and nobles, they learned to defuse ascending rivals through calibrated assimilation and co-optation. And just as outworn economic interests made the most of their political leverage to secure protective tariffs and fiscal preferments, so eminent artists used their influence in key hegemonic institutions—academies, salons, museums, ministries of culture—to rally support for their timeworn idioms.⁷⁶

Notably, that list of ‘key hegemonic institutions’ does not include any that might seem particularly attuned to assessing and reviewing literature. Mayer goes through countries and art forms by turn, moving from the architecture of state institutions to the institutions of culture: in Britain, he discusses the Houses of Parliament, the nineteenth century museums in South Kensington, the Royal Academy, the National Gallery, the Tate.⁷⁷ But again, there is little place for literature.

A magazine like the *Spectator* clearly does not have quite the same relationship to literature as an institution such as the Royal Academy does to visual art. Principally, institutions like the Royal Academy operate proactively, providing education and granting explicit recognition to individuals (for example, the status of ‘Royal Academician’); by contrast, the *Spectator* was reactive, analysing works already published. However, the relationship between the

⁷⁴ Guy Debord, ‘Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency’, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. by Tom McDonough (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 29-50 (p. 39).

⁷⁵ Debord, ‘Report on the Construction of Situations’, p. 31.

⁷⁶ Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 190.

⁷⁷ Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*, pp. 197, 202, 217-19.

Spectator and literature is of a similar form to that of the Royal Academy and visual art. I suggest that these magazines should be understood as institutions that sought to uphold official culture. This should not simply be understood as a criticism. Notions of official culture—and critics that attempted to speak of or for official culture—could of course be hidebound, bigoted, xenophobic, narrow-minded, inflexible. But they were not always so; in the 1920s and 1930s, these magazines sought to understand how new literature might be understood in relation to official culture. Sometimes, this meant criticism. Sometimes, it meant a careful attempt to think through how the concept of modernism might, in time, become a part of the institution of art. For Bürger and others, this institutionalization was a failure of the avant-garde. For these magazines, and for this thesis, it was not necessarily a tragedy.

*

Two crucial questions remain. How might such an institutionalizing process operate? How might the concept of modernism thus emerge? This first question essentially asks how one should approach reading a periodical, in order to think about the way in which it interacted with modernism. Scholarship on nineteenth-century periodicals has long recognized the potential power of Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism and heteroglossia for the study of magazines.⁷⁸ Cynthia L. Bandish's 2001 essay on Bakhtin and *Belgravia* magazine opens by noting the similarity between Margaret Beetham's work on 'open' and 'closed' elements of the periodical as genre, and Bakhtin's centrifugal and centripetal forces in dialogic texts. Beetham's arguments are particularly relevant to the weekly review, as a form of periodical that was reliable and regular rather than idiosyncratic and short-lived. For Beetham, periodicals are both open and closed. Open, for the periodical 'resists closure because it comes out over time and is, in that respect, serial rather than endstopped. Its boundaries are fluid and it mixes genres and authorial voices; all this in a time-extended form seems to encourage readers to

⁷⁸ Introducing a 1989 special issue of *Victorian Periodicals Review* on 'Critical Theory and Periodical Research', Laurel Brake and Anne Humpherys note that Bakhtin's theories could be extremely useful, but have not been taken up by the contributors. See Laurel Brake and Anne Humpherys, 'Critical Theory and Periodical Research', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22 (1989), 94-95 (p. 94).

produce their own readings.’ Closed, because ‘Each number of the periodical is a self-contained text and will contain sub-texts which are end-stopped or marked by closure. And each periodical positions its readers in terms which construct for that reader a recognisable self.’⁷⁹

From this perspective, Bandish argues that Bakhtin ‘describes the centripetal (closed) forces of language as those that work towards “verbal-ideological centralization and unification”, while the centrifugal (open) forces stratify language into a kind of “social and historical heteroglossia” where heteroglossia recognizes each language utterance as part of a multitude of languages informed by the values of various languages’.⁸⁰ Bandish thus moves to read Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s periodical *Belgravia* at two related but distinct levels.

Within a specific issue, we have dialogism operating between the individual entries, and over the course of a specific editorship, we will find dialogism operating at the level of metanarrative as groups of entries reflect patterns of temperament and shared assumptions about Victorian society.⁸¹

This attention to different forms of dialogism is extremely useful, but it runs the risk of passing over the possibility for individual texts to have a relationship with the periodical’s metanarrative. Individual writers knew that they were writing for the *Spectator* rather than for, say, the *Criterion*: this knowledge surely had the potential to alter their texts.

I read the importance of Bakhtin’s dialogism for periodicals in a slightly different way.

Bakhtin’s argument about the novel is that the disunified properties of language are structured.

heterogenous stylistic unities, upon entering the novel, combine to form a structured artistic system, and are subordinated to the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole, a unity that cannot be identified with any single one of the unities subordinated to it. (p. 276)

Crucially, Bakhtin suggests that utter disunity is prevented not by an overt attempt at control (as in language), but by a structured ‘stylistic unity’ that admits and even depends on the acknowledged disunity and dissonance of heterogenous elements. For mainstream periodicals, I

⁷⁹ Margaret Beetham, ‘Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre’, in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 19-32 (p. 29).

⁸⁰ Cynthia L. Bandish, ‘Bakhtin’s Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of “Belgravia”’: A Case Study for Analyzing Periodicals’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 34 (2001), 239-62 (p. 240). Bandish is quoting from Bakhtin’s essay ‘Discourse and the Novel’; see Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 272. Further references to this essay are given in the text.

⁸¹ Bandish, ‘Bakhtin’s Dialogism’, p. 242.

consider Bakhtin's concept of a structured system particularly powerful; under this model, heterogeneous articles are structured in their relationship to the magazine as a whole. That whole, as I have argued, is flooded with a sense of serious purpose, and a need to uphold the institution of art. While one might legitimately talk about the metanarrative of the periodical as invested in this defence of official culture, and then about dialogism within individual issues, it is important to recognize that individual elements could have a relationship with the wider institutional structure of the periodical.

Bakhtin goes on to develop heteroglossia to discuss external and internal dialogism at the level of the word:

The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile. (p. 276)

I read this dynamic extended metaphor as a way to think about discussions of modern literature in mainstream weekly magazines. The serious nature of these periodicals creates an overarching stylistic unity under which these texts appear: periodical texts are never published in isolation. In this highly metaphorical sense, the modernist 'word' might include the publication of a modernist text, the review of a modernist text, or even just the mention of the concept of modernism in an editorial or review. These brief, illuminating moments in a periodical's overall structure are those that 'shape discourse' and 'leave a trace'. These mainstream periodicals should be read as open, dialogic institutions, governed by an overall cultural seriousness but finding space within that identity to discuss new literature.

Note, also, that Bakhtin's image of the word in a 'dialogically agitated' environment is truly dynamic. To pursue the metaphor, it does not simply battle towards its object but is shaped by the dialogic, heteroglossic motion it undergoes. The process of exploring representations of modernism in these magazines is not a matter of excavating the first moments where that which we know as modernism is clearly visible. Rather, the concept of modernism was never static; the reality is more complex. The authoritative, evaluative role that

these magazines take on is not *neutral*; they do not simply perceive modernism and choose to recognize it as legitimate. Instead, I contend that as weekly reviews evaluate modernism for a mainstream audience, they bring the concept of modernism itself into public being.

This contention is rooted in philosopher Ian Hacking's work on a phenomenon that he calls 'making up people'. His work deserves extended attention, as its relevance to the study of modernism is not immediately apparent. Hacking begins his essay 'Making Up People' by asking a question: 'Were there any perverts before the late nineteenth century?'.⁸² The answer he takes from Arnold Davidson is *no*, there were not: 'perversion as a disease, and the pervert, as a diseased person, were created in the late nineteenth century' (p. 100). Hacking's concern is largely with kinds of people, particularly diagnostic kinds—he also writes about multiple personality disorder—but he goes on to discuss the philosophical consequences of making up people, and a theory he calls 'dynamic nominalism' (p. 100). Hacking sees this as a way to transcend the nominalist/realist debate in philosophy.

A traditional nominalist says that stars (or algae, or justice) have nothing in common with others of their kind except our names for them ('stars', 'algae', 'justice'). The traditional realist in contrast finds it amazing that the world could so kindly sort itself into our categories. He protests that there are definite sorts of objects in it, at least stars and algae, which we have painstakingly come to recognize and classify correctly. (p. 104)

Perry Anderson's famous argument (discussed above) about the emptiness of modernism as category might be described as classically nominalist in this fashion: modernist texts understood as sharing our labels for them, rather than underlying characteristics. On the other hand, what Hacking perceives as a realist argument might argue that modernist texts shared certain inalienable properties, which the wider public eventually recognized and named. Neither are fully satisfactory, and Hacking suggests an alternative.

A different kind of nominalism—I call it dynamic nominalism—attracts my realist self. [...] The claim of dynamic nominalism is not that there was a kind of person who came increasingly to be recognized by bureaucrats or by students of human nature, but rather that a kind of person came into being at the same time as the kind itself was being invented. In some cases, that is, our classifications and our classes conspire to emerge hand in hand, each egging the other on. (p. 106)

⁸² Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 99. Further references to the essay 'Making Up People' are given in the text.

This is a radical claim, and the bluntness of Hacking's title is apparent: as medical categories were proposed, people were made up to meet them.

As I explore a concept, rather than a kind of person, my use of Hacking's dynamic nominalism—making up modernism, if you will—is necessarily idiosyncratic. But I find Hacking's work particularly rich because it provides a model for the study of the historicized concept of modernism, gradually taking public form. It is now quite clear that modernist literatures have complex intellectual and aesthetic roots that stretch back to the nineteenth century. It is equally clear that fully stable, critically orthodox conceptions of modernism—however problematic the nature of those conceptions might now be—were not available to literary critics until mid-century.

This history charts what happened in between these two points. I use Hacking's dynamic nominalism to emphasize that when journalists and editors of weekly reviews wrote about new literature, they brought the concept of modernism into public being. Weekly reviews are not there to be mined for examples of prescient reviewers praising literature now recognised as modernist. Rather, the intellectual conversation of these journals should be closely examined to see how, across the period covered by this thesis, the recognized, public possibilities for being modern shifted and altered, and it became possible for literature to be understood as modernist. This is not a history that attempts to explain why or how modernist texts took the forms that they did, or to recreate the intense intellectual ferment of particular little magazines, valuable as both of those endeavours are. It is an argument fascinated by magazines too often deemed dull and serious, and convinced of their significance, concerned with how the concept of modernism came to be.

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This thesis is structured by magazine, chronologically, and thematically. Each chapter begins with a moment of significant change: the founding of a magazine, the appointment of a new editor, or a change of ownership. The short time periods covered overlap, and run

chronologically. Each chapter follows a particular argumentative thread, in order to contribute to the wider study of modernism's emergence into public culture.

These short time periods also permit a close focus, as these magazines produced a huge amount of material. Each issue of the *Spectator* was thirty-two pages in length; at fifty-two issues a year, this amounts to 1664 pages to study. A five-year span thus consists of 8320 pages, not including any supplements that the magazine might have printed. Many of these pages consist of political material, and are largely irrelevant to this study, but these magazines remain a huge and dense archive of text. My intention throughout these chapters has been to focus attention on key texts within these magazines, and thus to avoid overwhelming the reader with a mass of quotations.

This being said, it should be acknowledged that this is not the only methodological approach possible with these magazines. It would be perfectly possible, for instance, to focus on one particular short historical span, and consider all five periodicals within that; or, to group periodicals in a pair and a three, and cover two historical spans. Alternatively, one could have constructed chapters that traced responses to particular texts or writers, across all five periodicals. However, the approach chosen here permits the thesis to cover a wider historical period than that of the first two alternatives, which gives a fuller sense of a shifting relationship between mainstream periodicals and modernism across the 1920s and 1930s. Due to the sheer volume of material produced by these magazines, it would never be practical to study all five magazines across eighteen years. Furthermore, dedicating each chapter to a particular magazine allows a more careful examination of the institutional character of that magazine than would be possible with a methodology oriented entirely around key texts or writers. As I go on to argue, understanding these magazines as cultural institutions is often crucial to analysing their relationship with modernism; as critically neglected periodicals, they are also, of course, worthy of study in their own right.

Chapter 1 covers *Time and Tide* from its inception in 1920 to 1926. This periodical was run by a group of newly enfranchised women as an openly feminist alternative to the more established weeklies such as the *Spectator*. Interrogating the act of starting a weekly in post-war London, this chapter explores the character of a weekly review in great depth, discussing book reviews as an everyday form of Francis Mulhern's metacultural analysis. Reinforcing the argument that these magazines stood behind cultural authority, in the early 1920s *Time and Tide* was largely uncharitable towards modernism. Yet its reviews must still be taken into account when considering the emergence of the concept of modernism. Finally, I look closely at three quite unusual reviews of D. H. Lawrence, to emphasize how unclear modernism's cultural role was at this point in history.

Chapter 2 covers the *Nation and Athenaeum* from 1923 to 1930. The periodical was purchased by J. M. Keynes in 1923, who soon appointed his friend Leonard Woolf as literary editor. This chapter follows the eight years of Woolf's editorship. Due to the *Nation and Athenaeum's* association with prominent members of Bloomsbury, one might expect the paper to be an ideal location for emerging modernist thought. While this is true to an extent, and important moments including Virginia Woolf's 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' are discussed, I argue that the *Nation and Athenaeum* was not a periodical driven to promote modernism, masquerading as a weekly review. In fact, Leonard Woolf defended the independence of the literary pages but disliked his job, and I use concepts of spatial practice to model the *Nation and Athenaeum* in this context of editorial disinterest.

Chapter 3 covers the *Spectator* under Evelyn Wrench, 1925-32. The *Spectator*—founded in 1828—is by far the longest running of the magazines studied here. It sits at the centre of the thesis: I argue that this magazine has a particularly strong and stable sense of its own identity as a venerable, prestigious institution of the British periodical marketplace, an identity that heavily influences the other magazines studied. The *Spectator's* identity can be explored as a form of conservative ideology, and I use political theorists of conservatism to discuss how this periodical

regards modernism in the late twenties. The *Spectator* does not entirely dismiss modernism, but instead attempts to portray new literature in a way that is acceptable to its own ideology. Sometimes, this produces unusual visions of modernism, sometimes idiosyncratic failures.

Chapter 4 covers a short period in the early history of the *Listener*, 1931 to 1933. This was the BBC's own weekly magazine—containing edited transcripts of broadcast talks—and it proved controversial. The *Listener* was composed under restrictions, permitted to include only a limited amount of material not directly based on broadcasts. This chapter has a particularly close focus, and considers a subsection of that material: poetry and reviews of poetry published in the *Listener*. It opens as the *Listener* begins to publish new poetry, in early 1931. This poetry was intertwined with the career of the young literary editor, Janet Adam Smith, who was dedicated to publishing the poetry of W. H. Auden and his contemporaries. Her work culminated in an extraordinary poetry supplement in July 1933, featuring Auden's 'The Witnesses', eight other poems and woodcuts by Gwen Raverat. This chapter brings this publication to light. At the same time, however, Smith's quite radical act raises pertinent questions concerning the limits of the weekly review as periodical form, and the ways in which it can—and cannot—play host to new modernist literature.

Chapter 5 covers the first years of the *New Statesman* under a new editor, Kingsley Martin. It runs from 1931 to 1937, and considers the question of modernism's emergence and canonisation. At this point, there are certainly indicators that modernist has passed into critical orthodoxy. However, the status of modernism in public culture is not quite this simply: its canonisation is always unclear and unstable. I consider different ways in which this magazine nervously tests the canonical status of modernism, ending with an extended consideration of a largely neglected piece of late prose by James Joyce, 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer'. This final chapter is an explicit attempt to destabilize the potential of an overly neat ending to this thesis, and raises questions pushed further in the short conclusion.

1. *TIME AND TIDE*, 1920-26

In the very first issue of *Time and Tide*, on 14 May 1920, Rebecca West wrote a theatre column on J. M. Barrie's new play *Mary Rose*. She dismissed it as 'a bad play, atrociously produced, and inappropriately acted', and offered thoughts on the future of the theatre that look forward not only to the new promise of this new magazine, but to the wider task faced by this thesis.

A tremendous responsibility now rests upon the theatre audience. The war has put all the other arts on short commons for an indefinite period. Literature is not going to have the free field it has had for the last century until we discover the way to make paper out of tropical grasses instead of wood-pulp, and almost every picture gallery in London is on the verge of bankruptcy. But though people will not pay money to read books or look at pictures, they do not mind paying it to go to the theatre or the cinema. Now we need not consider the cinema at present as an art. It is in the process of becoming an art, but it is still in the stage of working out its limitations and its possibilities, and this process is likely to be prolonged by a certain regrettable disability. At a cinema there is nobody at whom one can throw things. [...] The future of art then will lie, to a far greater extent than it has done for centuries, with the theatre. The writer who would otherwise have written novels will probably, as he finds it impossible to get his first novel accepted, turn to writing plays. Now this is, in any case, regrettable, because the novel is an infinitely richer and more flexible art-form than the modern play, which has the cardinal disadvantage of being too short to allow the author to work out any complex theme. It is true that Shaw and Ibsen override this disadvantage, but an art-form that needs a Shaw and an Ibsen to tackle it is not for the average writer. It is indeed a most ominous thing about the play that the few great playwrights are so very great, that the only people who would have surmounted its limitations are people would have surmounted any limitations and could have made their gospel clear, if the need had arisen, in Limericks.¹

In retrospect, of course, this cannot be taken seriously: paper prices did not kill the novel, and West's analysis serves as a reminder of the importance of not taking contemporary critics to task for their lack of foresight. Indeed, one wonders how much of this analysis may be intended to be humorous; when West criticizes the cinema for preventing the audience from throwing 'things' at the actors, it is entirely plausible that her tongue is firmly in her cheek.

The most important thing that emerges from this analysis is an absence. The 'future of art' may lie with the theatre, but it lies with the theatre not because of the particular possibilities of the theatrical medium—if anything, West is downbeat about the theatre's inherent virtues—

¹ Rebecca West, 'The Theatre: "Mary Rose"', *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, pp. 10-11 (p. 10). Barrie's play is a ghost story, concerning the titular character's mysterious disappearance from and reappearance years later on a remote island in the Hebrides.

but because of irresolvable problems in other art forms. Furthermore, West offers no model for what the future of art will look like, other than the prospect that it will be somehow theatrical.

Where, then, is modernism? West, of course, wrote for the *Freewoman* and its successors the *New Freewoman* and the *Egoist*, was literary editor of the *Egoist* for a time, and printed a short story in the first number of *BLAST*.² She was, in other words, entangled in British modernist little magazines, and it is difficult to believe that she was entirely unaware of new literature. But the force of her uncertainty is compelling, even if it is somewhat performed. West reviews a new play, dislikes it, muses on the future of art, and fails to elicit any clear conclusions. That future is complex and unclear. If this thesis attempts to trace modernism's emergence into public being, it must first be acknowledged that, for *Time and Tide* in 1920, modernism could not be clearly perceived. This is not to say, of course, that modernist texts could not be read: to take merely one example linked to West, *The Egoist* had been printing excerpts of Joyce's *Ulysses*. But for a weekly review—even in the criticism of a writer like West, clearly knowledgeable about experimental art—the wider conceptualization of modernism as literary movement was not yet possible.

This chapter will develop two principal lines of inquiry. First, the fact that *Time and Tide* was a new magazine in 1920 demands attention, and offers a rare opportunity to inspect the genre of the weekly review, as a new magazine imagines itself into being as a member of a pre-existing class. This is, to a certain extent, a slight turn away from modernism, and the questions raised by Rebecca West's review of *Mary Rose* therefore still stand: where, for *Time and Tide*, is modernism? I trace the concept as it is glimpsed in reviews of new poetry, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence, among other texts. Many of these glimpses dismiss modernism as a short-lived fad, but it should be considered that in such brief moments of recognition one can locate modernism's position in public culture in the 1920s: unclear, but emerging gradually into public life with each fragmented, sceptical glance. On the other hand, following West's review,

² See *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. by Jane Marcus (New York: The Viking Press, 1982).

the absence of a clear perspective on modernism signifies. Modernism may locate its origins in the nineteenth century, but in the early 1920s, at least, *Time and Tide* remained ambivalent about its place in public culture.

In May 1920, then, *Time and Tide* was both brand new and unusual. It discussed these facts in an editorial in its first issue.

That the group behind this paper is composed entirely of women has already been frequently commented on. It would be possible to lay too much stress upon the fact. The binding link between these people is not primarily their common sex. On the other hand, this fact is not without its significance. Amongst those to whom the need we have spoken of is apparent to-day are a very large number of women. Women have newly come into the larger world, and are indeed themselves to some extent answerable for that loosening of party and sectarian ties which is so marked a feature of the present day. It is therefore natural that just now many of them should tend to be especially conscious of the need for an independent Press, owing allegiance to no sect or party.³

The weekly reviews were overwhelmingly male dominated. Female journalists did of course write for these papers—Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Stella Benson, to take just three examples—but they were only rarely found in stable positions. A very few had regular columns—Iris Barry wrote one of the first film columns for the *Spectator*—but they were not editors. As Jayne Marek in particular has argued, women played hugely important roles in editing some of the most important little magazines, but the same was not true for the weekly reviews.⁴ Outside of *Time and Tide*, one might point to Janet Adam Smith, whose career at the *Listener* is discussed in Chapter 4, or the *Saturday Review* (not a periodical covered by this thesis), which was owned in its very last years by the ‘eccentric heiress’—and Fascist sympathizer—Lucy, Lady Houston.⁵

Time and Tide, then, was truly revolutionary, and should be remembered as such irrespective of its relationship with modernist literature. It is likely due to this fact that of the magazines covered by this thesis *Time and Tide* has received the lion’s share of critical attention. Dale Spender’s 1984 anthology of *Time and Tide* articles attempted to recover a sense of women

³ ‘Time and Tide’, *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, p. 4.

⁴ Jayne E. Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: ‘Little’ Magazines & Literary History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

⁵ Kerry Powell, ‘Saturday Review, The’, in *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837-1913*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (New York: Greenwood, 1984), pp. 379-83 (p. 382).

working together in a moment of historical optimism: public feminism after the vote was (partially) won.⁶ Her arguments have been developed by Michelle Tusan's more recent work in feminist periodical studies.⁷ Muriel Mellown has argued for the importance of the magazine as literary review in the late twenties and thirties, particularly in publishing female writers and ethnic minorities.⁸ As previously mentioned, *Time and Tide* is the only magazine covered here to appear in the Brooker and Thacker volumes: Jane Dowson writes on this weekly and the *Bermondsey Book*, a quarterly, and discusses the potential of a counter-public sphere.⁹ But it is Catherine Clay's recent and ongoing work on this magazine that has brought *Time and Tide* closer to the critical limelight, and her work forms a crucial backdrop to my focus in this chapter. Clay traces the development of the magazine's identity in the late twenties and thirties, locating a 'literary turn' in October 1928. In a clear alteration of its periodical codes, *Time and Tide* expanded from 24 to 32 pages, used the extra space largely for book reviews, and began to include more publishers in its advertising material.¹⁰

This chapter looks at the periodical's first years, from 1920 to 1926, under two editors (Vera Laughton and Helen Archdale), before Clay's 'literary turn'. While I have suggested that the place of modernism in the cultural landscape of Britain in 1920 was unclear, a text in only the second issue of *Time and Tide* appears to be precisely what this history has been searching for. In this curious, whimsical essay, named 'Two-Eyes', novelist Clemence Dane assesses current and past novelists and poets and divides them into three types, 'the products of the age, the

⁶ Dale Spender, *Time and Tide Wait For No Man* (London: Pandora Press, 1984).

⁷ Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

⁸ Muriel Mellown, 'Time and Tide', in *British Literary Magazines, vol. 4: The Modern Age, 1914-1984*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (New York: Greenwood, 1983), pp. 441-52; Muriel Mellown, 'Rhondda and the Changing Faces of British Feminism', *Frontiers - a Journal of Women Studies*, 9 (1987), 7-13.

⁹ Jane Dowson, 'Interventions in the Public Sphere: *Time and Tide* (1920-30) and *The Bermondsey Book* (1923-30)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 530-51.

¹⁰ Catherine Clay, "'WHAT WE MIGHT EXPECT - If the Highbrow Weeklies Advertized like the Patent Foods": *Time and Tide*, Advertising, and the "Battle of the Brows"', *Modernist Cultures*, 6 (2011), 60-95 (pp. 60-61, 75). Clay has written widely on *Time and Tide* and the network of writers connected with the magazine, and her work is discussed throughout this chapter. Her history of *Time and Tide* is forthcoming.

products of the age (to come), and the ageless, the pure artists.¹¹ Both a serious attempt at classification and gently comedic, it immediately undercuts its own legitimacy.

To your true story-lover, literature is a jig-saw puzzle, and the picture to be made a ladder of fame. On each rung there is room for just one author and the fun, of course, lies in fitting favourite authors into their proper places. Unfortunately the story-lover always calls in another story-lover to help him, and the rest is confusion; for where the one puts *Cinderella* above *Red-Ridinghood*, the other puts *Red-Ridinghood* above *Cinderella*: and when they call in an umpire he decides in favour of—*Sleeping Beauty*! Still, it's a delightful game, and who hasn't played it?¹²

Dane's tone modulates towards seriousness as she suggests that in order to 'criticise, to appreciate the writers of our age [...] they must be divided into at least three classes or processions, each following a different group of leaders'. She then immediately reintroduces the whimsical element by linking her groups to characters from a Grimm fairy tale.

Dane's three types are broadly hierarchical: One-eye is 'the ever increasing herd of writers whose genius is [...] receptive rather than creative'. The category includes Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, and Dorothy Richardson, as well as now lesser-known writers: J. D. Beresford, Gilbert Cannan and W. P. Barbellion.¹³ Three-eyes, the true artist, includes much of the established canon of English literature, alongside Conrad, Bennett, and Henry James, among others. Two-eyes, the final classification, is 'the man with the message': H. G. Wells, but especially John Galsworthy.¹⁴ Almost a full third of the article is taken up with detailed praise of Galsworthy's work.

If nothing else, Dane's article knowingly demonstrates the humorous folly of attempting to impose strict classification on emergent concepts of literature. There is some form of recognized connection between Joyce, Lewis and Richardson, although it is not praised. Even though the piece itself is humorous, the rejection of Joyce, Lewis and Richardson should be taken seriously. It is not even possible to say that Dane turns against modernism: her rejection is

¹¹ Clemence Dane, "Two-Eyes", *Time and Tide*, 21 May 1920, pp. 32-34 (p. 32). Clemence Dane was the pseudonym of Winifred Ashton (1888-1965), a novelist, playwright and screenwriter. See Jenny Hartley, 'Dane, Clemence', in *Encyclopedia of British Women's Writing, 1900-1950*, ed. by Faye Hammill, Esme Miskimmin and Ashlie Sponenberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 63-64.

¹² Dane, "Two-Eyes", p. 32.

¹³ Dane, "Two-Eyes", p. 32.

¹⁴ Dane, "Two-Eyes", p. 33.

more complete than this, as she denies that modernism should be accorded any status whatsoever. A ‘One-eye’ writer is entirely ordinary.

He is the Gradgrind of literature—fact, fact, fact, is his concern. And with bewildering, worker-bee industry he does gather and present to us, under cover of a novel, invaluable assortments of facts concerning himself and the effects upon himself of the universe; but he does not attempt arrangement or selection, nor does he deduce from his facts any theory, propound any panacea. He neither points his moral nor adorns his tale. He chronicles what his one eye has achieved and conceives that his work is done.¹⁵

This implies that the problem faced when reading *Time and Tide* at the start of the 1920s is not simply one of modernism viewed of as avant-garde, but of modernism not viewed at all. Any analysis of representations of modernism in *Time and Tide* is fraught with difficulty and confusion. Yet as promised in the introduction, modernism’s ghostly absence is sometimes as historically significant as its presence. *Time and Tide* has much to tell.

*

Time and Tide was founded in 1920: why did a group of politically active women choose to start a weekly review at this point in history? More pertinently, why a *weekly review*, rather than another magazine? What, in other words, can the origins of *Time and Tide* reveal about the genre of the weekly review? In the introduction, I offered some general and contextual analysis on this particular type of periodical; here, I hope to go into greater depth. A focus on *Time and Tide* reveals three related characteristics that recur throughout this thesis. First, the weekly review may be associated with the political and social establishment, but also proves ideologically flexible. Second, while this study considers the literary material, it is abundantly clear that this is a primarily political form. Cultural material tended to play second fiddle. Third, it is useful to understand a magazine of this nature as producing a profoundly everyday form of cultural analysis. These will be considered in turn, but it should also be emphasised that they are closely related, and bleed into each other as they make up the image of the weekly review that Rhondda and her collaborators imagined when they began a new magazine in May 1920.

¹⁵ Dane, “Two-Eyes”, p. 32.

The notion of seriousness as a central component of the sixpenny review, and from this their defence of the institution of art, was proposed in the introduction. With *Time and Tide*, this association with authority and institutionality is also clear in social and political terms. That editorial quoted above notes that ‘women have newly come into the larger world’, and the key historical context for *Time and Tide*’s publication was the partial enfranchisement of women in February 1918. In 1920, women over thirty were ‘newly’ able to vote; in 1928, they would gain enfranchisement on equal terms with men. Yet *Time and Tide*, despite being ‘composed entirely of women’, seeks to manage the way in which its readership interprets this information. It hesitates between trumpeting the energetic modernity of its staff, arguing that women are somehow uniquely placed to work as journalists in the new post-war environment, and reassuring the reader that such a staff makes it little different from any other weekly review. In fact, writing a weekly review did represent a clear turn away from the more openly radical political journalism that the magazine’s founders and editors had been involved in before and during the war. Both of *Time and Tide*’s early editors had been involved in pre-enfranchisement suffrage journalism. Vera Laughton, editor from 1920 to 1922, had joined the militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) at a young age, and edited the paper *Suffragette* in the war.¹⁶ Helen Archdale joined the WSPU in 1908 and was convicted multiple times of public disturbances. She went on hunger strike in 1909 and in 1911 was in Holloway prison for two months. Later, she was sub-editor and occasionally printer at the *Suffragette*.¹⁷ Rhondda was a fellow member of the WSPU, was briefly imprisoned in 1913, and was a frequent contributor to *Votes for Women*.¹⁸

¹⁶ Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a Reference Guide, 1866-1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp. 1093-94. Laughton suggests in a memoir that her career at *Time and Tide* ended so quickly because of her commitment to the Wrens Association for veterans of the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS). She would later rise to command the WRNS when it was re-established in 1939. See Vera Laughton Mathews, *Blue Tapestry* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1948), p. 28.

¹⁷ Crawford, *Women's Suffrage Movement*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁸ Crawford, *Women's Suffrage Movement*, pp. 1655-56; Shirley M. Eoff, *Viscountess Rhondda: Equalitarian Feminist* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), pp. 19-34.

Indeed, there is a clear sense that the weekly review was an appropriate format for politically active women who were formally and legally a part of the body politic. Michelle Tusan describes this format as one that ‘enjoy[ed] widespread respect among both supporters and detractors and commanded real influence over British political culture’.¹⁹ Indeed, one of *Time and Tide*’s principal activities was to set up and report on the ‘Six Point Group’, a lobby group which campaigned for reform on six specific points relevant to women.²⁰ These causes may have been radical, to varying degrees, but they are all understood through the lens of legal reform.

Time and Tide’s presentation of itself in its first editorial as safe and non-threatening despite female governance, together with its drive for legal reform, might thus be understood under what Adrian Bingham describes as ‘a broad consensus’ among gender historians of the 1980s and 1990s, that ‘the acquisition of the vote and the various legal reforms in the decade after 1918 did not fundamentally transform the position of women’, and that a post-war ‘backlash’ meant that ‘the women’s movement [...] splintered, and was unable to recapture mass support or to challenge effectively the conservative gender discourses that were becoming dominant.’²¹ *Time and Tide*, then, is indicative of a step back from vigorous campaigning, and a less confrontational attempt to work within the clearly patriarchal world of Westminster politics and the sixpenny weeklies. From the perspective of the weekly review, the genre is thus understood as a part of the establishment: one signs up to it and foregoes any chance at radicalism.

However, this fails to fully account for the complexities within the opening editorial: while *Time and Tide* does in certain ways hold its all-female nature at arms length, it does argue quite strongly that the female journalists working for it are somehow an indicator of its own

¹⁹ Tusan, *Women Making News*, p. 211.

²⁰ The Six Points were legislation on child assault; legislation protecting widowed mothers; legislation protecting unmarried mothers and children; equal rights of guardianship for married parents; equal pay for teachers; equal opportunities in the civil service. For the original announcement, see ‘A Programme’, *Time and Tide*, 21 January 1921, p. 52.

²¹ Adrian Bingham, “‘An Era of Domesticity’? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain”, *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004), 225-33 (p. 225).

vital modernity. Journalists and activists like Laughton, Archdale and Rhondda certainly moved to a periodical form more comfortable in the political establishment, but this should not necessarily represent a disavowal of their previous views. Broadly speaking, feminist history in recent years is less concerned with tracing the legislative successes and failures of feminism, and more with the idea that ‘after 1918 women sought to assert their citizenship within the profoundly inhospitable political culture to which they had just been admitted’.²² Michelle Tusan argues that periodicals, both as a part of the suffrage campaign and in the post-suffrage world, were a crucial way for women to participate in public life and create a gendered, activist community.²³ *Time and Tide* thus transformed women’s journalism from a space for radical advocacy into ‘an arena of intellectual public discourse for the newly enfranchised female reader’.²⁴ Dowson makes the more ambitious claim that *Time and Tide* ‘went on to enact the ideal of an egalitarian communicating public’.²⁵

While the weekly review might indeed offer the ideal periodical form for such an ‘arena’, there are again antecedents in pre-war journalism. As Maria DiCenzo, Lucy Delap and Leila Ryan argue, pre-enfranchisement female political activism was not limited to suffrage campaigns in the early twentieth century, and even that suffrage movement ‘served as a vehicle for much more than the struggle for enfranchisement.’²⁶ Furthermore, continuities should still be acknowledged between *Time and Tide* and previous feminist periodicals. In 1926, Rebecca West wrote for *Time and Tide* what must surely have been the first ever retrospective of the radical impression made by Dora Marsden’s *Freewoman*.²⁷ West argues explicitly that the ‘quiet orthodox women’s weekly’ *Time and Tide* makes arguments about women, normalized by 1926,

²² Pat Thane, ‘What Difference Did the Vote Make?’, in *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present*, ed. by Amanda Vickery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 253-88 (p. 288).

²³ Tusan, *Women Making News*, p. 2.

²⁴ Tusan, *Women Making News*, p. 220.

²⁵ Dowson, ‘Interventions in the Public Sphere’, p. 534.

²⁶ Maria DiCenzo, Lucy Delap and Leila Ryan, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 13.

²⁷ On the *Freewoman*, see Jean-Michel Rabaté, ‘Gender and Modernism: *The Freewoman* (1911-12), *The New Freewoman* (1913) and *The Egoist* (1914-19)’, in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 269-89.

that were first made in ‘candour’ by the *Freewoman*.²⁸ On the other hand, feminist periodicals differed widely. As Lucy Delap has argued, magazines such as the *Freewoman* were in favour of suffrage, but should be distinguished from suffrage periodicals such as *Votes for Women* (and, indeed, *Time and Tide*) by a profound commitment to political and social radicalism.²⁹ *Time and Tide* should be acknowledged as part of an alternative tradition, distinct from Delap’s political avant-garde.³⁰ Suffrage periodicals such as the *Englishwoman* were key precursors to *Time and Tide*’s status as generalist political review. The *Englishwoman*, for instance, occupied

a peculiar position as both a ‘suffrage magazine’ and a more generalist monthly review devoted to politics and culture. In a campaign which often struggled to defend its social inclusiveness, this journal addressed itself unapologetically to the ‘cultured public’ and included ‘The Lady Frances Balfour’ and Lady Strachey on its editorial committee.³¹

Delap, DiCenzo and Ryan note that the *Englishwoman* suffered a demise as new periodicals, including *Time and Tide*, began publication. Read together, ‘these titles represented a persistent attempt to provide a larger review format for debates about women’s issues from the late nineteenth century through to the interwar years.’³²

Time and Tide might therefore be a new entry into an established genre, but it has a complex and nuanced prehistory in feminist journalism and political activism. The format of the weekly review may have been uniform—something made very clear by the first issue of *Time and Tide*—but this uniformity should not be mistaken for complete ideological inflexibility. Rather, the monochrome, text-heavy, nearly identical front pages of these magazines (see Appendix C) concealed a surprising level of ideological flexibility within. Though this was a genre of periodical closely associated with political and cultural institutions, it could accept as a new member a periodical essentially constructed from the remnants of suffrage journals, staffed by former members of the WSPU. *Time and Tide* clearly had to negotiate with the conventions of the genre to form an identity for itself, but it did not, as this recent scholarship demonstrates,

²⁸ Rebecca West, “‘The Freewoman’”, *Time and Tide*, 16 July 1926, pp. 648-49 (p. 649).

²⁹ Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 27.

³⁰ Delap uses the term ‘avant-garde’ in a nineteenth-century sense, to ‘describe a certain kind of revolutionary political activism’. Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century*, p. 4.

³¹ DiCenzo, Delap and Ryan, *Feminist Media History*, p. 121.

³² DiCenzo, Delap and Ryan, *Feminist Media History*, p. 130.

have to disavow its prehistory altogether. As the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, weekly reviews could rarely be described as radical, but they were complex and fascinating institutions nonetheless; behind their covers, one finds not only *Time and Tide's* feminism, but the *Nation and Athenaeum's* entanglement with Bloomsbury, the *New Statesman's* publication of Joyce, and the *Listener's* promotion of W. H. Auden and his contemporaries.

While this ideological flexibility can, in this way, be linked to the discussion of literature and culture, it must also be acknowledged that the place of literary criticism is not central to the weekly review. The case of *Time and Tide* underscores the extent to which this was a genre led by politics and political analysis, not book reviews. Consider a further passage from its opening editorial.

Time and Tide has, in the view of its promoters, come into being to supply a definite need. The great whirlwind which has just passed has left us standing in a new and unknown world. It follows naturally enough that those who have served us as guides in the past are in certain directions ill equipped to help us to understand our strange surroundings, or to supply the new needs which we find ourselves to have acquired. This is perhaps specially true of the Press; bred for the most part in Victorian or Edwardian days, tethered inevitably to its own past, it would often seem to find great difficulty in interpreting the changed conditions that lie—still but half realised—around us.³³

It is a necessary intervention in a new and swiftly changing world. And while statements that refer to a 'new and unknown world' might easily, with hindsight, seem to pertain to literature—this is, after all, 1920—there is little contemporary evidence that *Time and Tide* sensed this interaction. Conversely, it is quite apparent that the historical moment into which *Time and Tide* propelled itself was a distinctive one for literary periodicals. Discussing T. S. Eliot's decision to start the *Criterion* in 1922, Jason Harding notes 'the demise of a number of varied and lively "little" magazines—the *Egoist* in 1919, *Art and Letters* and *Coterie* in 1920, *Wheels* in 1921—forums and clearing-houses for the work of London's literary avant-garde'.³⁴ Matthew Huculak has argued that a new wave of magazines emerged in London, following the war and filling this gap.

Murry took over the editorship at *The Athenaeum* (1919-21) while D. L. Kelleher's *Aengus* (Dublin, 1919), Chaman Lall's *Coterie* (1919-21), Harold Monro's *The Monthly Chapbook* (1919-25), Robert

³³ 'Time and Tide'.

³⁴ Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 7.

Graves's *The Owl* (1919-23), Thomas Moul's *Voices* (1919-21), and N. A. Beechman's *The Oxford Outlook* (1919-32) all sprang up out of the war's mire.³⁵

Huculak suggests that the notion of modern literature was not dominated by 'a monolithic understanding of modernism as solely an avant-garde movement'. Instead, the concept of what was modern remained firmly 'up for grabs'.³⁶ Yet *Time and Tide* is nowhere to be seen. While the magazine certainly does deserve further critical attention, its absence from lists of this kind is not simply an unjustified oversight. In 1921, T. S. Eliot first began to think seriously about starting a magazine, writing to Ottoline Morrell that it 'would be an interesting attempt just now when there is *nothing* in London'.³⁷ One could not fairly answer that Eliot was mistaken, and that there was *Time and Tide*, which also claimed to fill a void. While their paths do sometimes cross, these magazines have different absences, different modernities in mind; *Time and Tide*, like almost all weekly reviews, was led by an awareness of a political modernity, rather than a literary one.

This is not a clear-cut distinction: *Time and Tide* is clearly responding to a postwar world, as does (say) *The Waste Land* or *Jacob's Room*. Yet while these modernities are tangled up in each other, it should also be acknowledged that, sometimes, distinctions are valid. Political and literary motivations for starting a new magazine can lie on top of one another, responding to similar (though not identical) stimuli, yet appear largely invisible to one another. To an extent, this is gendered: *Time and Tide*'s particular awareness of political freedom and potential was motivated by partial enfranchisement. In taking this legal shift in the spirit that *Time and Tide*'s founders saw it, I am to an extent posing the same question upon which Rita Felski grounds her interrogation of the gender of modernity.

How would our understanding of modernity change if instead of taking male experience as paradigmatic, we were to look instead at texts written primarily by or about women? And what if

³⁵ Matthew Huculak, 'The London Mercury (1919-39) and Other Moderns', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 241-59 (pp. 242-43).

³⁶ Huculak, 'The London Mercury', p. 241.

³⁷ *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Valerie Eliot, Hugh Haughton and John Haffenden, 5 vols to date (London: Faber and Faber, 1988-), I (rev. edn), 571 (Eliot to Ottoline Morrell, 14 July 1921). This idea would become the *Criterion* in 1922.

feminine phenomena, often seen as having a secondary or marginal status, were given a central importance in the culture of modernism? What *difference* would such a procedure make?³⁸

From the point of view of the political half of *Time and Tide*, the difference is clear; it is less so from the cultural side. As I discuss below, *Time and Tide* has been understood as an important location for publishing women's writing, and while this is certainly true it also seems to lack the motivation and sheer awareness of modernity found in the political half. In other words, *Time and Tide's* identity as feminist political weekly provided it with a strong sense of its own modernity, but also permits—or perhaps even encourages—a less well-defined identity for the cultural half. Some of that energy is carried across the break between the political and literary halves, but some of it is lost.

It should be clear from the small number of pieces already discussed that this thesis tends to focus on the everyday cultural analysis found in weekly columns and editorials. Rebecca West's reading of *Mary Rose* and modern theatre was not an extraordinary event but simply the first instalment in a regular theatre column. Modernist little magazines were very different: when founded they tended to present themselves as an intervention or event. Not for nothing does Eliot's first issue of the *Criterion* print *The Waste Land*. Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST*—almost an archetype of that short-lived, avant-garde magazine—presented readers of the first issue with the Vorticist manifesto. The *Little Review* was less visually provocative, but nevertheless opened with an 'Announcement' that sought to emphasize the important role that the magazine would play in appreciating and criticizing art and literature.³⁹ Dora Marsden's *Freewoman* began the first article on its front page by questioning—and asserting—its own right to exist.

It is a wholly pertinent matter that the temerarious persons who launch *The Freewoman* should be asked, 'Who are the Freewomen?' Where are the women of whom and for whom you write who are free?⁴⁰

Such gestures recall Malcolm Cowley's acid joke about little magazines.

³⁸ Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 10.

³⁹ 'Announcement', *The Little Review*, March 1914, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ 'Bondwomen', *The Freewoman: A Weekly Feminist Review*, 23 November 1911, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

Usually the history of a little magazine is summarized in its format. The first issue consists, let us say, of sixty-four pages, with half tone illustrations, printed on coated paper. The second issue has sixty-four pages, illustrated with line cuts. The third has only forty-eight pages; the fourth has thirty-two, without illustration; the fifth never appears.⁴¹

The point that this misses, of course, is that it is entirely possible for a magazine to play an important cultural role within those four extant issues. *Fire!!*, one of the key magazines of the Harlem Renaissance, was famously limited to a single issue.⁴² Such magazines privilege the event—the fiery intervention—over the everyday.

This distinction is taken from Michael Sayeau’s recent *Against the Event* (2013). Sayeau’s concern is with modernist prose narrative, and considers the concept of the everyday. As he writes, ‘the event is that which features as a fundamental change in a situation or system in which change seems at first difficult if not impossible to imagine’.⁴³ As Sayeau describes, the complex relationship between the event and ‘the ground out of which it arises’—the everyday—has preoccupied Western philosophy.⁴⁴ For the sake of brevity, the ‘ground’ from which the event arises shall here be taken simply to constitute the periodical marketplace, in which the arrival of BLAST (for example) is very clearly an event.

Time and Tide, the weekly review, was profoundly different. Where little magazines began by asserting their interventionalism, *Time and Tide* confines its editorial setting out its aims to the fourth page—where there would be an editorial every week. The paper opens, as it would continue to do every week, with unsigned leading articles that provide comment on the week’s news. Thus *Time and Tide* did not begin with the claim that it has ‘come into being to supply a definite need’. Rather, it began by discussing internal struggles in the Liberal party.

Last week at Leamington the two wings of the Liberal Party succeeded in bringing their differences to a more or less definite issue in a real old-fashioned political way. And any candid critic cannot

⁴¹ Malcolm Cowley, *Exile’s Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*, ed. by Donald W. Faulkner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), p. 188. Brooker and Thacker quote Cowley’s comment at the start of their introduction to Vol. 1. See Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, ‘General Introduction’, in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-26 (p. 1).

⁴² See Martha Nadell, “‘Devoted to Younger Negro Artists’: *Fire!!* (1926) and *Harlem* (1928)”, in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume II, North America 1894-1960*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 801-23.

⁴³ Michael Sayeau, *Against the Event: The Everyday and the Evolution of Modernist Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 3.

⁴⁴ Sayeau, *Against the Event*, p. 3.

fail to observe that both sides are now expressing in public, some of those bitter personal animosities which have prevailed since December 1916, and which hitherto, have only been articulated in select and private circles. Lloyd George or Asquith? Under which leader will you serve?⁴⁵

Time and Tide essentially imagines itself into being as a periodical that will be dependable; it should be regular, and established, by issue two. One might surmise it would choose existence after ten years, rather than a splash in the first issue. Sayeau emphasizes the philosophical complexity of the everyday. ‘The ordinariness of things’, as he points out, ‘is very much a matter of the eye of the observer’.⁴⁶ This salutary reminder again points out that these magazines were associated with cultural and political authority, and stability; the world in which *Time and Tide* was everyday was educated, middle-class, and London-centric.

And yet, attention to the specific form of the everyday that *Time and Tide* performs also suggests the fact that, to be precise, this is not a case of everydayness, but of *weeklyness*. In this context, those very first words written by *Time and Tide* take on a likely unintended significance. ‘Last week at Leamington...’. Last week: a week’s worth of news must take place, and the weekly review will then and only then step in to sum up, analyse, and offer any conclusions it might have. In 1922, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary of reading the weeklies, always on a Saturday. In February, ‘Within the last few minutes I have skimmed the reviews in the *New Statesman*; between coffee and cigarettes I read the *Nation*’.⁴⁷ In July, she noted that ‘We have just had Saturday tea, at which we read the weeklies’.⁴⁸ Slightly banal notices, perhaps, but that is of course part of the point. *Time and Tide* establishes itself as a new magazine, but as a weekly review it explicitly starts as it means to go on; essentially, it imagines itself into being as a periodical that is stable and will continue.⁴⁹ What, then, did this new magazine that almost wanted to be old make of modernist literature?

⁴⁵ ‘[Last Week at Leamington...]’, *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, p. 1.

⁴⁶ Sayeau, *Against the Event*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-1984), II, 169 (18 February 1922).

⁴⁸ *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, II, 184 (22 July 1922).

⁴⁹ On a slightly related note, *Time and Tide* did last, and became one of the mainstays of the weekly periodicals marketplace. There is, however, a similarity to many little magazines in the fact that, like most weekly reviews *Time and Tide* was not a profitable enterprise. Most accounts concur that the magazine continually and consistently lost

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Catherine Clay's preeminent work on *Time and Tide* argues that this magazine turned its back on literary modernism; as she puts it, 'at once registering modernist discourses, and resisting their hegemonic power, *Time and Tide* constructed its modern feminist identity in 1920s periodical culture'.⁵⁰ It was a periodical that 'directs us to a number of alternative writing traditions that lived in critical and competitive dialogue with modernist writing in this period, and to a large number of neglected women writers in particular'.⁵¹ In a more recent essay, Clay suggests that the periodical's turn away from active feminism in October 1928—the 'literary turn' mentioned above—was strategic. She argues that *Time and Tide* chose to 'compromise its overt identification with female and feminist cultures in order to secure its reputation for serious political journalism', not necessarily a rejection of feminist principles. *Time and Tide's* 'movement into a more "masculine" sphere of "high" political journalism represent[s] a significant re-shaping of women's identities that was consistent with its early feminist agenda'.⁵²

This later history of *Time and Tide* goes beyond the scope of this chapter. In its earlier years, however, *Time and Tide* is modelled as a periodical that resisted modernism in order to promote alternatives to modernism. Clay is certainly right to emphasize the important part the magazine played in publishing the short fiction of

many of the most popular and critically neglected women writers of this decade, including Rose Allatini, Iris Barry, Stella Benson, Richmal Crompton, E. M. Delafield, Susan Ertz, Eleanor Farjeon, Susan Glaspell, Winifred Holtby, Ethel Mannin, Viola Meynell, Hilda Reid, Sylvia Thompson, Sylvia Townsend-Warner and E. H. Young.⁵³

While actively attempting to publish women writers should of course be understood as a political act in and of itself, it is also interesting to note that *Time and Tide* did sometimes attempt to make openly feminist and political arguments with its literary pages. The very first issue

money, and was bankrolled by Rhondda's substantial personal fortune. Muriel Mellown argues that as Rhondda aged, she took her magazine firmly to the political right. See Mellown, 'Time and Tide', p. 449.

⁵⁰ Catherine Clay, 'On Not Forgetting "The Importance of Everything Else": Feminism, Modernism and *Time and Tide* (1920-1939)', *Key Words*, 8 (2009), 22-37 (p. 25).

⁵¹ Clay, 'On Not Forgetting', p. 20.

⁵² Clay, 'WHAT WE MIGHT EXPECT', pp. 60-61; see also Clay, 'On Not Forgetting'.

⁵³ Clay, 'On Not Forgetting', pp. 25-26.

published a short, curious play text by Margaret MacNamara, titled ‘A New Idea’.⁵⁴ It presents itself as a politicized and socially aware text from a new and thoroughly feminist magazine. The play features two female characters, an older woman called ‘Meeps’ and her maid, Hannah; they argue over where and how to store the silverware. Hannah’s new ideas clash with Meeps’s innate conservatism and resistance to innovation. The ‘new idea’ is linked explicitly to the greater social responsibility brought on by enfranchisement.

Citizenship is the duty of every woman, whether we like votes for women or whether we don’t—seeing as we’ve got them.⁵⁵

The play is awkward and dogmatic—perhaps indicating why this idea was not repeated—yet it does indicate that those behind *Time and Tide* were actively seeking a way to translate their political feminism into literature.

Equally, *Time and Tide* provided employment for women to write literary journalism; as Catherine Clay has argued, the magazine supported a network of women writers based in and around West Hampstead, including writers such as Vera Brittain, Rebecca West, Winifred Holtby, Storm Jameson, and Naomi Mitchison, who all appeared regularly.⁵⁶ Moreover, the way in which these critics wrote literary journalism might be understood as significant; *Time and Tide*’s book reviews often analyse in an ironizing tone that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) defends the practice of reading for pleasure. Nicola Humble has argued convincingly that a key tenet of the ‘feminine middlebrow novel’—her label, and not one that can be applied to the early years under discussion here—is that such novels can be enjoyed, and are not necessarily instructive. As she puts it, ‘the biggest social sin, in the middlebrow imagination, is that of taking oneself too seriously’.⁵⁷ Clemence Dane’s ‘Two-Eyes’ analysis can certainly be understood in this context. One might equally pick up Sylvia Lynd’s 1924 criticism of Rebecca West’s defence of books that are ‘difficult to read’, and the argument that West ‘overlooks the

⁵⁴ MacNamara was a playwright known for socialist and feminist views; see Patricia E. Lufkin, ‘An Analysis of the Plays of Margaret MacNamara’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2002).

⁵⁵ Margaret MacNamara, ‘A New Idea’, *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, pp. 17-21 (p. 18).

⁵⁶ Catherine Clay, *British Women Writers, 1914-1945: Professional Work and Friendship* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

⁵⁷ Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 48.

first essential of story telling, which is that the attention of the reader must be captured and held so that he shall want to read with all his might'.⁵⁸ Conversely, she praises Rose Macaulay's *Crewe Train* (1926), calling it a 'delightful book', full of 'wit, airy wisdom and laughter', and suggesting that 'we are in the company of a writer who knows how to laugh and to make others laugh with her'.⁵⁹ Naomi Royde-Smith, novelist and literary hostess, is yet more explicit about how one should read a book:

Most people read novels for the story. Here and there some finicking creature is to be found who is concerned about literary quality, but these are mainly reviewers or those odd people who worry themselves about abstractions called beauty and style.⁶⁰

Royde-Smith's tone is of course slightly mocking, given that she is in the position of the 'finicking' reviewer—which is of course part of the point—yet the binary she creates opposes reading for pleasure and plot against reading for 'beauty and style'.

Time and Tide's role in demarcating an 'arena' for politically active women to discuss the brave new world of enfranchisement was undoubtedly significant, as has already been discussed. Additionally, the short fiction the magazine published, and the literary critics it employed, might be seen to argue for a conception of modern literature that does not lead inevitably towards the formal experimentation that is classically associated with modernism—and I use the singular, rather than the plural, with deliberate care. Modernism itself, of course, is hardly limited to just the so-called Men of 1914. At the same time, it is perhaps pertinent to point out Glenda Norquay and Sowon Park's argument concerning the troubling tendency within feminist literary criticism to valorize the formal experiments of modernism.⁶¹ The modern writing that *Time and Tide* did publish was new and important, even if it was rarely formally experimental.

However, I remain wary of reading *Time and Tide* as a magazine that turned its back on modernism in favour of a feminist alternative, and I must disagree with Clay's argument that

⁵⁸ Sylvia Lynd, 'Authors at Play', *Time and Tide*, 18 January 1924, pp. 56-57 (p. 56).

⁵⁹ Sylvia Lynd, 'Indiscretion and Laughter', *Time and Tide*, 29 October 1926, pp. 983-84.

⁶⁰ Naomi Royde-Smith, 'Yarns', *Time and Tide*, 27 November 1925, pp. 1164-65 (p. 1164).

⁶¹ Glenda Norquay and Sowon S. Park, 'Mediating women's suffrage literature', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 29 (2006), 301-06.

Time and Tide was ‘at once registering modernist discourses, and resisting their hegemonic power’. Simply put, I am not convinced that modernist discourses—of any form—were hegemonic in the 1920s, and to see *Time and Tide* as able to resist them is highly problematic.

Certainly, this magazine was not a bold proponent of experimental literature: weekly reviews rarely were. The periodical’s poetry reviews—usually written by Thomas Moulton—are a case in point. Moulton was himself a poet, and edited the little magazine *Voices*, but was perhaps best known for issuing annual poetry anthologies of the ‘best’ poetry of the year, though his notion of ‘best’ was quite conservative. In *Time and Tide*, he displays a strong antipathy towards modernist tendencies. A 1924 review of Edna St Vincent Millay suggests that she was originally of ‘brilliant promise’ but has now ‘travelled the world and learnt in the Latin quarters of all the capitals what it is to be “artistic”’. She would do better, Moulton suggests, to ‘forget all about “art”’, the Dadaists, and Mr James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.⁶² In an article published a few months later, Moulton sneers at ‘the spell of the ultra-modern’.⁶³ ‘Ultra-’ as prefix is rarely positive: it evokes a position taken beyond what is sensible. The *OED*’s entry on ‘ultra-’ lists two relevant, closely related senses: one that connotes ‘going beyond, surpassing or transcending the limits’, the other something that is ‘excessive or extreme’.⁶⁴ Consider, for example, the different connotations of ‘radical’ and ‘ultra-radical’. The former might be something that is exciting and new and even necessary; the latter carries with it unavoidable connotations of the extreme. Crucially, though, Moulton does not reject the possibility of good modern literature, but a particular *type*: that which is ‘ultra’, and goes too far in a particular direction. It is not art but ‘art’, perniciously influenced by global travel, Dada, and Joyce.

Even if ‘ultra-modern’ is used with some nuance, Moulton’s own prejudices make for slightly uncomfortable reading; there is a faint but clearly present tang of cultural xenophobia running through Moulton’s rejection of literature found in ‘Latin quarters’ across the world.

⁶² Thomas Moulton, ‘Poetry for Quiet People’, *Time and Tide*, 20 June 1924, pp. 593-94.

⁶³ Thomas Moulton, ‘Poetry: Emily Dickinson to May Sinclair’, *Time and Tide*, 7 November 1924, p. 1091.

⁶⁴ *OED*, ‘ultra-, prefix’, senses 2 and 3. This entry was first published in 1921, and thus predates this use in the *Spectator*.

However, the key point from Moulton's analysis is the extent to which it recognizes different ways to be modern: Millay does not simply represent the new outcrop of a hegemonic, experimental modernism, but a talented young poet who is open to various influences. What one sees here is not Moulton resisting a modernist hegemony, but evidence for Matthew Huculak's suggestion that the nature of modern literature was 'up for grabs'. If Joyce and Dada were bad, Moulton's own poetry and editorial work implicitly offered a better alternative. This work, ably explored by Mark Morrisson, was firmly oriented towards poetry that explored the legacy of the war without turning to the formal experimentation of modernism; in founding his little magazine *Voices*, Moulton 'chose to create an institution for poetry that would draw upon already established strategies that would connect it to the literary establishment'.⁶⁵ His admonishment of Millay in *Time and Tide* should not, therefore, be understood as a turn against modernism so much as a tactical argument in a shifting, fluid debate over the proper nature of modern poetry. The ultra-modern was not resisted because it was hegemonic, but precisely because it was not: Moulton is pitching one conception of modern literature against another.

But of course Moulton's arguments have a second consequence: in tactically delineating differences between modern and ultra-modern poetry, Moulton contributes—in an unsure and compromised way—to a process whereby modernism begins to take on public form. Across *Time and Tide*, one sees the process repeated, often in a far more even-handed manner. Sylvia Lynd's review of *Jacob's Room* is cautiously positive, and turns outwards in order to consider how Woolf's fiction might differ from previous models.⁶⁶

Mrs Woolf tells us no more about Jacob than the people who met him can tell us. She has given a new kind of unity to her novel. The old way was to let one central character be the touchstone [...] for the others. That character set the standard. Good and bad were relative to him. Instead of treating her hero in this way, Mrs Woolf presents us with a cloud of witnesses to his existence. We

⁶⁵ Mark S. Morrisson, 'The Cause of Poetry: Thomas Moulton and *Voices* (1919-21), Harold Monro and *The Monthly Chapbook* (1919-25)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 405-27 (p. 416).

⁶⁶ Sylvia Lynd (1888-1952) was primarily a poet, but also worked as a journalist and edited anthologies of children's literature. Clay notes that Lynd's home in Hampstead with her husband, Robert, was a key location for the 'Friday Hampstead Circle' of writers and publishers in the early 1930s. See Clay, *British Women Writers*, p. 17; Jane Dowson, 'Sylvia Lynd', in *Encyclopedia of British Women's Writing*, ed. by Hammill, Miskimmin and Sponenberg, p. 151. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the Lynds' role in the publication of Joyce's 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer' in the *New Statesman*.

do not see the world only with Jacob's eyes, but Jacob with the world's. He is the centre of the circle, and we look at him from all points of the circumference.⁶⁷

She suggests a difference between the 'old way' and the 'new kind of unity', focusing on Woolf's depiction of Jacob. While Lynd's conclusions are carefully measured, the implications she presents are subtly radical: by opposing character as 'touchstone' to the 'cloud of witnesses to his [Jacob's] existence', Lynd intuitively grasps that novels like this are starting to rethink character in fiction. To an extent, this should be seized upon as a moment where a reviewer begins to think about the cultural significance of Woolf's method, and the concept of modernism thus begins to emerge. At the same time, it should be recognized that Lynd remains (perhaps understandably) sceptical about the long-term consequences of these innovations.

Whether this scattered method of writing novels is better than the old method, I cannot say. It has so far not been used to reveal any great or terrible moments. [...] Probably in a very few years when custom has staled it, we shall find this new method unsatisfying and turn back to the old.⁶⁸

'Method'—a term which Lynd uses twice—is an interesting choice. It does, crucially, refer outward beyond Woolf, and suggest that she might be participating in a wider movement; surely the important point that defines a method (rather than, say, a style) is that it is a process that can be reproduced by more than one person. Furthermore, this 'scattered' method is, by implication, new, which points towards generational change from the 'old method' to Woolf's new writing. Yet this suggestion is always tentative, and Lynd expects the 'scattered method' to become 'unsatisfying'.

Three years later, Lynd reviews *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), and fulfils her own prophecy.

The manner which in *Jacob's Room* had the freshness of inspiration, is in danger of deteriorating into a mannerism. [...] For by this method of writing, this snatching at life in handfuls and heaping it chaotically together, by rejecting a central presence and personality to give it order and coherence and inevitably selection and limitation, Mrs Woolf compels us to make impossible demands on her, and cry for every life in London in a single book. When Mrs Dalloway ceases to be present, the reason for the presence of any of the other characters seems insufficient. [...] Septimus Warren Smith, the wretched neurotic, is a huge piece of irrelevance. [...] I refuse to accept him from Mrs Woolf as a character at all. [...] I hate him for nearly spoiling delightful Mrs Dalloway's party.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Sylvia Lynd, 'New Novels', *Time and Tide*, 24 November 1922, pp. 1136-37 (p. 1136).

⁶⁸ Lynd, 'New Novels', p. 1137.

⁶⁹ Sylvia Lynd, 'Town and Country', *Time and Tide*, 15 May 1925, p. 472.

'Method' appears yet again, but here has degenerated into something less promising, a 'mannerism'. Curiously, Lynd's phrases still suggest the existence of a wider concept: 'this method of writing, this snatching at life in handfuls and heaping it chaotically together'. Simply this acknowledgement of a method contributes towards the emergence of modernism, though clearly not in the same way as the cautiously positive probing of the 'new kind of unity' in *Jacob's Room*. Here, Lynd does her best to resist any connection to a wider movement, opposing 'method' to 'mannerism', and thus arguing that Woolf's style is an unpleasant idiosyncrasy, rather than a harbinger of literary change.

Knowing the place of *Jacob's Room* in histories of modernism, it is easy to light upon Lynd's review as confirmation of that historically inevitable greatness. Equally, it is easy to dismiss Lynd's seemingly facile comments on *Mrs Dalloway* and its 'wretched neurotic'. Yet I would argue that the distinguishing feature of these reviews is not whether they make a literary critical evaluation that we happen to approve of, but the way in which they seek to analyse new literature. Moulton's work on poetry recognizes the fluid shifts between different ways to be modern, and attempts to take a side. Lynd's argument is quite different. In reading *Jacob's Room*, she tentatively recognizes the potential of a modernist method, though she does not use that term, and her scepticism means that the movement itself is never in focus. Across the reviews of both *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, however, Lynd is firmly oriented towards the question of attempting to place Woolf's novel in a relationship to some sort of cultural authority; to work out, essentially, if it can be called 'great'.

This question is posed relentlessly, throughout *Time and Tide* and indeed weekly reviews as a genre. It is closely tied up with the nature of official culture: as new literature arrives, the weekly review asks whether it has any chance of being admitted as *great* literature. See, for example, Gerald Gould at the end of 1921.

It is asked why this age, being an age of great affairs, does not produce great literature. It is no answer to say that it is an age of vast incidents, indeed, but also of dissolution and decay: for Athens went on producing great literature when it was decaying. Besides, for all we know, we may

be struggling into the first light of a new day rather than lingering on, like ghosts, in the shadowland of collapsed Victorianisms.⁷⁰

Compared to Lynd, the promise is inverted—Gould hopes there might be something new, rather than worrying that there might not—but the arguments are structurally identical. The same concern is found in West’s worried characterization of Shaw and Ibsen as geniuses, impossible to follow. E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924) was received in ecstatic terms—again by Sylvia Lynd—and described as ‘a book of new knowledge as well as of wisdom and education’. Tellingly, the review was titled ‘A Great Novel at Last’.⁷¹

By asking what might make a new text a piece of great literature, these book reviews keep one eye on the relationship between a new text, and culture as a whole. For this reason, it is useful to think about the cultural work they do in the context of a term introduced by Francis Mulhern, ‘metaculture’. For Mulhern, metacultural discourse occurs when ‘culture, however defined, speaks of itself’.⁷² He perceives two different trends: *Kulturkritik*, a ‘critical, mostly negative discourse on the emerging symbolic universe of capitalism, democracy and enlightenment’, and Cultural Studies, a more recent discipline that aims to ‘revoke the historic privileges of “culture with a capital C” (the sovereign values of *Kulturkritik*) and vindicate the active meanings and values of the subordinate majority (the so-called “masses”) as core elements of a possible alternative order’.⁷³ Both are discussed in terms of public intellectuals involved with these disciplines: to take two examples from each, F. R. Leavis and Ortega y Gasset for *Kulturkritik*, and Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall for Cultural Studies. As befits the weekly review, the metacultural discourse found in *Time and Tide* is everyday: not long works by public intellectuals, but editorials and book reviews. Yet it deserves the metacultural label because of its focus—explicit or implicit—on how the texts it discusses relate to culture itself.

To an extent, *Time and Tide*’s publication of women writers and interest in writing for pleasure could be said to anticipate some of the equalitarian instincts of Cultural Studies that

⁷⁰ Gerald Gould, ‘Real Life’, *Time and Tide*, 2 December 1921, p. 1158.

⁷¹ Sylvia Lynd, ‘A Great Novel At Last’, *Time and Tide*, 20 June 1924, pp. 592-93.

⁷² Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. xiv.

⁷³ Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, pp. xv-xviii.

would come later in the twentieth century. However, as this thesis is interested in the emergence of modernism, the broader tendency is towards an everyday, metacultural form of Kulturkritik: assessing emergent forms to see if they deserve to be recognized as legitimate parts of official culture. While *Time and Tide* often turned against modernist texts, its overall interpretation of modernism is marked more by a profound ambivalence, a desire to question the place of what would come to be modernism in culture, and a reluctance—or perhaps inability—to formulate a clear answer. As I have demonstrated, the ambivalence does contribute towards the emergence of modernism into the public eye, but it simultaneously shows just how unclear that public status was at the start of the nineteen-twenties.

Texts printed by the magazines could often only approach this difficult question elliptically. In mid 1920, *Time and Tide* published a short story by Alec Waugh.⁷⁴ Here, talented young painter Eric Walker takes inspiration from modern industry.

The only beauty he could understand was the clean, hard efficiency of a machine. With eager eyes he had seen stones lifted into the air by iron arms; he had watched the glow of furnaces flickering on polished steel. For hours on end he had stood beneath the great factory at North Town, while the sunlight cut the wreathing smoke into hard, sharp angles.⁷⁵

This frustrates his patrons, who attempt to introduce him to other subjects for art ('trees, fields, love') as 'it's what other people think nice that matters'.⁷⁶ These generous patrons take Walker to the Pacific, where he tries—and fails—to paint houses covered in flowers and sunlight on waves. Finally—in what must be a reference to Gauguin—he finds a subject he can work on.

at the back of the small hut, an old woman, black and shrivelled, was cooking her dinner over an iron stove. Her neck and arms were bare, and the glow of the fire shone dimly on the damp flesh, the dying sunlight stealing in one long, broad band through a chink in the woodwork fell across her throat, cutting the curves of her hanging breasts into hard, sharp angles, and a few yards away Eric Walker was working at his canvas in a fine frenzy of inspiration.⁷⁷

Walker's art seems to be broadly representational; it is his subject matter, and standards of beauty, that cause tension and confusion between him and his patrons. Furthermore, there is

⁷⁴ Alec Waugh (1898-1981) was the elder brother of the more famous Evelyn Waugh. He wrote over forty books, the most famous of were his first novel, *The Loom of Youth* (1917), which explored homosexuality in British public schools, and a late novel, *Island in the Sun* (1956), which featured an interracial relationship. See *DNB*.

⁷⁵ Alec Waugh, 'You May Lead a Horse to the Water', *Time and Tide*, 20 August 1920, pp. 307-09 (pp. 307-08).

⁷⁶ Waugh, 'You May Lead a Horse to the Water', p. 308.

⁷⁷ Waugh, 'You May Lead a Horse to the Water', p. 309.

no sense that Eric is joining a controversial modern movement of some kind. He remains a lone, obsessive maverick. But his rejection of traditional standards of beauty ('what other people think nice'), his interest in modernity, industry, and primitivism, and in particular his focus on 'hard, sharp angles' mark Alex Walker as a painter who, at the very least, could be described as uncomfortably modern.

One might argue that this text recognizes modern tendencies in visual art without codifying and classifying a modern movement. More fundamentally, though, within the text it is entirely unclear whether Eric is intended to be a figure of fun, or one of modern promise in art. To be sure, his patrons' relentless focus on 'what other people think nice' is difficult to read as anything other than narrow-minded, but Alex is an otherworldly and largely unsympathetic character whose need to find and paint sharp angles is neither justified nor defended. Where Lynd explicitly questions whether Woolf's novelistic style should be understood as a promising new method, or a degenerating mannerism, Waugh's story implicitly wonders about the inherent value of Alex Walker's modern paintings. Reading dialogically between the two, *Time and Tide* continually questions how it should understand the emergent form of modernism; such questions help modernism emerge, but also signal how muddy the waters were.

The same hesitation and confusion is found in the magazine's largely retrospective discussions of W. B. Yeats. *Time and Tide* published a single page potted biography, the 'Personalities and Powers' feature that began in the very first issue.⁷⁸ In 1924, a year after Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, *Time and Tide* covered his life and work. The essay looks back over the career of a lauded establishment figure, portraying Yeats as 'a poet in the fullest meaning of the word'. This seems to mean romantic, lonely, otherworldly, 'wandering in the Celtic twilight'. Of his poetry, 'The Stolen Child' and 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' are

⁷⁸ The inaugural text, for example, discussed Elizabeth Robins (1862-1952), one of the most prominent actors of her time, and writer of the play *Votes for Women!* (1907). Her 'Prudence and Peter' novella, serialized in *Time and Tide* in its early years, aimed to teach children how to cook. See Faye Hammill, 'Elizabeth Robins', in *Encyclopedia of British Women's Writing*, ed. by Hammill, Miskimmin and Sponenberg, pp. 209-10.

quoted, and his verse is described as ‘musical, melancholy, mournful; the natural expression of a sensitive soul’.⁷⁹

So far, so Wordsworthian, and clearly representative of Yeats’s earlier work. However, while Yeats’s most clearly modernist poetry—*The Tower*, for instance—had not yet been written, he was at this time starting to move away from his earlier work, and the article ends by recognizing this.

The struggle against ‘externality’, so clearly expressed in the lack of stage effects at the Abbey Theatre, is a marked characteristic of the later poems of Yeats. ‘Quite suddenly’ he ‘lost the desire of describing outward things’.

...there’s more enterprise
In walking naked.⁸⁰

This is not the essay’s last word on Yeats, but it is the final analysis of his poetry. It is a curious and tentative way to frame his most recent work. Certainly, the bold, stark lines of ‘A Coat’, quoted at the end of the extract above, do not fit the ‘Celtic twilight’ image of Yeats throughout the article. ‘Walking naked’ is hardly ‘quaint’. Earlier lines in the poem (not quoted in the magazine) are telling, signalling a need to move away from earlier models of poetry, and particularly from ‘quaint and telling symbols’.

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat;
But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world’s eyes
As though they’d wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For there’s more enterprise
In walking naked.⁸¹

Without the context of these earlier lines, the reader of *Time and Tide* cannot make the comparison, and must instead rely on the magazine’s own reading of the lines, as a ‘struggle against “externality”’, linked to work at the Abbey Theatre, and a loss of interest in ‘outward things’. This reading of the later Yeats represents a fundamental change in style from the early, more confident images of a poet of the Celtic twilight. Crucially, however, the nature of the

⁷⁹ ‘Personalities and Powers: William Butler Yeats’, *Time and Tide*, 8 August 1924, pp. 762-64 (pp. 762-63).

⁸⁰ ‘Personalities and Powers: W. B. Yeats’, p. 764.

⁸¹ *Yeats’s Poems*, ed. by A. Norman Jeffares (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 230.

article's thought on the later Yeats remain unclear: it is difficult to say whether the placement of this terse summation of recent work at the end of the article is a cursory glance at more recent (and less valuable) work, or an open-ended vision of future poetry from the Nobel laureate, characterised by a turn inwards and a more modern style. Put another way, should we read the article's emphasis as placed on the moment when Yeats 'lost the desire' or on 'more enterprise | In walking naked'?

In these examples, *Time and Tide* performs a form of metacultural discourse that is fundamentally unsure what to make of modernism; clearly, the magazine is interested in these emergent forms of modern literature, but this interest does not permit it to reach clear conclusions. The reviews of Woolf and Yeats and Waugh's short story imply broad questions that cannot be answered. Is Woolf's style method or mannerism? How should Yeats's still-developing career be understood? Should artists that resemble Eric Walker be praised or mocked? When *Time and Tide* reviews D. H. Lawrence, this ambivalence does not disappear, but it does become a source of critical energy, rather than an obstacle. Lawrence, of course, was famous and controversial. For many critics and thinkers, an interest in experimental modern literature often meant an interest in Lawrence: take, for instance, essays by two very different critics in the *Listener*, shortly after Lawrence's death. F. R. Leavis, reviewing Huxley's edition of Lawrence's letters, compares Lawrence to Dante and argues that he is greater than Blake. As he puts it, 'His best art exhibits his marvellous power of compelling the reader to an unprecedented freshness and sincerity of emotional, instinctive and sensuous experience.'⁸² Harold Nicolson, in the sixth of his 'New Spirit in Literature' series, described Lawrence as 'the first word of some new movement', an artist who 'groped passionately, fiercely, sometimes clumsily towards some new formula for the world that is about to be born'.⁸³

Reviews in *Time and Tide* were not so clear, but Lawrence's novels were always reviewed, with significant space devoted to them. In the period studied here, four novels by Lawrence are

⁸² F. R. Leavis, 'The Living Lawrence', *The Listener*, 5 October 1932, Literary Supplement, pp. iv-vii (p. vii).

⁸³ Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature—VI: Intellect and Instinct', *The Listener*, 11 November 1931, pp. 823-24 (p. 823).

reviewed: Rose Macaulay writes on *Women in Love* (1921), Mary Agnes Hamilton on *Aaron's Rod* (1922), and Sylvia Lynd reviews *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926).

All these reviews perform an unusual type of metacultural analysis: they consistently identify problems with Lawrence's novels, but remain fascinated by them and admit as much in the review. The reviewers see plenty to criticize, as Macaulay makes clear. She describes *Women in Love* as an 'amorphous muddle', and that 'there are many words of which Mr Lawrence simply does not know the meaning'. He has a 'large, flowing and sentimental inexactitude', and is likened to Amanda McKittrick Ros, a novelist now remembered largely for her purple prose. Gerald, Ursula and Gudrun are 'obviously and certifiably mad'.

They have indeed curious fashions of speech. Occasionally Mr Lawrence records a conversation on general subjects, and it is pitiful to see these distraught creatures trying clumsily to have and express thoughts on subjects other than the relations between the sexes. They are then merely dull.⁸⁴

Hamilton makes similar criticisms of *Aaron's Rod*. It 'is not, in any ordinary sense, a good novel. Mr Lawrence cannot make his story move.' There is 'an infinite amount of singularly bad dialogue'. Lawrence's ability with character is 'curiously limited. His people are vehicles of emotion and of talk, and very little more. Lilly, for example, is not a person at all.' And Lawrence returns constantly to 'the sexual relation', where he is 'most troubled and most perverse'.⁸⁵ On *Kangaroo*, Sylvia Lynd remarks that 'Everything that Mr. Lawrence recreates he recreates a little strangely', and that 'there is a distortion as of fever in his work, and through it flows an inky river of half-stated thoughts and half-confessed emotion. It is better to skip a good deal of "Kangaroo" than to read it thoroughly'.⁸⁶

Similar charges are levelled at *The Plumed Serpent*. Lawrence's 'figures' have 'no character inside their forms'. In order to give the reader an impression of his work, Lynd takes the odd step of retelling a portion of the novel with layered quotations.

As for the ceremonials and general goings-on of these living gods, I am not sure that Mr Lawrence is not almost more incredible than Rider Haggard. Let me give you some idea of them: When

⁸⁴ Rose Macaulay, 'Book Reviews', *Time and Tide*, 1 July 1921, pp. 628-29.

⁸⁵ Mary Agnes Hamilton, 'Seeing Straight', *Time and Tide*, 7 July 1922, pp. 641-42 (p. 641).

⁸⁶ Sylvia Lynd, 'Greater and Lesser Magnitudes', *Time and Tide*, 9 November 1923, pp. 1124-25.

Kate Leslie was staying in Mexico she read in a newspaper that the peasants who live by a certain lake in the interior were expecting a return of the ancient gods of Mexico, Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli. Some time afterwards she learned that the nice general who had helped her to get away from the bull-fight and the nice handsome man who had talked so interestingly at dinner were really the Living Huitzilopochtli and the Living Quetzalcoatl.⁸⁷

The tone is arch: the sheer silliness of Lawrence's novel is emphasized.

Yet these very genuine problems and criticisms are interwoven with praise. More precisely, in fact, they tend to be interwoven with the question of how Lawrence can be quite so good, and quite so bad, almost at the same time. Macaulay's review of *Women in Love* notes that 'There are indeed many sources of joy in this book, and it will be found to repay reading aloud.' She ends by suggesting that Lawrence's characters are sometimes 'so genuinely funny that one forgives them for being also nauseating.'

One also forgives Mr Lawrence much literary incompetence, silliness and imbecile-like unpleasantness for the beauty of some of his prose-rhythms. Though he often bungles and misses his effects, he also often gets them, and then he is like woven tapestry with a running pattern, and one momentarily forgets that he is absurd.⁸⁸

Praise with a sting in the very last clause, perhaps, but praise nonetheless. Hamilton is more forthright in the problems that Lawrence poses:

In so far as he undoubtedly possesses a streak of that thing we call genius, meaning, essentially, something that bursts and evades our categories, Mr D. H. Lawrence is the most difficult of writers to classify, place, judge. For the sense of it remains, when one has exhausted himself in criticism of his palpable defects, his intensely irritating mannerisms. Nothing could be more obvious than that he does not see straight, but round his queer corner he has a sight so vivid that his distorted vision imposes itself, and, for a moment, one feels that a thing seen or rather felt with such intolerable sharpness must be true.⁸⁹

Clearly, Hamilton finds this novel troubling, and cannot easily put it aside: 'his wild, chaotic story undoubtedly leaves an impression on the mind that is stamped with a branding iron'.⁹⁰

Reviewing *Kangaroo*, Lynd highlights Lawrence's 'wonderful descriptive writing', and her instruction to skip parts of the book continues by suggesting that 'A hop, a skip and a jump may land you safely upon scenes of strange power and beauty'.⁹¹ Her praise for *The Plumed Serpent* is clearer still. She opens her review by arguing that 'Mr Lawrence, in his new novel has painted

⁸⁷ Sylvia Lynd, 'Three Popular Authors', *Time and Tide*, 5 February 1926, pp. 127-28.

⁸⁸ Macaulay, 'Book Reviews', p. 629.

⁸⁹ Hamilton, 'Seeing Straight', p. 641.

⁹⁰ Hamilton, 'Seeing Straight', p. 641.

⁹¹ Lynd, 'Greater and Lesser Magnitudes', p. 1125.

Mexico like a Van Gogh or a Gauguin. The energy and brilliance with which he describes material things are amazing.’ She ends with a focus on the novel’s stark contrasts:

What energy, one exclaims as one reads this book, what brilliance of scene, what solemnity, what grammar and how intolerable Mr Lawrence’s love of the gross and disgusting would be were it not for his redeeming absurdity?⁹²

These reviews do not paint an entirely consistent critical picture of Lawrence: it is immediately noticeable, for example, that the question of Lawrence’s absurdity is a reminder of his flaws for Macaulay in 1921 but a redeeming feature for Hamilton in 1926. But the broad impression of Lawrence’s reception—fascination and wonder matched by derision and disgust—is found throughout all four.

It might be argued that the novels considered here have continued to divide and confuse critical opinion. *Women in Love* is clearly one of Lawrence’s most important novels, but the same cannot be said for *Aaron’s Rod* and *Kangaroo*, which have not received a great deal of critical attention. *The Plumed Serpent*, perhaps more than any other of Lawrence’s novels, tends to frustrate its critics.⁹³ Lawrence’s profound interest in leadership and proto-fascism does not always make for the most comfortable reading.

There is no small truth in the argument that these reviews were some of the first forays in a critical tradition in which these novels do not sit easily. But even if these texts do anticipate future trends in Lawrence’s reception, they should not simply be understood as prescient. Instead, they should be placed within *Time and Tide*’s general, everyday practice of metacultural analysis, and its particular concern—as a weekly review—with whether new literature might some day gain a legitimate place in official culture. These reviews puzzle over Lawrence’s relation to literary tradition, and wonder how his novelistic experiments might be understood;

⁹² Lynd, ‘Three Popular Authors’, p. 128.

⁹³ In Ellis and De Zordo’s *Critical Assessments* volumes on Lawrence, for example, James C. Cowan—one of five critics excerpted for *The Plumed Serpent*—writes that ‘the brilliance of Lawrence’s symbolic conception notwithstanding, most critics perceive a failure in coherence between the realistic and metaphorical modes of the novel’. *D. H. Lawrence: Critical Assessments*, ed. by David Ellis and Ornella De Zordo, 4 vols (Robertsbridge: Helm Information, 1992), III, 23.

in a similar way to Lynd's evaluation of Woolf's *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, they attempt to work out whether Lawrence's way of writing novels should be encouraged or criticized.

No conclusions are reached, but these reviews are energized by the puzzling conflict brought on by reading Lawrence's novels. Hamilton has a fondness for two-word phrases that criticize even as they praise: 'intolerable sharpness' and 'distorted vision'. She makes the vital problem explicit: 'Mr D. H. Lawrence is the most difficult of writers to classify, place, judge'. Sylvia Lynd comes the closest to directly classifying Lawrence as modernist in some way, comparing Lawrence's Mexico in *The Plumed Serpent* to Post-Impressionist art by Van Gogh or Gauguin. It is difficult to disentangle the exact consequences of this description: is Lynd attempting to conjure up an emphasis, say, on expression and intense colour, with a lesser concern for representation? Turning to *The Plumed Serpent* itself, one can certainly see what she means.

Kate would sit and rock on her terrace, while the sun poured in the green square of the garden, the palm tree spread its great fans translucent at the light, the hibiscus dangled great double-red flowers, rosy red, from its very dark tree, and the dark green oranges looked as if they were sweating as they grew.⁹⁴

As suggested, the connections are not precise, but there might be some form of association between Lawrence as modernist novelist and a pair of linked artists, known for their experiments with representation. While I am unwilling to place too much pressure on strict chronology, it is perhaps significant that Lynd makes this connection significantly later (1926) than the other reviews considered (1921-23).

What can certainly be derived from these reviews is the idea that these unsure discussions about Lawrence's place in modern literature have cultural significance. Retrospectively, Lawrence's place in British literary modernism is a matter of complex and tangled critical debate. It is telling, for example, that Michael Bell's discussion of Lawrence and modernism in a *Cambridge Companion* perceives Lawrence as central to modernist thought but

⁹⁴ D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* (London: William Heinemann, 1955), p. 210.

has to wrestle with the fact that Lawrence is often neglected; Bell argues that he should be read as the ‘repressed conscience of modernism’.⁹⁵

However, my intention here is less to place Lawrence in a particular relationship to modernism than it is to demonstrate that, for these reviewers, Lawrence certainly *was* modern, and his texts proved puzzling and complex to evaluate. These unsure, worried attempts to evaluate Lawrence should be understood as directly implicated in modernism’s emergence into public being. In the initial range of examples from reviews, *Time and Tide* displays an ambivalence towards the emerging concept of modernism, unsure whether this new work should be considered a legitimate direction for literature, or not. In the case of D. H. Lawrence, this tendency is developed further and made explicit. To a certain extent, this is likely due to the fact that these *are* difficult novels to ‘classify, place, judge’—for the modern critic, as well as for the contemporary reviewer.

But perhaps Hamilton’s statement that Lawrence’s writing demonstrates ‘genius’ because it is ‘something that bursts and evades our categories’ deserves closer attention. This places Lawrence’s fiction not simply as something that is new, or controversial, or unusual, but as a literary texts that *defies* classification, at least under the critical practice that Hamilton brings to her task as reviewer for *Time and Tide*. Put another way, Lawrence’s modernism appears resistant to analysis by the book reviews in this periodical. This is striking: in terms of a history of modernism, these years in the 1920s saw many classic modernist texts published in Britain; not only works by Lawrence and Woolf, reviewed by *Time and Tide*, but—to take only the most prominent example—Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, which received only the most cursory coverage. In the introduction, I referred to Peter Bürger’s concept of the avant-garde, as a phenomenon directed at the institution of art itself, and thus not comprehensible by that institution. Bürger’s conception of who the historical avant-gardes were is quite strict, and I would not claim this status under these terms for, say, D. H. Lawrence. But it might

⁹⁵ Michael Bell, ‘Lawrence and Modernism’, in *The Cambridge Companion to D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by Anne Fernihough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 179-96 (p. 194).

nevertheless be proposed that *Time and Tide*'s encounters with modernist literature share some of the characteristics that Bürger ascribes to the relationship between art as an institution and the historical avant-gardes. There is, at times, a disconnect that manifests itself as ambivalence: modernism might be understood as a concept that evades the categories available to *Time and Tide* at this point in history. This must not of course be construed as a criticism of *Time and Tide*; rather, to return to Ian Hacking's terminology, if modernism's emergence into public life went 'hand in hand' with critical discussion of modernism, for *Time and Tide* in the early 1920s, that hand-in-hand grip was at best loose, and at worst sometimes non-existent. In the next chapter, I turn to a magazine run by individuals far more intimately associated with emergent forms of modernist literature, to explore how a weekly magazine could begin to engage more directly with modernism.

2. *THE NATION AND ATHENAEUM, 1923-30*

We have had the *Nation* for nearly seven years, without making it blood & bone of ours, as once I thought possible.

Virginia Woolf, 5 November 1929.¹

Virginia Woolf wrote this line as her husband, Leonard, resigned from his position as Literary Editor of the *Nation and Athenaeum*: this chapter covers his tenure.² Her odd metaphor—the paper as ‘blood & bone of ours’—suggests one question: what would it have meant for a weekly review to be ‘blood & bone’ to Leonard and Virginia Woolf? Her regretful tone suggests a second: why did she feel that they had failed? The second question must be put aside until the first is answered satisfactorily. It is surely uncontroversial to suggest that Leonard and Virginia Woolf were at the forefront of literary experimentation in London in the 1920s. Virginia Woolf’s status as modernist novelist and—almost as important—as theorist of the modern novel needs no introduction; her husband, entirely aside from his work at the *Nation and Athenaeum* and the Hogarth Press, was always her first reader. Thus if *Time and Tide*, closely associated with a network of politically active women in West Hampstead, was ambivalent and unsure in its relationship with modernism, I contend that a weekly review that was ‘blood & bone’ of Leonard and Virginia Woolf was at once far more intimately involved in conversations about modernism, and broadly more sympathetic towards the emerging concept of modernism.

At the same time, this periodical remained a weekly review: serious, careful, broadly defensive of official culture. Thus a broad sympathy towards modernism is developed not through didacticism, but cautious and reasoned argument. One of Leonard’s principal tasks was to write a weekly page of literary notes, the ‘World of Books’, reviewing one or (more usually) several new releases. On 18 April 1925, he wrote under the subtitle ‘Modern Poetry’.

Any reviewer will probably agree that modern poetry presents far greater difficulty to the conscientious critic than prose, whether the essay, the short story, or the novel. The more ‘modern’

¹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-1984), III, 265.

² Forenames are used for Leonard and Virginia Woolf only because they are referred to with such frequency in this chapter.

the poetry, the greater the difficulty. Here, may be, there suddenly pops up something which is obviously meant to be a serious poem, but which, at first sight and on ancient standards, has no form, no rhythm, no rhyme, no meaning. It is easy to put on the black cap, and, calling the names of Alfred Tennyson and William Wordsworth, to pronounce all this nonsense and not poetry. And yet every now and again one feels that such pontifical condemnation is only age and mental inertia taking the line of least resistance—i.e., the line of resistance to everything which is new and difficult to understand.³

Woolf asks the (presumably sceptical) reader to consider the ‘difficulty’ faced by the reviewer of modern poetry. Crucially, his focus is not precisely on the radical nature of modern poetry, but on the often troubling claims it makes for legitimacy in official culture: a text that is ‘obviously meant to be a serious poem’ but seems to have ‘no form, no rhythm, no rhyme, no meaning’. This is far from a campaign against nineteenth-century traditions: rather than calling for a revolt against Wordsworth and Tennyson, Woolf suggests quite gently that to ‘put on the black cap’ (and pronounce a death sentence) is ‘easy’, and might in fact reflect ‘the line of least resistance’. Woolf argues that the reader should take the claims of modern poetry seriously; this is framed not as a joyful, energetic act of youthful exuberance (compare Marinetti’s Futurist Manifesto, ‘Poetry must be conceived as a violent attack on unknown forces’), but as the considered, fair-minded judgment of a mature critic.⁴

Put another way, Woolf’s poetry review demonstrates how a weekly review could argue for modernism: cautiously and carefully. In certain ways, this article shares significant common ground with the *Listener*’s poetry editorial, discussed at the start of the Introduction. Intriguingly, however, the scope of the *Nation and Athenaeum*’s engagement with modernism does not merely take the form of explicit requests that modernist poetry be given a fair hearing by the initially sceptical reader. Consider, as a quite different example, an article by Vita Sackville-West. Her poetry review of 24 January 1925 discusses a number of anthologies, and provides some short notes on Ernst Toller’s *The Swallow Book*.

[It is] a poignant picture of his [Toller’s] prison life, inevitably inviting comparison with Mr Eliot’s ‘Waste Land’, not only in its forms, but also in its mentality. These are the poets who make new patterns from their broken shards. Intellectual rather than lyrical, they pursue their only, difficult, unhappy path in a perplexed world. Mere music is insufficient today for the thinking poet. He

³ Leonard Woolf, ‘The World of Books: Modern Poetry’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 18 April 1925, p. 76.

⁴ F. T. Marinetti, *Let’s Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, ed. by R. W. Flint, trans. by R. W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1991), p. 49.

turns to something tragic and ugly; something dry and desiccated; inhuman in the superficial sense, but having perhaps a profounder relation to the spiritual problems of sixpence.⁵

Sackville-West's distinction between 'forms' and 'mentality' is interesting; the implication leads not only to a resemblance between Eliot and Toller, but the understanding that they might be approaching modernity in a similar way. Furthermore, it seems to me that Sackville-West's open invocation of *The Waste Land* is closely linked to her discussion of key elements of modernist poetry. Her metaphors are intimately connected to Eliot's poem; 'broken shards' recall Eliot's 'fragments I have stored against my ruins' (l. 430); 'something dry and desiccated' relates to Eliot's focus on a lack of water in 'What the Thunder Said': 'Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand | If there were only water amongst the rock | Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit' (l. 337-39).⁶ 'Something tragic and ugly' might recall Madame Sosostris's prophecies (l. 43-59), the pub conversation (l. 139-72), or the mechanical sex between the 'young man carbuncular' and the 'typist' (l. 222-56). Moreover, by opposing 'intellectual' and 'lyrical', the 'only, difficult, unhappy path' for Eliot and Toller against the 'mere music' of 'insufficient' poetic forms, Sackville-West aligns her review with Eliot's now-famous argument in 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921) that 'poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*'.⁷

Seen in this way, the review itself is difficult. Sackville-West's criticism praises the profound, inhuman qualities of Toller and Eliot while slyly alluding to Eliot's poem throughout her review. Taking this one step further, one wonders if it is entirely coincidental that allusion is so central to Eliot's poetry, too. The review could thus be read as demanding but rewarding, offering a reader soaked in contemporary poetry the chance to appreciate both the ways in which Eliot might be influencing the terms under which new poetry is discussed, and (less seriously) a poetical in-joke. If *Time and Tide* tended to wrestle, as an institution, with the

⁵ Vita Sackville-West, 'Anthologies and Poets', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 24 January 1925, p. 585. Toller was imprisoned from 1920 to 1925 for participation in a left-wing revolt that established the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic.

⁶ 'The Waste Land', in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 59-80. Further references to this poem are given by line number after quotation in the text.

⁷ *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, ed. by Ronald Schuchard, 2 vols to date (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014-), II, 381.

emerging concept of modernism, the *Nation and Athenaeum* goes further, both requesting (in the case of Leonard Woolf) that the reader look sympathetically on modernist poetry, and providing (in the case of Vita Sackville-West) a literary criticism that displays a far more intimate knowledge of modernist literature, and entangles that knowledge within its critical practice. As I have suggested throughout this thesis, arguments such as this did not only identify modernism, but helped to make up the concept itself in public culture: from these two initial examples, it might be surmised that the *Nation and Athenaeum* played a particularly significant role. To return to the two questions posed by Woolf's diary entry, this study of Leonard Woolf's career at the *Nation and Athenaeum* therefore explores how modernism is constructed by this weekly review, before considering why his time at the magazine might—to Virginia, at least—have been considered a failure.

*

First, if this paper was 'blood & bone' of anyone, it was not Leonard and Virginia Woolf but their Bloomsbury friend, John Maynard Keynes. In early 1923, Keynes and the 'New Nation Company', a small group of investors including Arnold Rowntree, L. J. Cadbury and E. D. Simon, purchased the *Nation and Athenaeum* from the Rowntree Trust.⁸ The paper was formed in 1921 by merging two Rowntree papers: the *Nation*, a Liberal political weekly edited by H. J. Massingham since its formation in 1907, and the *Athenaeum*, a venerable (founded 1828) literary and cultural paper, most recently edited by John Middleton Murry.⁹ Indeed, for several years the paper was published under the title *The Nation and the Athenaeum*, emphasizing its hybrid nature, two papers sutured together in the middle.¹⁰

⁸ Arnold Rowntree had prior links with the paper via the Rowntree Trust; as Michael Whitworth notes, he worked with Murry on the *Athenaeum*. Michael H. Whitworth, 'Enemies of Cant: *The Athenaeum* (1919-21) and *The Adelphi* (1923-48)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 364-88 (p. 366).

⁹ Michael Whitworth's essay on Murry's *Athenaeum* is comprehensive, but Massingham's *Nation* has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention.

¹⁰ The last issue to appear as *The Nation and the Athenaeum* was dated 26 June 1926. It was published thereafter as *The Nation and Athenaeum*. For consistency, this later title is used throughout.

The *Nation and Athenaeum*'s new owners were all close to the Liberal Summer School, a high-powered think tank that met in the early 1920s and was particularly associated with the liberal economics practised at Cambridge by Keynes and others. Indeed, it seems clear that the Summer School group were offered the chance to purchase the *Nation and Athenaeum* because of their known political views; Walter Layton wrote to Keynes that 'The only essential so far as I am concerned is that the political complexion of the Nation must be in harmony with that of the summer school group. It is because of our political opinions that the option was offered to us, & that the capital has been put up'.¹¹ Layton speaks of the paper as a capital investment—that is, one that might yield money. However, the *Nation and Athenaeum* offers yet another example of how the weekly review was rarely a commercially successful venture, and was more commonly propped up by patrons. Much of Keynes's archive for the *Nation and Athenaeum* consists of writing to the magazine's investors and asking them for just a bit more money. While Keynes did drum up the magazine's sales, it never turned an annual profit and never breached ten thousand copies.¹²

There may have been a group behind the paper, but Keynes's personal contribution was immense. Robert Skidelsky emphasizes Keynes's drive to craft a paper that would clearly express his—and only his—political and economic views. Skidelsky portrays Keynes as a 'preacher who needed a pulpit', who envisaged the *Nation* as 'a journalistic platform from which to mount his assault on the policy of deflation'. Keynes's personal control was clear: he had 'virtually untrammelled freedom to shape the journal as he wished'.¹³ Keynes's willingness to stamp his authority on the board of directors is best seen in the discussion over who to appoint as editor. The historian Ramsay Muir was originally preferred, as in Layton's words 'his name is the one which stands most definitely for the political shade of opinion which we should give

¹¹ Cambridge, King's College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, King's/PP/JMK/NS/1/1/24-25 (Layton to Keynes, undated).

¹² See Appendices A and B.

¹³ Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes, Vol. 2: The Economist as Saviour 1920-1937* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 134-36.

to the Nation'.¹⁴ Muir was willing to take the position but took issue with Keynes's evident desire to have a powerful influence over the editor, as he wrote in a letter negotiating the position.

The third point is the editorial powers of the Editor, i.e. his powers of selecting contributors & distributing work among them. It is in my view an essential part of an Editor's duty that his control in these matters should be absolute, and that no article should be commissioned, and no writer asked to contribute, except by him or in his name.¹⁵

Keynes quickly turned against Muir, seeming to recognize a prominent figure who might deny him the editorial oversight and freedom he desired. He wrote to Layton five days after the above letter.

Apart from my growing doubts as to whether he is the right man for the job, what he suggests would make the relationship between the editor and the editorial board very different from what we contemplated when it was first discussed. I should not think it worth while to give time and energy and risk money under the conditions that Muir would require for himself. And it would be impossible for me to be in a show of this kind as a sleeping or semi-sleeping partner.¹⁶

Virginia Woolf noted in her diary that she had seen Keynes, and he had declared 'that he will not work with Ramsay Muir'.¹⁷ He got his way, of course. Hubert Henderson, a Cambridge economist and one of Keynes's protégés, was employed as editor, despite his lack of experience and enthusiasm. Keynes would not be denied, as Henderson's wife, Faith, later noted.

Hubert raised the obvious objections. He had never edited anything; he had done very little journalism. Maynard, like a prancing steed, overcame all his objections. He wanted him as editor, and Hubert must not and could not refuse.¹⁸

The overall editorship must be run exactly as Keynes wished, subject to his desires.

The cultural half of the paper was a very different matter: as a weekly review, the primary identity of this paper was political (in this case, Keynes's Liberalism), and the task of reviewing new books and thinking about modern culture was a subordinate concern. Skidelsky suggests that Keynes enjoyed playing the role of 'patron of Bloomsbury', and I think this term is the correct one.¹⁹ Initially, the post of Literary Editor was offered to T. S. Eliot, with the

¹⁴ KCSC, JMK/NS/1/1/24-25 (Layton to Keynes, undated).

¹⁵ KCSC, JMK/NS/1/1/12-16 (Ramsay Muir to Keynes, 2 February 1923).

¹⁶ KCSC, JMK/NS/1/1/22-23 (Keynes to Layton, 7 February 1923).

¹⁷ *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, II, 233 (10 February 1923).

¹⁸ Faith Henderson, 'Editing the *Nation*', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 5 (1953), 7-27 (p. 8).

¹⁹ Skidelsky, *Keynes: Vol. 2*, p. 137.

intention that a literary job might allow him to leave Lloyds Bank. Prior to this, the idea of a philanthropic fund to support Eliot's writing had been pursued, particularly by Virginia Woolf. She was also the origin of this new proposal, writing to Keynes in February: 'Is there any chance that the Nation could give him [Eliot] employment as literary editor?'.²⁰ As far as the documentary evidence shows, even this plan was not at the forefront of Keynes's mind. In the midst of arguments over whether Muir was suitable, and after Woolf's letter requesting that Eliot be considered, a brief note comes up in a letter from Layton to Keynes: 'There must be a Literary Editor.'²¹ Eliot himself was not sure. Writing to Sydney Schiff, he pointed out that the job offer would 'allow me the time to run the *Criterion*';²² in another letter, to John Quinn, he noted the multiple disadvantages:

I am now offered the post of literary editor of the *Nation*, at £200 a year less than my present salary and with no assurance that the job will last longer than six months, and if I take that I shall have to go straight into new work, which for the first six months will be very difficult and worrying, at a moment when I feel much more like going into a sanatorium.²³

For Eliot, editing the *Nation* would be a job not dissimilar to his current position at Lloyds, to be measured in terms of financial loss or gain, effect on health, and only valuable for the leisure it might afford him to pursue poetry or the *Criterion*. Eventually, he decided to offer such stringent conditions on his acceptance of the position (a guarantee of two years' employment, three months notice for the bank, plus an extra month's medical absence) that Keynes would be forced to turn him down.²⁴ Keynes reluctantly did so, writing back that 'I am very sorry. I think we could have worked together and made a good thing of it. I appreciate deeply your difficulties'.²⁵ Keynes turned to Woolf, who accepted the position just days before disappearing on holiday to Spain. While there is no question that Woolf was qualified for the job, the whole business rather smacks of indulgent patronage and, at the last minute, desperation: Keynes

²⁰ *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanna Trautmann, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1975-1980), III, 11 (to Keynes, 12 February 1923).

²¹ KCSC, JMK/NS/1/1/46-48 (Layton to Keynes, 17 February 1923).

²² *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Valerie Eliot, Hugh Haughton and John Haffenden, 5 vols to date (London: Faber and Faber, 1988-), II, 69 (Eliot to Sydney Schiff, 12 March 1923).

²³ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 72 (Eliot to John Quinn, 12 March 1923).

²⁴ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 85-86 (Eliot to Keynes, 21 March 1923).

²⁵ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 88 (Keynes to Eliot, 23 March 1923).

could support one of his friends, and he needed someone to look after the literary half while he got on with the real business of politics and economics.

*

Putting a positive spin on this situation, Leonard Woolf might, therefore, have been offered a perfect opportunity to exercise editorial freedom. Looking back on his years at the *Nation* in his autobiography, he seemed proud of his work there, writing that 'I doubt whether any weekly paper has ever had such a constellation of stars shining in it as I got for the *Nation*'.²⁶ At the time of his appointment, Woolf was more reserved, writing to Margaret Llewelyn Davies that 'I have been asked to become Literary Editor of the *Nation*. [...] I should rather not, but the question of money has made me say that I will on certain conditions'.²⁷ Woolf wrote more elaborately to Lytton Strachey.

I expect you have heard that, having failed as (a) a civil servant, (b) a novelist, (c) an editor, (d) a publicist, I have now sunk to the last rung on which stand Jack Squire, Desmond MacCarthy, Edward Shanks, and Penguin—literary journalism. I am now Literary Editor of the *Nation and Athenaeum*, and I would not even have sunk to that, if I had not been told that you had agreed to write for it.²⁸

While this letter clearly has more than a dash of self-deprecating humour in it, Virginia's comments in an earlier letter to Jacques Raverat were less ambiguous. 'Leonard first lost his job [on Massingham's *Nation*], which ruined us, and has now been made literary editor, which is almost as bad.'²⁹ Nonetheless, in his first months on the job Leonard seems to have seized the opportunity offered to him. His purview at the paper was significant: while he declined to continue writing articles on foreign affairs (his role at Massingham's *Nation*) he took a salary of £500, and agreed to write a weekly page of literary notes—'The World of Books'—as well as

²⁶ Leonard Woolf, *Downhill All The Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939* (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), pp. 129-30. He lists some contributors who appeared in the first months of his editorship: Bertrand Russell, George Lowes Dickinson, Maxim Gorky, Augustine Birrell, Roger Fry, Edward Joseph Dent, Walter Sickert, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Osbert Sitwell, Richard Hughes, Stella Benson, Robert Graves, Vita Sackville-West, and Arnold Toynbee.

²⁷ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, ed. by Fredric Spotts (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), pp. 225-26 (to Margaret Llewelyn Davies, 5 April 1923).

²⁸ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, pp. 283-84 (to Lytton Strachey, 4 May 1923). Squire and MacCarthy were successive literary editors of the *New Statesman*; Edward Shanks was a poet and critic. I have not been able to identify 'Penguin'. Strachey wrote in Woolf's very first issue in charge of the literary half; see Lytton Strachey, 'Sarah Bernhardt', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 5 May 1923, pp. 152-53.

²⁹ *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 23 (to Jacques Raverat, 30 March 1923).

edit the literary half.³⁰ While Woolf's exact responsibilities are never spelled out, they would have certainly included organizing the books for review and selecting reviewers, commissioning articles, and helping to make up the paper, as well as writing his literary notes. He was in the office for two and a half days a week, yet as Victoria Glendinning notes his work amounted to a full time job, much of which he had to do at home.³¹

At first, Virginia was an active participant in these editorial responsibilities, particularly when it came to encouraging writers to contribute to the *Nation*. While on holiday in Spain in 1923, she reached out to her friends. She wrote to Roger Fry, asking him to 'Remember the Nation', perhaps attempting to remind Fry of a commitment to write.³² A few days later she wrote to Molly MacCarthy, informing her of Leonard's new job, and relaying that 'he wishes to get hold of your memoirs. Would you consent? Very slight alterations would be needed; and how delightful to humanise the Nation, which is dry and bald as bone'.³³ To Vanessa Bell, once returned. 'Maynard [Keynes] wants a special literary supt. in a hurry. Wont you write something? or Duncan?'³⁴

As Leonard adapted his social life to incorporate the intense demands of his editorship, and both he and Virginia wrote to their friends to request that they contribute to the *Nation*, one sees how the promise that the paper might become 'blood & bone of ours' might have been put into practice. The (literary) *Nation and Athenaeum* under Woolf has often been described as a Bloomsbury paper; consider Robert Skidelsky's brief assertion, in his biography of Keynes, that 'Bloomsbury writers dominated the back part of the paper', or Victoria Glendinning's note that 'Leonard's old Cambridge and Bloomsbury friends wrote for him'.³⁵ Victoria Rosner goes

³⁰ Brighton, University of Sussex (US), Leonard Woolf Papers, SxMs-13/1/I/1/b, 1-4 (letters between Keynes and Leonard Woolf, 25 March-14 April 1923).

³¹ Victoria Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 256.

³² *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 29 (to Roger Fry, 16 April 1923). Fry first wrote in July; see Roger Fry, 'Degas', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 28 July 1923, pp. 549-50.

³³ *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 30 (to Molly MacCarthy, 22 April 1923). The serialization began in September; see [Molly MacCarthy], 'A Nineteenth-Century Childhood: I', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 1 September 1923, pp. 683-84.

³⁴ *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 31 (to Vanessa Bell, 28 April 1923). As it turned out, neither Vanessa Bell nor Duncan Grant wrote for the 19 May literary supplement.

³⁵ Skidelsky, *Keynes: Vol. 2*, p. 137; Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf*, p. 257.

further, associating the *Nation and Athenaeum* with other Bloomsbury ‘formal joint ventures’, including the Hogarth Press and the Omega Workshops.³⁶

It is certainly true that many prominent members of the Bloomsbury group wrote for the paper: alongside Leonard’s weekly pages of literary notes, Virginia Woolf and Clive Bell were frequent contributors, with Roger Fry and Lytton Strachey also writing for the magazine. But it is also worth noting that characterising the *Nation and Athenaeum* as a Bloomsbury paper does not reveal a great deal about the nature of the contents. Certainly, it does not hold true that members of Bloomsbury shared a unified viewpoint, as Michael Holroyd usefully illustrates.

Leonard Woolf was always passionately interested in politics; Lytton, though he inclined to become more leftist under his brother James’s persuasion during the war, was largely indifferent to political questions of the hour. Clive Bell enthused over the most abstract art; Roger Fry held aloof; while Lytton himself was even more conservative and dismissed Clive Bell’s *Art*, in a letter to James Strachey, as ‘utter balls’ (22 February 1914). Though he had learnt at Cambridge to enjoy a literary appreciation of the visual arts, Lytton considered that both Clive Bell and Roger Fry were downright silly in their highflown admiration of Matisse and the early Picasso, and he made some attempt through Vanessa Bell to discourage Duncan Grant from the post-impressionist and cubist influences under which he was falling. As for Maynard Keynes, Lytton maintained that he possessed no artistic sense whatever; and Clive Bell held a similar opinion of Harry Norton. Despite his tenuous friendship with E. M. Forster, who was certainly no atheist or even agnostic, Lytton found his novels quite unreadable—a view similar to that which Virginia Woolf affected to hold of his own biographies—while his aesthetic differences with Roger Fry, who injected a mood of earnest Quakerism into the group, effectively stifling the movement towards sybaritic pleasure, were, according to Gerald Brenan, enlivened by personal antipathy.³⁷

Describing the paper as a part of Bloomsbury would not, therefore, necessarily imply that the periodical took a particular critical perspective on cultural matters. Indeed, many critics—both those involved with Bloomsbury, and those studying it—have argued that the defining feature of Bloomsbury was not a particular viewpoint or set of viewpoints, but simply free and open conversation. Victoria Rosner roots Bloomsbury in Gordon Square, at a time ‘when a group of young people met together with no greater ambition than to speak freely and live as they chose.’³⁸ Duncan Grant, remembering Virginia Woolf for *Horizon* in 1941, argued Bloomsbury was ‘Conversation: that was all’.³⁹ But it is difficult—as is discussed in greater depth below—to

³⁶ *The Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group*, ed. by Victoria Rosner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 10.

³⁷ Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1967-1968), II, 418-19.

³⁸ *Bloomsbury Group*, ed. by Rosner, p. 2.

³⁹ Duncan Grant, ‘Virginia Woolf’, *Horizon*, June 1941, pp. 402-06 (p. 404).

understand whether these Bloomsbury conversations could ever have taken place in a weekly review.

Importantly, as editor Leonard resisted the charge that he had given a Bloomsbury flavour to the paper. In late 1923, Woolf clashed with Hubert Henderson, the overall editor, over a controversial book review, and Woolf's choice of reviewers. The central conversation was verbal, but Woolf's letter after the fact clearly refers to the question of whether or not Woolf's sympathies to Bloomsbury were problematic.

I do think that we differ rather fundamentally in our tastes. (I naturally think that I am right and you wrong, but not, I assure you, in the supercilious sense that is thought to be characteristic of 'Bloomsbury'. It is simply that if I think a piece of writing good, I think that I am right—and there is an end of it; I admit that I may be completely wrong.)⁴⁰

Woolf thus resists the charge that he is characteristic of Bloomsbury, but refuses to change his style. Henderson's reply was conciliatory, but again emphasizes Woolf's Bloomsbury connection.

I like very much the general character & quality of what you put into the paper. I have no antipathy to 'Bloomsbury'; &, if I feel—this is what our difference in taste really amounts to—that the sort of criticism that you especially like, is not sufficiently appreciative of the better type of non-Bloomsbury writing, that causes me very little worry.⁴¹

Several years later, Hubert Henderson wrote to Virginia Woolf in order to assuage concerns of log-rolling, as the *Nation and Athenaeum* was reviewing *To The Lighthouse*. Henderson assured her that the *Nation and Athenaeum* would cover her novels even if she had 'no connection with the paper', and brings in Keynes as a supporting example: 'Would you have us not notice books written, say, by Maynard?'⁴²

To describe the *Nation and Athenaeum* as a Bloomsbury paper may therefore have been true—in that its owners and some of its key contributors were closely associated with the group—but it is not necessarily revealing. But Woolf's 1929 regret that the paper might once have been 'blood & bone' to her and Leonard might be taken in a different way: what if the early period of Leonard's editorship is modelled as a time when the Woolfs, in the thick of new

⁴⁰ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/c/3 (Leonard Woolf to Hubert Henderson, 26 September 1923).

⁴¹ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/c/4 (Hubert Henderson to Leonard Woolf, 29 September 1923).

⁴² Brighton, University of Sussex (US), Monks House Papers, SxMs-18/1/D/69/1 (Henderson to Virginia Woolf, 3 June 1927). Henderson's letter is clearly a reply to a letter from Woolf, which has been lost.

literature in London, were able to drive a paper that shared their views; a weekly review that might have argued for modernism. Leonard may have been unsure about taking the job on the *Nation and Athenaeum*, but he (and his wife) seemed to plunge into the fray of literary journalism.

On 19 May 1923—Leonard's third issue in charge—Virginia Woolf wrote on Dorothy Richardson's experimental prose.

She has invented [...] a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes.⁴³

Woolf goes on to tease out the implications of this difference between the new and the old prose.

Therefore, in reading 'Revolving Lights' we are often made uncomfortable by feeling that the accent upon the emotions has shifted. What was emphatic is smoothed away. What was important to Maggie Tulliver no longer matters to Miriam Henderson [...] here we have [...] Miss Richardson proving that the novel is not hung upon a nail and festooned with glory, but, on the contrary, walks the high road, alive and alert, and brushes shoulder with real men and women.⁴⁴

Where Sylvia Lynd, for *Time and Tide*, questioned the potential long-term use of Virginia Woolf's new method of writing, Woolf herself proposes Richardson's method as a more definitely understood, and fundamentally more promising, shift in the literary landscape. She suggests ways to name Richardson's new 'elastic', 'psychological' sentence, and argues, crucially, that the modernist novel might find a place in the literary canon. Woolf's concluding point is that Richardson's work might differ from George Eliot, but this very difference proves that the novel is 'alive and alert'.

Of course, it is only to be expected that Virginia Woolf's review of a modernist novel would be more understanding of and sympathetic to modernism. But the importance of what the *Nation and Athenaeum* was doing is found not in a single article, but in the continual effect of different literary critics, week in and week out, continuing to think about modernism, and thus bringing the concept into public being. These were not always positive reactions, and they were not always directly associated with Bloomsbury, but they were almost always carefully thought through. One week after Woolf's comments on Richardson, Robert Graves reviews Edith

⁴³ Virginia Woolf, 'Romance and the Heart', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 19 May 1923, Literary Supplement, p. 229.

⁴⁴ Woolf, 'Romance and the Heart'.

Sitwell; he does not particularly like her poetry, but argues that ‘the most extreme reaction in modern poetry against the Patriarchal system and its accompanying philosophies [...] find[s] its expression in the poetry of a young woman’, and that ‘even Mr Joyce’s “Ulysses”, unwieldy and rambling a book as it is, has a certain hopeful structure’.⁴⁵

In June, T. S. Eliot reviewed a new edition of John Donne’s love poems. He focused directly on the question of why Donne’s work appears to be particularly popular now.

Our appreciation of Donne must be an appreciation of what we lack, as well as of what we have in common with him. What is true of his mind is true, in different terms, of his language and versification. A style, a rhythm, to be significant, must embody a significant mind, must be produced by the necessity of a new form for a new content. For this reason the extraordinary virtuosity of Tennyson is of little use to us. And for this reason, I suspect, most contemporary verse is so uninteresting in rhythm and so poor or so extravagant in vocabulary. The labour of composition for a poet today is very great, and the amount of time that he must expend on experiment unlimited. Verse and language have not kept up with economic progress, and have halted behind the development of sensibility. The dogmatic slumbers of the last hundred years are broken, and the chaos must be faced: we cannot return to sleep and call it order, and we cannot have any order but our own, but from Donne and from his contemporaries we can draw instruction and encouragement.⁴⁶

Later that month, Richard Hughes praised Herbert Read’s new volume of poetry, *Mutations of the Phoenix*.

One always turns, nowadays, to unrhymed verse with a greater expectation of a sense of form than one finds in most rhymed composition; and in the case of Mr Read is not disappointed. His creative faculty of rhythm is very highly developed; and he has obviously an appreciation of the nice interaction of rhythm of thought, the processional sequence of *idea*, with the surface-rhythm of sound.⁴⁷

It is crucial to emphasize that the *Nation and Athenaeum* does not have a significantly more secure grasp on the concept of modernism than *Time and Tide*. Many of these reviewers make their sympathies clear, but they rarely have a clear term for literary experiments, or for precisely how literature should change in the modern world. What they do share is a drive to puzzle away at these questions, from Woolf’s proposal of the ‘psychological sentence of the feminine gender’ to Hughes’s musings on the ‘rhythm of thought’ and ‘surface-rhythm of sound’, and from Eliot’s vague yet stark demand that ‘we cannot return to sleep and call it order’, and Graves’s recognition that young writers have a problem with the ‘Patriarchal system’.

⁴⁵ Robert Graves, ‘The Eagle and the Wren’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 26 May 1923, pp. 272-73 (p. 272).

⁴⁶ T. S. Eliot, ‘John Donne’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 9 June 1923, pp. 331-32 (p. 332).

⁴⁷ Richard Hughes, ‘Mutations of the Phoenix’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 23 June 1923, pp. 399-400 (p. 400).

Leonard Woolf's hand in these arguments is of course hard to measure, though the literary editor's ability to choose who to send new books to—thus potentially introducing new writers to the magazine—is not to be sniffed at. In these early months, readers could therefore witness these reviewers musing on modernism, in some cases—Virginia Woolf and Eliot stand out—as those writers continued to develop their own modernist fiction and poetry. Furthermore, one might point to an unusual special offer the *Nation and Athenaeum* proposes for readers in September 1923. If they take out an annual subscription (thirty shillings), they get two free books: J. M. Keynes's *A Revision of the Treaty* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922).⁴⁸ This advertisement is thus a moment where the *Nation and Athenaeum* imagines its audience as one interested in a Keynesian perspective on economic policy, and modernist fiction.⁴⁹

Leonard Woolf's weekly essays were not always sure about the value of new literature, a tendency discussed in greater detail below. On 10 November 1923, he proposed that 'We live ourselves in a silver, or electro-plate, age so far as literature is concerned'.⁵⁰ Presumably, to suggest the presence of a golden age—something higher in quality than silver or electro-plate—requires a stable understanding of the literary field that Woolf cannot grant himself. But in December, some of this stability might seem to come when Virginia published an essay on two competing groups of novelists, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown'.

This essay, with its division between Edwardian and Georgian writers, is the precursor to a later, longer version given as a talk to the Cambridge Heretics in early 1924, and published in the *Criterion* in July 1924.⁵¹ Confusingly, this longer version was later republished as a Hogarth Press pamphlet, also titled *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, and some criticism refers to

⁴⁸ 'Special Offer for Subscribers [advertisement]', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 1 September 1923, p. 693.

⁴⁹ More cynically, this offer may also have been an opportunity for the publishers (Macmillan for Keynes, the Hogarth Press for Woolf) to clear out any excess stock of the books.

⁵⁰ Leonard Woolf, 'The World of Books: The Lost Flute', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 10 November 1923, p. 222. Electroplating is a process of forming a thin metal coating on an object by electrolysis; presumably Woolf means electroplated silver as opposed to pure silver.

⁵¹ See *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and Stuart N. Clarke, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), III, 420-38.

‘Character in Fiction’ by this title. While Woolf’s ideas have been thoroughly explored by scholarship, ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ takes on a slightly different form when it is understood as an entry in a weekly review, and as a part of a developing conversation about the concept of modernism in that weekly review.

In the *Nation and Athenaeum*, ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ opens by locating itself in time.

The other day Mr Arnold Bennett, himself one of the most famous of the Edwardians, surveyed the younger generation and said: ‘I admit that for myself I cannot yet descry any coming big novelist.’⁵²

Those opening words—‘the other day’—are worthy of close attention. They are permissible in a weekly review—covering new literature and keeping on top of the news—in a way that they might not be in a periodical published at lengthier intervals. Indeed, this form of opening is not quite generic, but is hardly unusual for articles, especially middles, in this type of magazine; note, for instance, the first leading article in *Time and Tide*, quoted in the previous chapter, which begins ‘Last week at Leamington’.⁵³ But in this case, Bennett did not write ‘the other day’. Woolf was responding to an essay by Bennett published by *Cassell’s Weekly* on 28 March, eight months prior. Yet Woolf insists on a temporally local relationship between Bennett’s argument and her response. Those opening lines are a deeply Woolfian construction, a taut colloquialism that underlines the sense of debate. This first version of ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ never exists in isolation, but is always oriented towards Bennett’s earlier words. Scholars have followed this presentation of immediate debate by closely analysing the disagreement between Bennett and Woolf. Samuel Hynes’s 1967 essay attempts to rescue Bennett from Woolf’s attack, while Beth Rigel Daugherty’s response in 1983—her essay echoes Hynes’s title, just as Hynes echoes Woolf—again takes up Woolf’s side.⁵⁴

⁵² Virginia Woolf, ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 1 December 1923, pp. 342-43 (p. 342). The same essay had first appeared in the *New York Evening Post*, on 17 November 1923.

⁵³ ‘[Last Week at Leamington...]', *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Samuel Hynes, ‘The Whole Contention between Mr Bennett and Mrs Woolf’, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 1 (1967), 34-44; Beth Rigel Daugherty, ‘The Whole Contention between Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Woolf, Revisited’, in *Virginia Woolf: Centennial Essays*, ed. by Elaine Ginsberg and Laura Gottlieb (Troy: Whitston, 1983), pp. 269-94.

Bennett's original article, 'Is the Novel Decaying?', was printed in *Cassell's Weekly*.⁵⁵ This was a new paper; founded earlier in 1923, it was purchased towards the end of that year by politician and journalist T. P. O'Connor (1848-1929), renamed *T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly*, and continued publishing until 1929. At two pence, *Cassell's* was a third of the price of the *Nation and Athenaeum*. There were many weeklies priced at two pence, on a range of topics, some of which sold hundreds of thousands of weekly copies (though figures are unfortunately not available for *Cassell's*).⁵⁶ This particular magazine is quite similar to the better-known *John O'London's Weekly*; both were broadly oriented towards cultural matters, but compared to a sixpenny they carried more advertising, shorter articles, and more short fiction. They occupied a slightly unusual cultural position: writing in 1932, Q. D. Leavis considered the stock in different newsagents and suggested that one might find 'a few cultural weeklies of different levels'. The *New Statesman* and *Nation* had to be ordered, but *John O'London's* did not: it was 'merely a résumé of publishers' advertisements, literary gossip, with an original short story'.⁵⁷ At the same time, this magazine is grouped with the *Nation* and *New Statesman*, rather than with '2d. weekly papers in magazine form containing the crudest marketable fiction'.⁵⁸

If *Cassell's Weekly* thus shared certain qualities with the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the differences between the two papers are also key. Where sixpenny weeklies were serious, politically minded, and authoritative, twopennies were more openly engaged with a modern, mass audience. Jonathan Wild suggests that *John O'London's Weekly* was aimed at a public that 'lacked formal education in the study of literature' but had begun to read widely in the First World War. Therefore, 'a degree of didacticism was clearly welcomed', but it was 'interspersed with lighter material'.⁵⁹ Both these aspects are clearly seen in Bennett's essay, which is brief,

⁵⁵ Arnold Bennett, 'Is the Novel Decaying?', *Cassell's Weekly*, 28 March 1923, p. 47.

⁵⁶ For circulation figures of a range of twopenny weeklies, see T. B. Browne Ltd, *The Advertiser's ABC*, 45 vols (London: T. B. Browne, 1887-1931).

⁵⁷ Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932), p. 10. Leavis's book was published in 1932; presumably, this survey was carried out prior to 1931, when the *Nation and Athenaeum* merged with the *New Statesman*.

⁵⁸ Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, p. 12.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Wild, "Insects in Letters": *John O'London's Weekly* and the New Reading Public', *Literature & History*, 15 (2006), 50-62 (pp. 50-51).

sharp, humorous, and didactic. He argues that nothing is more important in the novel than character.

The foundation of good fiction is character creating, and nothing else. The characters must be so fully true that they possess even their own creator. Every deviation from truth, every omission of truth, necessarily impairs the emotional power and therefore weakens the interest.

Modern novelists, Bennett suggests, are ‘interested more in details’, and ‘attach too much weight to cleverness, which is perhaps the lowest of all artistic qualities’. Having set up these frames for criticism, he turns his attention to Woolf, writing that ‘I have seldom read a cleverer book than Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*’. For Bennett, cleverness is a loaded quality, and he goes on to develop his attack.

[*Jacob’s Room*] is packed and bursting with originality, and it is exquisitely written. But the characters do not vitally survive in the mind because the author has been obsessed by details of originality and cleverness. I regard this book as characteristic of the new novelists who have recently gained the attention of the alert and curious, and I admit that for myself I cannot yet descry any coming big novelists.⁶⁰

Bennett’s own argument, of course, recalls Sylvia Lynd’s analysis of Virginia Woolf in *Time and Tide*, though where Lynd seems at least open-minded—while she worries that Woolf’s fiction might *potentially* be a dead end—Bennett is brusquely definite. *Jacob’s Room* holds no promise: it is all insipid style, and no meaty substance.

Daugherty’s reading of the debate is acute, and recognizes the gendered subtext to Bennett’s criticisms. Woolf was not just pushing back against Bennett’s dislike of *Jacob’s Room*, but a wider debate about gender and writing, refuting Bennett’s view of women writers as naturally and inevitably limited.⁶¹ Crucially, Daugherty demonstrates that ‘Woolf’s differences with Bennett existed long between Bennett wrote a single critical word’.⁶² While this is certainly true, the publication contexts of these two particular sorties in the conflict—Bennett’s attack in a twopenny weekly, and Woolf’s reply in a sixpenny—also deserve attention. Bennett’s argument in *Cassell’s* is essentially patriarchal and populist, assuming the unqualified support of a large audience against a tiny, isolated minority who enjoy Woolf’s work. We can all agree,

⁶⁰ Bennett, ‘Is the Novel Decaying?’.

⁶¹ Daugherty, ‘The Whole Contention, Revisited’, pp. 273-77.

⁶² Daugherty, ‘The Whole Contention, Revisited’, p. 269.

Bennett argues, that character is everything, great literature is Alexandre Dumas and Thomas Hardy, cleverness is overrated, and *Jacob's Room* has made merely a 'great stir in a small world'.⁶³

Daugherty argues that Woolf's reply in the *Nation and Athenaeum* is 'much less powerful' than the later, longer Hogarth Press pamphlet, and that it 'evades the real argument'.⁶⁴ The later version is seen as more important; Quentin Bell has argued that *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*—the longer version—was 'Virginia's own private manifesto', where she outlined 'her programme for the next decade'.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, this first version of 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' *does* have critical force, but makes its arguments in a form wholly appropriate to the sixpenny weekly review. Where Bennett makes brusque assertions and attempts to gather the audience together in support of obvious truths about literature, Woolf muses more cautiously on the problems faced by modern fiction.

She accepts his insistence on the centrality of character, but draws the now-famous distinction between the Edwardians (a group that includes the trio of Bennett, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy), and the Georgians, a group that is typically (and fairly) taken to indirectly include Woolf. Woolf's challenge is orientated around the fact that Edwardians had to differentiate themselves from the Victorians for two reasons. First, she suggests, 'the young novelist became a reformer', discussing Samuel Butler's critique of the Victorian *Weltanschauung*. Second, Woolf emphasizes the publication of Dostoevsky in English, and novelistic characters that did not match what Woolf perceives as a Victorian model of characters with few but prominent features (caricatures, essentially). Dostoevsky's characters are a challenge: 'We go down into them as we descend into some enormous cavern [...] it is all dark, terrible, and uncharted'. Famously, the Edwardians fail to respond: 'in none of them are we given a character whom we know'.⁶⁶

⁶³ Bennett, 'Is the Novel Decaying?'

⁶⁴ Daugherty, 'The Whole Contention, Revisited', p. 278.

⁶⁵ Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: a Biography*, 2 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), II, 105.

⁶⁶ Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', p. 343.

In the closing paragraphs, Woolf turns to the Georgians, though she does not explicitly identify herself as one of them.

The Georgians had, therefore, a difficult task [...] To bring back character from the shapelessness into which it has lapsed, to sharpen its edges, deepen its compass, and so make possible those conflicts between human beings which alone rouse our strongest emotions—such was their problem. It was the consciousness of this problem, and not the accession of King George, which produced, as it always produces, the break between one generation and the next. Here, however, the break is particularly sharp, for here the dispute is fundamental. [...] To disagree about character is to differ in the depths of the being.

It is these last two paragraphs that contain the essay's most famous lines, expanded in the essay's later, longer version. Woolf ends with the assessment that this Georgian endeavour is not currently successful, but deeply promising; 'that [Georgian] chapter will be one of the most important, the most illustrious, the most epoch-making of them all'.⁶⁷

This closing claim is rightly famous: Woolf's individual, sidelong way of making claims for her own brand of modernist fiction. Yet—as suits a sixpenny weekly—it is broadly defensive of official culture. Her contention is that the new Georgian way of writing novels might, in time, turn out to be 'epoch-making'. Furthermore, while this final claim is famous in its own right, it develops directly from that focus on character that originates with Arnold Bennett. Daugherty describes this character focus as a weakness, reading Woolf's original argument as too closely bound to the terms set by her opponents in this argument.⁶⁸ But it can be seen in another way, as a way of exploring modern literature entirely appropriate to the sixpenny review. Bennett—with no-nonsense prose—asserts that character is all there is, and that everyone knows what character is. Woolf and the *Nation and Athenaeum* do not dismiss this as the rant of a philistine—one wonders what the *Little Review* would have made of Bennett—but instead take the claim seriously, and interrogate it. Bennett claims character is central: fine. But is character limited to what he believes it to be? Maybe not. And are these new writers crafting a new way to catch Mrs Brown? Not for certain—but perhaps. Therein the excitement lies. Modernism—that sense that the Georgians might indeed be 'epoch-making'—emerges just a little more into the

⁶⁷ Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', p. 343.

⁶⁸ Daugherty, 'The Whole Contention, Revisited', p. 278.

public eye. Crucially, the nature of that emergence depends on ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ operating in a way that upholds, rather than challenges, the traditions of the sixpenny weekly review.

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This optimistic possibility should not be taken lightly. But it cannot be pretended that the *Nation* project was one of energy and optimism, fuelled by a consistent drive to repurpose the form of the weekly review for a perspective sympathetic towards modernism. In other words, enthusiasm for the *Nation* project was short-lived. Leonard Woolf was offered the *Nation* post two days before he and Virginia left on holiday for Spain. Virginia wrote about her experiences of travelling to and in Spain for Leonard’s first issue of the *Nation*.⁶⁹

Back in England, and sunk in the drudgery of reviewing, Woolf wrote that ‘I must read Miss Dorothy Richardson, having been bribed by very large sums of money to do what of all things I have come to detest—write reviews for the *Nation*’.⁷⁰ As Leonard’s time at the paper progresses, even these irritated mentions of the paper’s responsibilities die out: it seems to become merely something that has to be done in order to pay the bills, and the paper only crops up as a burden. In June 1926, Virginia writes that Leonard is prevented from visiting Ottoline Morrell with her due to his ‘*Nation* horrors’.⁷¹

Leonard’s dislike of his editorial post, though, is of greater significance in this case. Victoria Glendinning suggests that Leonard ‘remained satisfied with what he had achieved at the *Nation*’; even if this is an accurate retrospective, it was not reflected in his behaviour on the job.⁷² Leonard started on a salary of £500, with significant editorial responsibilities and two and a half days in the office, for what was essentially a full time job. In September 1923, after less than six months, he first offered to let his role in the paper lapse at the end of the year, over

⁶⁹ Virginia Woolf, ‘To Spain’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 5 May 1923, pp. 153-55.

⁷⁰ *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 34 (to Janet Case, 4 May 1923). Virginia Woolf’s dislike of reviewing is well known; see Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1997), pp. 720-21. While Lee discusses a late essay by Woolf, her dislike of literary reviewing was evident throughout her life.

⁷¹ *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 268 (to Ottoline Morrell, June 1926).

⁷² Glendinning, *Leonard Woolf*, p. 257.

what he felt was excessive control (by Henderson) over his reviews.⁷³ In September the following year, his dissatisfaction was indicated by negotiations to reduce his salary to £400, with reduced responsibilities.⁷⁴ In March 1925, he gave his six months notice to Keynes (writing that ‘I find it takes up more time than I am really prepared to give to go on giving to it’), but he was evidently talked into carrying on.⁷⁵ In July 1926, he again offered a resignation, and was again persuaded to continue, subject to a further reduction in salary, and a further reduction in duties so that he was just responsible for writing the ‘World of Books’ notes, and ‘dealing with the books issued for review’—presumably, choosing who to send them to and editing the resulting reviews.⁷⁶ In 1927, though, he claimed in a letter to Edmund Blunden that ‘I still write a page in the *Nation* but do little else there’.⁷⁷ He finally resigned at the end of 1929.⁷⁸

This series of attempts to resign is reflected in his carefully phrased comment on the *Nation and Athenaeum* in his autobiography. He does indeed boast of the ‘constellation’ of people he recruited to work for him, but dissatisfaction constantly pops up. For example, discussing his resignation he notes that ‘my work as literary editor revealed to me the corroding and eroding effect of journalism upon the human mind’. He emphasizes how, under the original arrangement of work, he had to do a ‘considerable amount’ at home, and that ‘I also had to read a rain of articles and journals with which journals like the *Nation* are perpetually deluged. No one who has not been an editor and/or a publisher can have any idea of how badly many people can write.’ Indeed, the ‘main interest’ of his *Nation* position was not the work but ‘the people with whom my work brought me into contact’. Later, Leonard is more specific, stating that ‘after about five years of it, I began to grow rather restive’; again, a few pages on, ‘After

⁷³ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/c/3 (Leonard Woolf to Henderson, 26 September 1923).

⁷⁴ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/b/6 (Keynes to Leonard Woolf, 24 September 1924).

⁷⁵ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/b/10 (Leonard Woolf to Keynes, 24 March 1925).

⁷⁶ The minutes of a meeting of the *Nation* directors on 14 July 1926 note that ‘Mr Leonard Woolf had agreed to write “The World of Books” and to deal with the books issued for reviews at an Annual stipend of £250. In view of this arrangement his resignation was withdrawn.’ KCSC, NS/2/18-20.

⁷⁷ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p. 296 (to Edmund Blunden, 26 July 1927).

⁷⁸ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/b/12 (Leonard Woolf to Keynes, 14 December 1929).

four years as literary editor of the *Nation* I already began to feel I had had enough of this kind of journalism'.⁷⁹

Thus it is likely fair to conclude that Leonard Woolf disliked his job at the *Nation*. This is not an issue that is often discussed by periodical studies, simply because most magazines—and all little magazines—were projects that involved passion and dedication, not disillusionment and attempted resignation. In most cases, if an editor wished to resign the magazine simply halted publication. Even within the weekly reviews, passion was the norm. Rhondda would write in her autobiography that 'To edit [...] a weekly paper, the kind of weekly review that I enjoyed reading, [...] that was pure joy'.⁸⁰ Similarly, John St Loe Strachey, whose editorial career at the *Spectator* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, was utterly dedicated to his magazine. As his wife Amy Strachey wrote, 'I do not think anyone ever enjoyed an editorship as much as St Loe did.'⁸¹ Leonard Woolf, clearly, had a very different relationship with the *Nation*. The appropriate language belongs to management studies, a discipline that rarely impinges on literary studies yet for obvious reasons has great interest in understanding why people like or do not like their jobs. Leonard exhibits a low level of job satisfaction; both 'global satisfaction'—he does not see pleasure in literary journalism as a whole—and 'facet satisfaction', the different specific aspects of his job. In the examples given, he is clearly dissatisfied with his superiors, the nature of the tasks assigned to him, and the time demanded by those tasks.⁸²

Yet Woolf persevered for seven years: as Eliot recognized in 1923, a job in mainstream literary journalism had its (financial) advantages. Furthermore, even if he came to view the job as tedious and thankless, he consistently defended his editorial independence. This is seen first in his threat to resign in late 1923: Woolf argued with Henderson over reviews written by Raymond Mortimer (on A. A. Milne) and George Rylands (on Lady Gregory and Florence

⁷⁹ Woolf, *Downhill All The Way*, pp. 128-41.

⁸⁰ Margaret Haig Thomas, *This Was My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 304-05.

⁸¹ Amy Strachey, *St. Loe Strachey: His Life and His Paper* (London: Gollancz, 1930), p. 149.

⁸² John Arnold and Ray Randall, *Work Psychology: Understanding Human Behaviour in the Workplace*, 5th edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2010), p. 261.

Darwin).⁸³ In 1926—after Leonard’s responsibilities had been significantly reduced—Henderson spiked an article by Richard Aldington, most likely a review of Alec Waugh’s *On Doing What One Likes* (1926). Henderson called Aldington’s suggestion that Waugh should have stuck to cricket ‘grossly offensive’.⁸⁴ Woolf responded angrily, defending Aldington’s talent and character.⁸⁵

Neither of these disputes were conflicts over modernism per se, though it is useful to note that in both cases Leonard is defending contributors (Rylands, Mortimer, Aldington) who were largely sympathetic towards modernist literatures in their attacks on broadly conservative writers (Milne, Waugh). In this context, the figure of the periodical editor defending a controversial text against a censor is a familiar one to students of modernism, most obviously in the case of the *Little Review*, and its legal troubles printing Wyndham Lewis’s short story ‘Cantelman’s Spring-Mate’ and, of course, Joyce’s *Ulysses*.⁸⁶ It is telling—given, once again, that the periodical in question is a weekly review, not a modernist little magazine—that these disputes occurred not externally, but internally, as Woolf attempted to carve out a space for literary criticism that allowed his contributors to speak freely.

These crises may have been dramatic, but they were also rare. Alongside them, though, one detects a more humdrum and everyday set of negotiations about space. Leonard claimed in *Downhill All The Way* that ‘In the editorial rooms of weekly newspapers there is or was an unending struggle for space [...] a violent struggle for space between politics and literature’.⁸⁷ Evidence of this struggle at the coal face, as it were, is found in letters Leonard wrote to Keynes in late 1924 and early 1925, comparing ‘relative space’ allocated to literature and politics in the

⁸³ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, pp. 284 n. 3, 285 n. 1.

⁸⁴ KCSC, NS/1/2/41 (Henderson to Woolf, 10 August 1926).

⁸⁵ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p. 294 (to Hubert Henderson, 13 August 1926). Frederick Spotts’s note points out that Leonard lost this debate, and that in any case Aldington soon refused to write for the *Nation and Athenaeum* after Leonard ‘accepted an article by a critic who had run off with Aldington’s wife’.

⁸⁶ See Rachel Potter, *Obscene Modernism: Literary Censorship and Experiment, 1900-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 74-75, 93.

⁸⁷ Woolf, *Downhill All The Way*, p. 140.

Nation and Athenaeum and the *New Statesman* under the editorship of Clifford Sharp.⁸⁸ First, he makes a general argument about the squeezing of the literary half.

I wish you would look at the enclosed figures of the average space [...] You are making the paper [the *Nation and Athenaeum*] more and more political precisely at the moment when—owing to the position of the Liberal Party—you are bound temporarily at any rate to lose a little on the political side. You are materially deteriorating the literary side precisely at the moment when [Clifford] Sharp—very cleverly, I think—is all out, not only to do you on the political side, but at the same time to strike you as hard as he can on the literary. Hence he gives his literary side an average of 5 pages more than his political while you give yours 1½ pages less. I am sure the latter policy is wrong.⁸⁹

Presumably, Keynes did not respond to Leonard's satisfaction, as he wrote again in March 1925.

I hope you will not mind my harping on the old chord but here are the figures of relative space since Jan. 1. You will note that I have never had more than 22 cols since Jan 10, whereas Desmond [MacCarthy] has had less than 22 cols on only two occasions and has had as many as 27 and 28 cols. Now a middle of just over three columns and two columns of Alpha [& Omega, a page of short notices] leaves me in a predicament that if I am to get 21 cols and have 14 of reviews, I have less than two cols over in the front of the paper, i.e. too little for another middle, a science or an art article. The result is that I either have to have 12 col of reviews which is really inadequate or squeeze down Alpha until it looks silly. We have already practically abolished science, art, and music, and are on the way to abolishing drama from the Nation. It also means that the squeeze is so perpetual that one never dares try to get anything new. I now practically never ask any one to write an article though I often think of something which I should like to get. I do not do so because I know that, if I did, I should have to refuse our best contributors. I am sure that my part of the Nation has deteriorated.⁹⁰

Leonard Woolf may not have enjoyed his job, but this does not mean that he did not defend his turf. This second letter, in particular, shows Woolf scrapping over each small element of the periodical's make-up: the important difference between twelve and fourteen columns of reviews, the difficulty of introducing new contributors into the paper's space, the problems in a desire to bring cultural coverage beyond literature—music, art, drama, science—into the paper.

Essentially, these protests signify as an attempt to remind the proprietors of a politically oriented weekly that there was cultural material too, and it should not be forgotten. If the magazine as a whole is constructed spatially, then it is always clear that the front of the magazine reflects the dominant concern, notwithstanding the ability of the reader to

⁸⁸ The *New Statesman* was edited by Clifford Sharp from 1913-30, though in the last years Sharp's alcoholism meant that he was only nominally in control of the paper. The literary half was edited by Leonard's friend Desmond MacCarthy from 1920-29.

⁸⁹ *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p. 290 (to Keynes, 13 December 1924).

⁹⁰ US, SxMs-13/1/I/1/b (Leonard Woolf to Keynes, 15 March 1925).

deconstruct such hierarchies and read the magazine. Patrick Collier has written illuminatingly on just this concept in relation to the *Illustrated London News*.

The representational agenda visible in the *Illustrated London News* crucially involves interventions at the intersection of space and value, cultural work with literary, journalistic, and imperial ramifications. That is to say, newspapers produce themselves as representations of their self-defined territory, at the most basic level, by affording value-marked page space to items that they deem valuable (and thus, implicitly, by assigning peripheral page space, few column inches, or no page space at all, to other items). Their logic is in this sense metonymic and microcosmic: they shrink the world, on a daily or weekly basis, into a manageable package that can be consumed within the leisure time of the reader. (As *Headline News* today promises, 'Give us ten minutes and we'll give you the world.') They make their vast territory legible by bringing it down to size, as it were.⁹¹

By offering itself to readers as a way to survey the empire, the *Illustrated London News* constructs itself as an empire in miniature, easily surveyable and comprehensible by the reader, who is thus cast in the commanding imperial position. Collier recognizes that spatial arrangements of this type recreate the power structures of empire, where items deemed important are brought to the front, and those deemed unimportant relegated to the back or not covered at all. Prominence in the spatial arrangement of the magazine becomes an expression of power and influence. While the centre/periphery model is particularly relevant to Collier's interrogation of the *ILN's* imperial reporting, it applies to the *Nation and Athenaeum* also. Woolf, as editor, is protesting the squeeze placed on an already marginal space.

Yet Woolf's desire to construct his half of the magazine spatially goes beyond this. His own retrospective of a 'battle for space', plus his contemporary reminder of the size and nature of the cultural space, suggest that the *Nation and Athenaeum* cannot merely be read spatially, but that its literary editor was keen to construct it as such. Put another way, in Henri Lefebvre's terms Woolf's defence of space as editor constitutes a form of spatial practice, 'a projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice'.⁹² In a richly evocative phrase, Lefebvre later remarks that 'the spatial practice of a society secretes that society's

⁹¹ Patrick Collier, 'Imperial/Modernist Forms in the *Illustrated London News*', *Modernism/modernity*, 19 (2012), 487-514 (p. 492).

⁹² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 8.

space'.⁹³ Thus, Woolf's behaviour as editor—defending the space of the literary half—secretes the space itself.

This emphasis on Woolf's practice matters because it must surely be entangled within his dislike of his job. Virginia Woolf's original hope of a paper that might be 'blood & bone' to her and Leonard implies a space that might somehow be characterized, or even driven, by a sympathy for modernism. But though Leonard defended his space, his dislike of the job suggests that it could never quite be this. In a perceptive if idiosyncratic essay, Cyril Connolly drew a distinction between 'dynamic' and 'eclectic' magazines, and their respective editors.

The dynamic editor runs his magazine like a commando course where picked men are trained to assault the enemy position: the eclectic is like an hotel proprietor whose rooms fill up every month with a different clique.⁹⁴

Notably, his image of the dynamic editor is concerned with motion (a committed military assault), whereas the eclectic editor is referred to as the proprietor of a hotel: a place. It is important, I suggest, not to mistake the many arguments for modernism made in the *Nation and Athenaeum* for an institutional sympathy for modernism.⁹⁵ Instead, Leonard presided over a space that was identified not with a drive to promote modern literature, but, in the absence of passionate editorial drive, the general concern of the weekly review to evaluate culture with caution and care. The ways in which the *Nation and Athenaeum* encountered modernism must be understood in this context.

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This does not of course mean that the paper had no important role to play in public discussions of modernism. This may have been a critical space born out of indifference, but it was an important space nonetheless. The focus on a guarded space without a defined editorial drive means that the work different contributors did at the *Nation and Athenaeum* should be

⁹³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38.

⁹⁴ Cyril Connolly, 'Fifty Years of Little Magazines', *Art and Literature*, 1 (1964), 95-109 (p. 95). I am indebted to Faith Binckes, who introduced me to this essay.

⁹⁵ This distinction is a further reminder that the exploration of space in modernist texts, and of space in texts that discuss modernism are two very different things. For work on the former, see Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

understood as the (relatively) free play of individuals in a space that did not purpose them to promote modernist literature, but simply allowed them the space to evaluate new literature, and think about what it might mean for culture.

The focus is therefore less on Leonard Woolf's passion to argue a certain way, and more on the writers he published, many of whom—far more than the other magazines covered by this thesis—were either directly involved in writing modernist literature, or were interested in thinking about why modernism might be important. Naturally, one might argue that had Woolf acted as a passionate, driven, commando-like editor, the same thing would have happened, but I do not think that the distinction is a facetious one. The difference between a periodical institution that announces itself as pushing the boundaries of literature, and one that might have a disinterested editor, but contributors involved in modernism, is significant.

Consider, then, as a first example, the career of Edwin Muir at the *Nation and Athenaeum*. Muir is best known for the poetry that he wrote towards the end of his life, but he began as a critic and essayist; in the years studied here, he was just beginning to write poetry seriously alongside journalism.⁹⁶ For the *Nation and Athenaeum* he frequently wrote the 'New Novels' column, as well as other reviews. Across his work for the periodical, he demonstrated time and again an interest in modern literature, a preference for modernism and a desire to make this argument for the public.

For instance, Muir disliked Gerald Gould's *The English Novel of To-day*, as it 'does not show the novelist the outline of his present problem as it exists: it simply disapproves of the problem'. Gould does not like Joyce or Lawrence, but cannot see, Muir argues, that 'Mr Joyce's Leopold Bloom [...] is more "in the thick" than any Victorian character, and Mr Joyce's Dublin [...] is more concrete than any Victorian town'.⁹⁷ In 1925, Muir writes a series of articles on 'Contemporary Writers', on Lytton Strachey; D. H. Lawrence ('he has awakened our minds to the existence of a new realm of consciousness'); T. S. Eliot ('As a poet Mr Eliot

⁹⁶ For further details on Muir, see *DNB* and Andrew Frisardi, 'The Anomaly of Edwin Muir', *The Hudson Review*, 52 (2000), 576-86.

⁹⁷ Edwin Muir, 'Past and Present', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 18 October 1924, pp. 116-18.

lacks seriousness [...] he is bitter, melancholy, despairing, but he is not serious’); Aldous Huxley; Virginia Woolf; Robert Graves; Edith Sitwell.⁹⁸ Muir’s piece on Virginia Woolf turns outwards to suggest that the ‘literature of to-day’ has a ‘certain note of inhumanity’. He showers *Mrs Dalloway*, in particular, with effusive praise, and links it to poetry and Joyce.

The rhythm of the prose is exquisitely graded; it has profited, one feels, as prose may, whether poetry may or not, from the experiments which have been made in *vers libre*: in the daring and fullness of the metaphors it has a remote indebtedness to Homer. There is no English prose at present, except Mr Joyce’s which in subtlety and resource can be compared with it.⁹⁹

Muir would later review *To The Lighthouse*, which he again admired—though he still preferred *Mrs Dalloway*—and particularly praised ‘Time Passes’: ‘For imagination and beauty of writing it is probably not surpassed in contemporary prose’.¹⁰⁰

Muir was prolific, and always particularly likely to probe emerging concepts of modernism. But it is also important to note that he was only one of many critics who wrote about modernism for the *Nation and Athenaeum*. Thus far, I have quoted from Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville-West, Robert Graves, Clive Bell, and T. S. Eliot. But to take a wider survey, one might also point to Raymond Mortimer, who reviewed Paul Valéry’s *Le Serpent*, focusing mainly on its introduction by Eliot, as he was ‘the most distinguished living writer of English poetry’.¹⁰¹ An unsigned review of new poetry in 1926—including volumes by J. C. Squire and Carl Sandburg—argued that ‘In Europe we are beginning to realize that if poetry is to be kept alive, it must be brought in contact with a world that has been changed, and is still being changed, by scientific discoveries’. Squire’s poems, by contrast, are ‘only dust under their poetic wrappings’.¹⁰² Edith Sitwell reviewed Peter Quennell’s *Poems* in early 1927, declaring them ‘fresh, clear and original’ and belonging ‘to no school [...] neither modern nor

⁹⁸ Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: I—Lytton Strachey’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 25 April 1925, pp. 102-04; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: II—Mr D. H. Lawrence’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 4 July 1925, pp. 425-27; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: III—Mr T. S. Eliot’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 29 August 1925, pp. 644-46; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: IV—Aldous Huxley’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 27 February 1926, pp. 743-44; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: V—Virginia Woolf’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 17 April 1926, pp. 70-72; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: VI—Mr Robert Graves’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 14 August 1926, pp. 554-55; Edwin Muir, ‘Contemporary Writers: VII—Edith Sitwell’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 18 September 1926, pp. 698-700.

⁹⁹ Muir, ‘Virginia Woolf’, p. 72.

¹⁰⁰ Edwin Muir, ‘Fiction’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 2 July 1927, pp. 450-52 (p. 450).

¹⁰¹ Raymond Mortimer, ‘Significant Form’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 28 February 1925, pp. 750-51 (p. 750).

¹⁰² ‘Poetry’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 5 June 1926, p. 252.

ancient'.¹⁰³ Later that same year, Herbert Read wrote on Wyndham Lewis's *Time and Western Man*, taking the opportunity to ruminate on aesthetic responses to modernity.

Against the giant Flux (and that is the shortest and most expressive word to describe all the complex and confused varieties assumed by modern Humanism) there has emerged a small band of Davids, as yet badly organized, and not a little uncertain, among themselves, what they are to do when they have destroyed the giant.

His examples of 'Davids' are Cubism (though not Futurism, which is apparently part of the 'Flux'), the poetry 'associated with the name of Mr Eliot', 'neo-Thomism' in Catholic theology, and 'philosophical critics', including Eliot, T. E. Hulme, Julien Benda, and Wyndham Lewis.¹⁰⁴

There are many more examples that could be drawn upon. Wherever or whenever they appeared in the literary half, they appeared near to Leonard Woolf's page of literary notes, 'The World of Books'. From 1923 to 1930, writing this column was Woolf's most consistent task as Literary Editor, a task that he performed over three hundred times. He only rarely demonstrates the same close focus on modernist literature as one finds in, for instance, Edwin Muir; instead, one immediately notices the breadth of his coverage. 'The World of Books' might review a new novel, or a selection of history books, or biographies, poetry, linguistics, politics, economics. One example of Woolf's analysis—his 1925 discussion of modern poetry—has been discussed above. In June 1924, he reviewed E. M. Forster's new novel, *A Passage to India*.

So the book builds itself up, arch beyond arch, into something of great strength, beauty, and also of sadness. The themes are woven and interwoven into a most intricate pattern, against which, or in which, the men and women are shown to us pathetically, rather ridiculously, entangled.¹⁰⁵

Woolf—like most contemporary reviewers—praised the book in the highest terms. He and Forster were of course closely connected socially, and praise of this kind could be construed as log-rolling—that is, authors praising works by their friends. During Woolf's time at the *Nation and Athenaeum*, this was a common occurrence; to look at the issue sympathetically, one might remark that Woolf and his friends were writing some of the most important works of fiction and

¹⁰³ Edith Sitwell, 'A New Poet', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 8 January 1927, pp. 514-15 (p. 514).

¹⁰⁴ Herbert Read, 'Time and Mr Wyndham Lewis', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 19 November 1927, pp. 282-24 (p. 282).

¹⁰⁵ Leonard Woolf, 'The World of Books: Arch Beyond Arch', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 14 June 1924, p. 354.

history and literary criticism, but were also prominent reviewers. That being said, it is at the very least striking that, throughout the period covered here, few of the writers discussed saw any conflict of interest when they praised each other in reviews: here, Woolf on Forster; elsewhere, Woolf on Roger Fry, or Clive Bell on Harold Nicolson.¹⁰⁶ Virginia Woolf's worry about the *Nation and Athenaeum* reviewing *To The Lighthouse*, discussed above, was rare.

But my intent here is less to focus on friends reviewing friends than it is to consider the *Nation and Athenaeum* as a guarded space for the discussion of culture. To a large extent, it matters less that Woolf saw no problem in heavily praising his friend's book, and more that he took the opportunity to probe how new texts might best be discussed. In the above review of *A Passage to India*, Woolf is clearly trying to work out a critical language that will best represent Forster's novel. Rather than seeing the book as being comprised of plot and character—recall Bennett's reductive suggestion that the novel is character and nothing else—Woolf implies that Forster's novel is *built*, 'arch beyond arch'. It constructs an 'intricate pattern', within which the characters are 'pathetically [...] entangled'. This is both a careful attention to form, and a focus on the way in which the different characters in *A Passage To India* (especially Dr Aziz and Adela) are trapped within the social and political matrices of the Raj.

This tendency—attempting to find an appropriate language to review new books—recurs. Reviewing a survey of the English novel, he notes that 'The critics of to-day seem to be greatly concerned about the novel', with some (his example is E. M. Forster) 'cheerfully analytic', but others less so. These 'come with the grave and professional faces of doctors gathered about the bedside of a patient whom they contemplate, not without a little satisfaction, as suffering from an astonishing complication of disorders'. Woolf's response is, once again, to muse carefully, this time on novelistic tone and warmth. This may be 'an age of disillusionment',

¹⁰⁶ Leonard Woolf, 'The World of Books: Mr Roger Fry', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 27 November 1926, p. 304; Clive Bell, 'We Are Amused', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 16 July 1927, p. 519.

as ‘in the minds of our best novelists there seems to be this bare spot, a kind of mental vacuum which lowers the level of their temperature and the temperature of their books’.¹⁰⁷

Leonard wrote an obituary for Thomas Hardy, a writer whom he greatly admired. He suggested that Hardy was the ‘last of a dynasty’, and compares those writers to the modern novel.¹⁰⁸

None of the leading writers of the generation or generations which followed Hardy—and now survive him—whatever their merits or their defects, write novels in this pure tradition; they have other axes to grind in social problems or the subtleties of psychology or the sophistications of literary form and expression. And since each generation gets the literature which it understands, appreciates, and deserves, the traditional English novel is out of fashion; its real merits are not properly appreciated; it seems to the present generation clumsy and monumentally primitive.¹⁰⁹

This is neither quite criticism of the ‘traditional English novel’ nor praise for the new ‘generation’; for Woolf, it is a shame that the former is ‘out of fashion’ and ‘not properly appreciated’, but equally the modern novel is that which the new generation ‘understand, appreciates, and deserves’. It has different concerns: society, psychology, aesthetic form.

At the very end of his career at the *Nation and Athenaeum*, in 1929, Woolf tackles the question of modernism head-on.

We have been told for a long time, both by revolutionaries like Mr Lawrence and Miss Sitwell and by such guardians of the ‘well of English undefyled’ as Lord Brentford—and I therefore believed—that this was a time of literary Bolshevism. It was not a question of Right Wing Socialism or reformist pinks; Parnassus had already been captured by the reddest, revolutionary literary geniuses who had ever written in *vers libre* or in syncopated prose. In a general way one had the impression that tradition had gone by the board in every department of literature.¹¹⁰

He then proceeds to move through each ‘department’, citing Eliot as leader of a group that had ‘stormed the ancient citadel of poetry’; for the novel, the ‘new school of novelists had “liquidated”, as the Bolsheviks say, the old form of novel as it was known to Jane Austen or

¹⁰⁷ Leonard Woolf, ‘The World of Books: The Novel of To-Day’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 3 December 1927, p. 356.

¹⁰⁸ The list of ‘one of the great Royal Houses of English literature’ in full: ‘Meredith, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Scott, right back to Fielding, naming them, one feels at once that they belong to the same blood royal, the same race, the same tradition’. Leonard Woolf, ‘Thomas Hardy’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 21 January 1928, pp. 597-98 (p. 597).

¹⁰⁹ Woolf, ‘Thomas Hardy’, p. 598.

¹¹⁰ Leonard Woolf, ‘The World of Books: The Bolshies on Parnassus’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 14 December 1929, p. 402.

Flaubert'; the drama had been 'transformed into a new vehicle of art and emotion' and 'Mr Strachey had blown up the ancient three-decker biography'.¹¹¹

Note, first of all, that sense of time: these assertions of literary Bolshevism have been going on 'for a long time'. This is very far from *Time and Tide's* unsure musings on the status of modernism. Then again, while Woolf admits that his own sympathies lie towards 'this alleged world-revolution', his construction of an odd, slightly humorous political analogue to modernist experimentation means that the *Nation and Athenaeum* holds itself back from supporting these ideas. The conceit is, on the whole, more than slightly whimsical, a tone that makes this piece as literary criticism very much of its time. The wry comment comparing experiments in the novel to Soviet 'liquidations' is of course deeply uncomfortable, given what is now known about the nature of those liquidations.

Woolf does not conceal his personal sympathies—clearest in this last 1929 editorial—but carefully writes a literary criticism that always acknowledges readerly scepticism, while still searching for the most appropriate way to talk about modernist literature, even without that word itself. This criticism ranges from the deeply serious—as Woolf attempts to find the appropriate way to talk about E. M. Forster—to the uncomfortably whimsical, as literary experiment is consciously militarized. Compared to the reviews and essays written by Edwin Muir and Vita Sackville-West (for example), Woolf's criticism turns to modernism less frequently, and when it does leaves a greater and more considered space for the sceptical reader to have their day. This might simply reflect a subtly different attitude towards modernism as it emerged into public life, but it might also be ascribed to Leonard's position—even if that position was disliked—as literary editor. If Leonard constructed a guarded space for cultural discussion, the governing location in that space was 'The World of Books'. As editor, Leonard could employ critics who would write forcefully and charismatically about modernism, moderating those voices with the more cautious, and more broad-based arguments in his

¹¹¹ Woolf, 'The Bolshies on Parnassus'.

column. This was not, of course, necessarily a conscious tactic, so much as behaviour that typified the weekly review; even within the *Nation and Athenaeum*, caution and care were paramount.

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Ultimately, the dense and energetic discussions of modernism in the *Nation and Athenaeum* suggest that Woolf's regret that she and Leonard had failed to make the periodical 'blood & bone' to them might have been misplaced. Leonard may not have liked working for the magazine—and Virginia may not have liked reviewing at all—but it is nevertheless clear that Leonard Woolf maintained a space for cultural journalism that thought carefully about the emerging nature of modern literature.

Envisaging a periodical as a space that hosts different voices talking about modernism has given rise to the claim that those voices should be understood as in conversation. Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible make this claim quite clearly, arguing for a 'conversational model for modernism'.

We do not deny the presence of competition, territorialism, and even antagonism among various little magazines, their editors, and contributors. [...] these publications also fostered surprising alliances, encouraged dialogue among opposing points of view, and promoted cooperation among writers from competing artistic and political camps. [...] Little magazines provide a published record of the richness, variety, chaos, and exhilaration of modernist talk.¹¹²

Churchill and McKible draw explicitly on Christine Stansell's 2000 work on avant-gardes in New York. Stansell emphasizes the importance of free-wheeling speech in the 'conversational community' of Greenwich Village, which she links to the 'self-consciously shocking and intimate talk of Bloomsbury', though for Stansell the community in New York was far more heterogenous. As Stansell argues, 'The mingling of men and women in conversation came to seem the very essence, the condition of modernity.'¹¹³

¹¹² *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. by Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 12-13.

¹¹³ Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 83-84, 89.

Furthermore, Alan Golding's work on the *Little Review* reads it as a 'magazine in persistent dialogue with itself [...] internally dialogic, enacting an ongoing and often heated conversation about modernism within its own pages'.¹¹⁴ Golding suggests that the *Little Review* encouraged disagreements between contributors, and dissent; Margaret Anderson, the editor, did not wish to publish 'something that monolithically reflected her own taste and thinking, but rather a magazine that offered positions worth arguing with'.¹¹⁵ Golding gives a remarkable example from 1916:

Anderson persistently engaged in critical fashion with the contents of her own magazine, and with her own editorial standards, strikingly so in her August 1916 editorial 'A Real Magazine'. The *Little Review*, she complains bitterly, 'has been published for over two years without coming near its ideal'. [...] Remembering where editorial responsibility lies, finally Anderson turns to direct self-critique: 'I loathe compromise, and yet I have been compromising in every issue'.¹¹⁶

Neither of these models—a conversational community, an internally argumentative periodical—entirely resembles the *Nation and Athenaeum*. But it might also be recalled how central the concept of conversation was to Bloomsbury, or at the very least to the Woolfs and their immediate friends. Some evidence for this is quoted above, but Virginia Woolf herself provides a particularly thrilling model for Bloomsbury talk.

The argument, whether it was about atmosphere or the nature of truth, was always tossed into the middle of the party. Now Hawtry would say something; now Vanessa; now Saxon; now Clive; now Thoby. It filled me with wonder to watch those who were finally left in the argument piling stone upon stone, cautiously, accurately, long after it had completely soared above my sight. But if one could not say anything, one could listen. One had glimpses of something miraculous happening high up in the air.¹¹⁷

Might the *Nation and Athenaeum*—with its space to host different critics, talking excitedly about new art, bringing the concept of modernism into the public eye—not be understood in much the same way? Even if the Woolfs disliked the job, might these voices, in this space, not be understood as a form of conversation? Under this idea, 'something miraculous happening high

¹¹⁴ Alan Golding, 'The Little Review', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume II, North America 1894-1960*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 61-84 (p. 62).

¹¹⁵ Golding, 'The Little Review', p. 79.

¹¹⁶ Golding, 'The Little Review', pp. 79-80.

¹¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, 'Old Bloomsbury', in *Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), pp. 43-61 (p. 51).

up in the air' might even be repurposed as a image of modernism itself, explored and emerging in this magazine under Leonard Woolf.

The possibilities of such an idea should certainly be taken seriously. From the reader's perspective, the presence of different critics in the *Nation and Athenaeum* reviewing and analysing modern literature might indeed be taken as a form of cultural conversation, as one encounters different opinions and measures them against each other: Edwin Muir's full-throated defence of Joyce against Leonard Woolf's more measured praise for modern poetry, for example. But the model proposed by Churchill and McKible goes further than this, arguing that conversation in a magazine was a form of 'modernist talk', a snappy and sometimes directly confrontational process well explored by Alan Golding in relation to the *Little Review*.

Here—at least in relation to the *Nation and Athenaeum*—it is important to sound a note of caution. Firstly, while there were cases of internal dialogue, they tended to be resolved in private, rather than in the pages of the magazine. Clive Bell's spat with T. S. Eliot in 1923 is an excellent example of this. Having rejected Keynes's offer of a job in early 1923, it seems that Eliot felt an obligation to write when possible; a postscript in a letter to Keynes once the affair was settled states that 'I should like very much to offer my help toward the Nation in any way within my power—if you should care ever to call on me, it would be an obligation & a pleasure'.¹¹⁸ He wrote the essay on John Donne, discussed above, and further reviews were in the pipeline. But then in late September, Clive Bell—never the most diplomatic of writers—wrote a cynical essay for the *Nation and Athenaeum* that managed both to inflate his own prestige in discovering Eliot and rubbish Eliot's poetry. He stated that 'I was one of the first in England to sing the praises of T. S. Eliot', and that 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' was a 'minor masterpiece' that 'raised immense and permissible hopes'. But unfortunately, Eliot has 'written nothing else'. He sees *The Waste Land* and Eliot's other work as simply re-treading the same ground, and offers only double-edged praise.

¹¹⁸ KCSC, NS/1/1/64-65 (Eliot to Keynes, 26 March 1923).

By his choice of words, by his forging of phrases—manipulations possible only to an artist with an exact ear—Eliot can make out of his narrow vision and meagre reactions things of perpetual beauty.¹¹⁹

Eliot, as one might have guessed, was not pleased. He wrote to Wyndham Lewis of a ‘Disgusting and filthy article on me by Clive Bell in *Nation*—sort of thing one can only receive in silence.’¹²⁰ To J. M. Robertson, Eliot stated that Bell’s article was ‘incorrect in its facts and malignant in its assertions’;¹²¹ to Ottoline Morrell, he wrote that the article ‘made me feel as if I was covered with lice’.¹²² Lewis suggested that Eliot must withdraw all promised articles from the *Nation*, but in the end Eliot decided not to ‘pick a quarrel with the *Nation* on this point.’¹²³ He delivered two reviews that had been promised—on Marvell, and on a book on Elizabethan drama—but he would not write again for Woolf until 1926.¹²⁴

Crucially, this argument can only be excavated by reading Eliot’s letters: the public face of the magazine gives nothing away, apart from the initial presence of Eliot in its pages, followed by his absence. Then again, there are indeed instances within the magazine that promise the presence of genuine and active debate, debate that seems to show modernism as ‘something miraculous happening high up in the air’. One of the most prominent of these is found in a series of three responses to Virginia Woolf’s *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, published in the *Nation and Athenaeum* in late 1923 and early 1924. One can say with certainty that they are direct responses because they assert their identity as such. J. D. Beresford opens in a way that again relates to the frequent periodicity of the weekly, and perhaps even deliberately echoes Woolf on Bennett: ‘In a recent article, Mrs Woolf suggested’.¹²⁵ He is largely critical of Woolf’s arguments, and it seems that she persuaded a friend, Logan Pearsall Smith, to write a second

¹¹⁹ Clive Bell, ‘T. S. Eliot’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 22 September 1923, pp. 772-73 (p. 773).

¹²⁰ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 224 (Eliot to Wyndham Lewis, 26 September 1923).

¹²¹ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 228 (Eliot to J. M. Robertson, 1 October 1923).

¹²² *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 232 (Eliot to Ottoline Morrell, 2 October 1923).

¹²³ *Letters of T. S. Eliot*, II, 226-7 (Eliot to Lewis, 1 October 1923).

¹²⁴ See T. S. Eliot, ‘Andrew Marvell’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 29 September 1923, p. 809; T. S. Eliot, ‘The Beating of a Drum’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 6 October 1923, pp. 11-12.

¹²⁵ J. D. Beresford, ‘The Successors of Charles Dickens’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 29 December 1923, pp. 487-88 (p. 487).

response against Beresford.¹²⁶ His contribution emphasizes the ongoing debate with a whimsical metaphor.

Mrs Woolf, in her recent answer to Mr Beresford in these columns, and Mr Beresford, with his reply to Mrs Woolf, have started a hare, and inaugurated a hunt of such fascination that even the most grizzly and retired of critical greyhounds must be irresistibly tempted to leap from his kennel and join the chase.¹²⁷

Michael Sadleir's final essay references a conversation 'which has now for several weeks held the attention of *Nation and Athenaeum* readers'.¹²⁸

While the presence of critics who believed themselves to be in dialogue with one another (and stated as much in their writing) is clearly significant, the nature of debate is also important. In this context, the three responses of Woolf's 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' become notable not so much for their conversation as for their lack of it. Beresford's reply, for instance, summarizes Woolf's argument as proposing that 'the chief failing of those three important novelists, Wells, Galsworthy, and Bennett, has been their inability to create character in the manner of, say, Dickens and Thackeray'. Beresford ignores entirely Woolf's focus on how the novel might change in the modern world, and muses oddly on his suggestion that the characters of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy are not memorable because 'in the eighteen-forties there were more queer, one-sided, less complicated, less self-conscious people about in England than there are in the nineteen-twenties'.¹²⁹ While new participants in a debate must always be permitted to introduce new material, it is surely legitimate to object to this as a reply to Woolf that does not seem to have read her argument.

Even with these peculiarities, Beresford's text comes closest to a genuine response to Woolf. Logan Pearsall Smith's essay, 'First Catch Your Hare', may have been encouraged by Woolf but remains an odd and confusing contribution. He argues that the field of discussion must be enlarged:

¹²⁶ As Woolf wrote to Smith, 'I'm very glad that I goaded you into writing your article, which is worth 25 dozen of that stupid Mr Beresford's'. *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, III, 90 (to Logan Pearsall Smith, 25 February 1924). Woolf and Smith would later fall out, and Woolf would include a parody of him in *Orlando*; see Michael H. Whitworth, 'Logan Pearsall Smith and *Orlando*', *Review of English Studies*, 55 (2004), 598-604.

¹²⁷ Logan Pearsall Smith, 'First Catch Your Hare', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 2 February 1924, pp. 629-30 (p. 629).

¹²⁸ Michael Sadleir, 'Why Only Dickens?', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 9 February 1924, pp. 667-68 (p. 667).

¹²⁹ Beresford, 'The Successors of Charles Dickens', p. 487.

It isn't a question merely of English fiction; or, in English fiction, of the Victorians, the Edwardians, and our contemporary novelists. Indeed, to make sure that one has left no covert unexplored one should include, I think, not only foreign novels, but the drama, and even the epic.

He argues that in order 'to arrive at some definite idea of what we mean by character creation in fiction' two groups must be recognized.

By far the great majority of them [characters] are stock figures, devoid of any independent existence. [...] But in the works of certain great writers some of the figures (though by no means all) present a very different appearance. They seem to be framed in a different manner and composed of other materials, to be real human beings, discoveries and not inventions; they are no sooner brought into existence that they seem to have always existed: and when the novel is closed, or the curtain falls upon the drama, they go on living in our imaginations, and are as familiar to us as our relations and our best-acquainted friends. These are the figures which we call 'characters'; and the power of evoking them is what we call 'character-creation'. It is a power possessed in the highest degree by Shakespeare; we find it also in Scott, in Jane Austen, in Thackeray; and Dickens possessed it almost to madness. It is commonly regarded as the greatest gift of these novelists, and the very essence of their art.¹³⁰

While a discussion of literary character was indeed a key point of Woolf's analysis, there is no sense in Smith's essay of the question of modern fiction. Indeed, his conclusion is merely to suggest that English fiction differs greatly from 'Continental writers'.¹³¹

Michael Sadleir, the final participant in this debate, recognizes these problems, naming Smith as 'authorized purveyor of red-herrings'. Yet his own sense of the existing debate contains the same fundamental problems:

As I understand it, the point at issue is whether the modern novelist (which phrase must include alike Edwardian and Georgian writers) excels or yields to his Victorian forbears in power of creating fictional character. Just that and no more.¹³²

But can this really be said to be the 'point at issue'? By conflating the difference between Edwardian and Georgian novelists, Sadleir renders Woolf's original dispute with Bennett entirely inconsequential. Sadleir goes on to make his principal point, which is that 'neither of the eminent disputants [Woolf or Beresford] is wholly free from the tendency to speak of the Victorian novel as though it were epitomized in the works of Dickens and Thackeray'. He emphasizes the scope of the Victorian novel beyond this pair, mentioning George Eliot and

¹³⁰ Smith, 'First Catch Your Hare', p. 629.

¹³¹ Smith, 'First Catch Your Hare', p. 630.

¹³² Sadleir, 'Why Only Dickens?', p. 667.

Anthony Trollope. In just the last short paragraph, the modern novel comes into view, and the conclusion that the form has become ‘gradually emaciated’ and ‘flimsy’.

There can be no doubt whatever that the greater compression or the lighter weight of modern fiction is due to the limitations of physical space in the printed book and a decline in the habit of concentration among novel readers.¹³³

This debate has come a long and confusing way from Woolf’s original challenge to Bennett’s critique of her fiction.

Characterising these responses to Woolf as inadequate in this way has a ring of injustice to it: it is always possible to hope for a better-informed, better-argued debate, in any context. I would in no way suggest that these articles are valueless. Beresford’s peculiar remarks on social change aside, this is a lengthy debate about literature (if not, after Woolf, *modern* literature) that, as Sadleir argues, ‘has now for several weeks held the attention of the *Nation and Athenaeum* readers’. After Woolf, though, this is not really a debate about the shifting and reforming nature of modern literature; as responses to Woolf’s claims about the developing face of Georgian literature, these essays waffle, miss the point, and digress.

Part of this failing might be explained simply by the fact that this is a textual debate, rather than verbal, personal conversation. When responses are separated by weeks, and formed as complete prose pieces, rather than as interjections, they necessarily speak to their own concerns, rather than those of the piece they are supposedly responding to. This being said, this cautionary note must be understood as relating specifically to the *Nation and Athenaeum*. Golding demonstrated well how Anderson, at the *Little Review*, took considerable care to shape her periodical into a restless institution that interrogated its own output, consistently encouraging the possibility of energetic debate. By contrast, as a weekly review, the *Nation and Athenaeum* is too respectable, and Leonard Woolf simply not invested enough in his position as literary editor, for the same to be true of this periodical.

These responses to ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ are thus most interesting as failed responses to Virginia Woolf. But the lack of energetic debate—à la the *Little Review*—should not

¹³³ Sadleir, ‘Why Only Dickens?’, p. 667.

be taken as a criticism of the *Nation and Athenaeum*: part of the importance of weekly reviews is that they do not behave like modernist little magazines. In her 1924 letter to Logan Pearsall Smith, Woolf expressed dissatisfaction with Beresford's response, which one might extend to frustration with the *Nation and Athenaeum* itself: this inadequate institution, demanding the expenditure of time on reviews, and not even providing a good debate. One might plausibly suggest that at least an element of Woolf's regret in 1929 was linked to an unrealistic expectation of a form of debate and conversation—blood & bone of the Woolfs in Bloomsbury—that a weekly review could never have provided. If the *Nation and Athenaeum* was, from Virginia Woolf's point of view, a sad reminder of what might have been, it may be necessary to conclude that the Woolfs had taken hold of something that was, essentially, not the right tool for the job. While the *Nation and Athenaeum* may have employed Strachey, Clive Bell, and Fry, it was never a Bloomsbury drawing room, and it is not reasonable to expect it to behave like one.

Woolf's regret in 1929 may be understandable, if perhaps not reasonable. But it should not overshadow the role that the *Nation and Athenaeum* under Leonard Woolf played in exploring modernism in Britain in the 1920s. Leonard did not enjoy his work as a literary editor; rather than driving the *Nation and Athenaeum* forward to make a particular set of arguments about literature, he patrolled an oddly neutral space, attempting to prevent the dominant political half from encroaching any further into his turf. Within this space, a series of critics—many of whom were interested in the emerging shape of modernist literature—were given the freedom to review new books, to think on how literary experiments might be linked and conceptualized, to explore how the old models of literature were being found inadequate. The *Nation and Athenaeum* was entirely a weekly review, invested in the calm book review, and in official culture; in its own way, it was also quietly radical. From and within and between the free play of these book reviews, modernism emerged into public culture, explored if not embraced by a magazine that insisted on taking it seriously. In the next chapter, I turn, for contrast, to a very different

magazine, one that Leonard Woolf described as ‘conservative’.¹³⁴ If the *Nation and Athenaeum* allowed critics a space to explore new literature, how did a magazine of the *Spectator*’s ilk negotiate a relationship with modernism?

¹³⁴ Leonard Woolf, ‘The World of Books: The Revolt Against Europe’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 20 August 1927, p. 666.

3. *THE SPECTATOR*, 1925-32

In the early years of his editorship of the *Spectator*, Evelyn Wrench attempted to employ a war hero as a reviewer. He suggested that his literary editor, Francis Yeats-Brown, invite T. E. Lawrence to review some books on the Middle East. When the idea was first put to him in April 1926, Lawrence demurred. Asked again the following year—while he was stationed in Karachi—he replied giving details of his reluctance to write.

Your letter arrived duly: and has been thought out: but I can't imagine what sort of a reception you'd give to the only sort of stuff I'd consider writing: I'll never again use the name Lawrence: nor allow anything I write to be connected in any way with the reputation I made as Lawrence. Nor will I ever write upon the Middle East, or upon any political subject. Nor upon archaeology.

If you want poems reviewed, anonymously, or literature (biography, criticism, novels of the XXth Cent. sort of Forsters, Joyces, D. H. Lawrences etc) at an interval of three months from the fountain head:—but of course you don't...¹

If all these conditions are met, he would be 'delighted' to review. Lawrence's perspective on modern literature and the *Spectator* is revealing. He portrays himself as a reader of a particular type of modern literature, and while he does not give a name to the 'sort of' thing that interests him, it can fairly be called modernist: Forster, Lawrence, Joyce 'etc'. Crucially, this group is readily identifiable and supposed to be outside the *Spectator's* purview. Borrowing the vague language that Lawrence favours, it is not a magazine involved in that sort of thing. The *Spectator* is not compatible with the serious critical discussion of modernist texts.

In this instance, Lawrence was incorrect. The *Spectator* was happy for him to review and recommend modernist literature: Yeats-Brown sent a packet of three novels by D. H. Lawrence to Karachi. These arrived on 6 July. Two days later, Lawrence wrote to Yeats-Brown, enclosing a review. He continued his previous line of thought: little faith in his own writing

¹ Evelyn Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown: 1886-1944* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), pp. 130-31. The surviving correspondence between Lawrence and Yeats-Brown is reproduced in Wrench's biography of Yeats-Brown, his cousin. The original letters are preserved in Wrench's papers; see London, British Library (BL), Wrench Papers, Add MS 59548. Lawrence's refusal to 'use the name Lawrence' refers to his re-enlistment in the armed forces under an assumed name. He first tried 'John Hume Ross' in 1922; after this was exposed, he joined the Army as 'Thomas Edward Shaw' in 1923. In 1925, Lawrence transferred to the RAF and sailed for Karachi on 7 December 1926. See Michael Korda, *Hero: The Life & Legend of Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Aurum Press, 2012), pp. 535-43, 577-78, 605, 618-24.

ability ('As for the note, of course it's no good') and less in the *Spectator's* reception of his writing ('I don't expect you to like what I write').² The article was published under the pseudonym 'C. D.' on 6 August.³ One wonders if Lawrence, having been given the approval to write the review, was attempting to push what boundaries he could find. His review makes no mention of Lawrence's experiments with explicitness (commonplace in reviews of Lawrence at this time), instead simply praising the 'rich depth and strangeness and fine artistry of the author'. He even quotes, utterly straight-faced, two stanzas of the poem 'Ballad of a Wilful Woman', including the lines 'While a naked man comes swiftly | Like a spurt of white foam'.⁴ Lawrence would write four further pieces for the *Spectator* under this pseudonym, on a range of texts from Hakluyt to H. G. Wells.⁵ He remained despondent in his letters to Yeats-Brown about his skill as critic and his compatibility with the *Spectator*.⁶

Was Lawrence wrong about the *Spectator*? When approached by Wrench and Yeats-Brown, he presumes that this magazine has a certain taste in literature: the clarity of this presumption is striking. Even if the reality proved to be more complex, the vision is instructive. The *Spectator* could be taken to defend tradition in literature, and oppose innovation; to take a cultural stance that is most simply described as conservative—although as I shall later suggest, cultural conservatism is itself not simple at all.

I do not intend to claim the *Spectator* as an unexpected advocate of experimental modernist texts. Instead, I will first suggest that the conservative rejection of modernism that

² Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, pp. 132-33.

³ Yeats-Brown had suggested that a new name might be 'amusing' to create. Lawrence took 'Colindale', the last Underground station he had visited, split it to make 'Colin Dale' and reduced this to initials. Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, pp. 131-2.

⁴ [T. E. Lawrence], 'D. H. Lawrence's Novels', *The Spectator*, 6 August 1927, p. 223. 'Ballad of a Wilful Woman' was first published in 1917 in Lawrence's collection *Look! We Have Come Through!*

⁵ [T. E. Lawrence], 'Mixed Biscuits', *The Spectator*, 20 August 1927, pp. 290-91; [T. E. Lawrence], 'A Critic of Critics Criticized', *The Spectator*, 27 August 1927, pp. 321-22; [T. E. Lawrence], 'Hakluyt—First Naval Propagandist', *The Spectator*, 10 September 1927, pp. 390-91; [T. E. Lawrence], 'The Wells Short Stories', *The Spectator*, 25 February 1928, pp. 268-69.

⁶ 'Here's another poor scribble', on 14 July; 'I write such miserable stuff', 18 August. On 6 September, he commented again on how unsuitable D. H. Lawrence was for the *Spectator*: 'The reading of that attempt to interest your readers in D. H. Lawrence was worse, as a show-up of my dumbness as a critic, even than anticipated. I'm sorry'. On 13 October, a drafted review of E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* was 'not good enough for the *Spectator*'. He ends that letter by suggesting 'You should have torn up my Guedella review'; this refers to his article of 27 August. See Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, pp. 132-6.

Lawrence identifies as natural to the *Spectator* must be taken seriously, and was a crucial factor in modernism's emergence into public culture. Taking this cultural perspective seriously entails attention to the distinctive conservative ideology associated with the *Spectator*: the same ideology that Lawrence was so quick to recognize. The *Spectator* had an institutional ideology unlike any other magazine studied here, and this significantly influences its reading of modernist texts. Finally, I contend that this ideology—a curious blend of conservatism, independence, and a studied idiosyncrasy—is able not merely to evaluate modernism, but to do so in a way that transforms it. The *Spectator* makes a modernism it is able to comprehend and appreciate. Sometimes, this conservative refashioning of modernism can provoke intriguing, unexpected readings of modernism. Sometimes, I suggest, it can distort and distend the literature that the *Spectator* attempts to analyse.

While the *Spectator's* ideology might set it apart, like the other chapters in this thesis this reading of the *Spectator* begins with an important shift in its history. It covers the short editorship of Evelyn Wrench, from 1925 to 1932. Wrench came into journalism in the first years of the twentieth century, working as a private secretary for Alfred Harmsworth. He was a passionate imperialist, and founded the Overseas League and English Speaking Union (both of which still exist today).⁷ In 1922, he joined the *Spectator* staff in a corporate (rather than editorial) role as Managing Director. Apparently, this was at the direct suggestion of Joe St. Loe Strachey, the previous editor. Wrench took over the position of Editor-in-Chief on 1 January 1925, with an option to buy the paper outright (which he exercised within a few months).⁸ He bought a paper that had previously been closely associated with an influential, long term editor—Strachey—who had edited and owned the paper for twenty-seven years. 1925 might therefore be seen to offer the prospect of significant change for the *Spectator*.

It was, however, a very different periodical to either the *Nation and Athenaeum* or *Time and Tide*. Both magazines were, in their current formats, brand new. Even if continuity is drawn

⁷ See *DNB*.

⁸ Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, p. 90.

between Keynes' *Nation and Athenaeum* in 1923 and Massingham's *Nation* in 1907, that magazine was barely adolescent. When Keynes took over the *Nation* from Massingham, he was replacing the *Nation*'s founding and only editor. Wrench may have had large shoes to fill, but Strachey's tenure at the *Spectator*—twice as long as Massingham's at the *Nation*—was only a quarter of the *Spectator*'s lifetime. Three years into Wrench's editorship, in 1928, the *Spectator* celebrated its centenary. Its first issue, published the week ending 5 July 1828, opened by discussing the invasion of Bulgaria in the Russo-Turkish war.⁹ Under Evelyn Wrench, electoral reform would allow all men and women over the age of 21 to vote in elections. In 1828, the government of the day under the Duke of Wellington had been elected with the votes of 3% of adult males.¹⁰ Impressively, Wrench's editorship represented only the fourth transfer of editorial control in the paper's ninety-seven years. The paper's first editor, Robert S. Rintoul, was in his post for thirty years. Strachey's predecessors, Meredith Townsend and Richard Holt Hutton, managed almost forty years as joint editors.¹¹

The *Spectator* figures large in the cultural history of the weekly review, and is central to the very idea of this type of magazine. As discussed briefly in the Introduction, its foundation in 1828 sets out many of the features of the weekly review that would be maintained to the early twentieth century, and even to the present day: a weekly discussion of political and cultural material, with a clear division between the two. More importantly, perhaps, individuals involved with other magazines were aware of this historical role: when weekly magazines as genre are considered, the *Spectator* is consistently used as a yardstick. One can place too much emphasis on a birthday tribute—it is hardly likely to criticize—but it remains significant that on the occasion of the *Spectator*'s centenary in 1928, the *Nation and Athenaeum* would describe it as 'a

⁹ 'The News of the Week', *The Spectator*, 5 July 1828, p. 1.

¹⁰ Based on figures for England and Wales. See Derek Beales, 'The Electorate Before and After 1832: the Right to Vote, and the Opportunity', *Parliamentary History*, 11 (1992), 139-50 (p. 147).

¹¹ Richard D. Fulton, 'Spectator, The', in *British Literary Magazines: The Romantic Age, 1789-1836*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 391-98 (p. 398). For a more in-depth history of the magazine, see William Beach Thomas, *The Story of the Spectator, 1828-1928* (London: Methuen, 1928). This was commissioned for the magazine's centenary, so is an uncritical celebration of the *Spectator*. Edward Hyams produced a similar volume to celebrate fifty years of the *New Statesman*, discussed in Chapter 5.

timeless institution, like the City Corporation, the Bank of England, and the House of Lords. It is strange to realize that, until a hundred years ago, Britain had to muddle along somehow without the weekly discipline of the *Spectator*.¹²

This ‘weekly discipline’ could be celebrated, as here, or rebelled against, but it was ever present. *Time and Tide*’s first editorial refers to the failings of a Press ‘bred for the most part in Victorian or Edwardian days’; a later speech by Rhondda on the nature of her paper names the key weekly reviews: ‘*The Nation*, *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman*, *The Saturday Review*, and our own *Time and Tide*’.¹³ What emerges from these twin conceptions of the weekly periodical press is the image of the long-lived, archetypal, conservative forebear, of which the *Spectator* is the most influential example: old enough, as it happens, to be not even Edwardian or Victorian but Georgian. When the *Nation and Athenaeum* circulated monthly reports on the paper’s advertising and circulation to its board, it provided comparative figures for the *New Statesman*, a politically aligned competitor with which it would eventually merge, and, of course, the *Spectator*.¹⁴ When the BBC first proposed to publish their own weekly review, they imagined ‘a weekly review of the ordinary type, or in other words, a “BBC Spectator”’.¹⁵ The new periodical’s name—the *Listener*—was chosen because it was ‘reminiscent of “The Spectator”’.¹⁶ When *New Statesman* editor Kingsley Martin described the weekly reviews in his autobiography (albeit referring to the 1930s) he wrote that ‘everyone took it for granted that the *Spectator* held the leading place. It was a very old-fashioned journal and assumed a somewhat superior air’.¹⁷ This periodical is not merely old, it provides an archetypal model against which other examples of the genre—especially new magazines seeking to enter an established marketplace—can measure themselves.

¹² “‘The Spectator’”, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 3 November 1928, pp. 168-69 (p. 168).

¹³ ‘Time and Tide’, *Time and Tide*, 14 May 1920, p. 4; Margaret Haig Thomas and Rebecca West, ‘The Function of the Weekly Review’, *Time and Tide*, 9 December 1927, pp. 1114-15 (p. 1114).

¹⁴ Cambridge, King’s College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, NS/4/1-2.

¹⁵ Caversham, BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), Publications: The Listener, R43/60/1 (K. Edwin, ‘The Listener’).

¹⁶ WAC, R43/60/1 (Nicolls to Murray, 25 October 1927).

¹⁷ Kingsley Martin, *Editor: A Second Volume of Autobiography, 1931-45* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p. 13.

And as T. E. Lawrence well recognized, this archetype tended to treat the concept of modernism with caution.

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In many important ways, Lawrence had the measure of the *Spectator*. This was certainly not an institution that was enamoured by modernist writing, and the *Spectator* would commonly identify modernist texts and traits only to denigrate their importance or lasting value. However, I suggest that such moments can play an important role in modernism's developing public presence. In 1927, the periodical published a short, unsigned review of Laura Riding and Robert Graves's *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, now often mentioned as one of the first texts to concretely link 'modernist' with the experimental poetry of the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁸ But the *Spectator* remains deeply unsure about the value of this critical text, and the value of the literature it assesses. The review is quoted in full.

It is not easy to see what Mr Robert Graves and Miss Laura Riding hoped for in writing this book. In part, it is an attempt to gain the sympathy of the 'plain man' for some sophisticated American-English fashions in poetry: in part it is an attempt to explain why no 'plain man' can expect to sympathize with them—they are addressed 'to the university', rather than to him. And their exposition itself seems to deny the need of any such attempts: they tell us that the aim of such writers is not in the least degree communication; but that they are much more engaged in commenting to themselves mockingly on the fact that they are writing poetry. Perhaps the best chapter in this book is the one which describes the attitude of mind implicit in 'modernism'; the pretence that one belongs to a 'lost generation', in which all standards and all tradition have vanished, and the poet is left as a dead soul laughing a little sourly at himself for being so dead. It would be simple to see in such a posture an infinitely regressive involution of fright and self-pity; but the authors would like us to observe the complexity of the involution, sympathize with it, and even admire it. They will find converts among the converted; or perhaps 'not even that', for then self-mockery would be at an end.¹⁹

One sees echoes of Sylvia Lynd's criticisms of Woolf, though the *Spectator's* review lacks even the question of potential. The modernist poetry that Riding and Graves explore so carefully is dismissed as 'some sophisticated American-English fashions'. The nature of this attack is important. As Faye Hammill has demonstrated, the value of 'sophistication' was in transition at this time. Where writers in the nineteenth century had tended to understand sophistication as morally questionable, in the twenties and thirties the term became more closely and positively

¹⁸ For example, see Ástráður Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 86.

¹⁹ 'Current Literature', *The Spectator*, 24 December 1927, p. 1132.

associated with urban modernity and—to a certain extent—modernism.²⁰ The *Spectator* thus not only orients itself against modernism, but pushes back against the concept of sophistication as positive attribute. Here, it clearly associates modernism with the older, negative connotations of sophistication: ‘forbidden knowledge’, an opposition to ‘consensual public morality’, ‘illness and death’ via consumption, ‘sexual desire and the maturing body’.²¹ Put another way: falseness, fragility, urbanity, effeminacy, irrelevance.

Modernism is, ultimately, a fashion: it does not offer meaningful or historically significant change, but the products of a new season that will, very soon, be superseded. Crucially, this review takes key terms used by Riding and Graves and places them into quotation marks: ‘plain man’, ‘lost generation’, ‘modernism’. Riding and Graves do not use marks around these terms. Take their first sentence:

It must be assumed for the moment that poetry not characteristically ‘modernist’ presents no difficulty to the plain reader; for the complaint against modernist poetry turns on its differences from traditional poetry.²²

Plain reader is used here and throughout the rest of the book (note that Riding and Graves’s term is gender neutral). ‘Modernist’ is placed in inverted commas in the first clause, but these are dropped for the second one and do not reappear. ‘Lost generation’ appears in Chapter 9, directly attributed to Hemingway in the famous epigraph to *The Sun Also Rises*, and following this is used without quotation marks.²³ The presence of the marks of course indicates that the validity of the term introduced by Riding and Graves is held to be questionable. If Riding and Graves are arguing for the importance of modernist poetry, the *Spectator* is pushing back against the classification itself.

If, following my use of Ian Hacking, discussions of modernist texts in weekly magazines represent modernism itself emerging into the light, the *Spectator* here takes the classification and

²⁰ Faye Hammill, *Sophistication: a Literary and Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), pp. 117-19.

²¹ Hammill, *Sophistication: a Literary and Cultural History*, pp. 66-67.

²² Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry and A Pamphlet Against Anthologies*, ed. by Charles Mundye and Patrick McGuinness (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2002), p. 5.

²³ That is, “‘You are all a lost generation’—Gertrude Stein, in conversation.’ See Riding and Graves, *A Survey*, p. 111.

attempts to push it back into the dark. Modernism is not a significant cultural development that demands to be understood, but only a fashion. This periodical's desire to deny validity to modernism is only partially successful. Indeed, perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this review to a modern reader is that it is so familiar. Modernism lacks any form of moral backbone or serious endeavour, associated with 'pretence', sour laughter, 'fright and self-pity', mocking commentary. Modernism offers only 'involution', is always reflexive and thinks only of itself. These are criticisms that any reader of modernist literature will have encountered. Note, for example, certain similarities between this 1927 review and John Carey's 1992 invective against modernism, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*.

I would suggest [...] that the principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses, the defeat of their power, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity.²⁴

That this review can be understood as a generalized attack on modernism signifies because—as is often remarked—the modernist poetry that Riding and Graves were promoting was idiosyncratic, and attuned to Riding's poetic agenda in particular. For example, e. e. cummings is presented the most representative of modernist poets, Riding's own poetry is quoted (without attribution) as a model for discussion, and Ezra Pound is hardly discussed at all.

This is not, of course, a criticism of the *Survey* itself: critical idiosyncrasies are always apparent in hindsight. Instead, it suggests that the *Spectator's* review of *A Survey* has the effect of flattening out those idiosyncrasies. In its attempt to condemn Riding and Graves's promotion of their modernist poetry, the *Spectator* refers to a wider concept of modernism. It is notable that the review places 'modernism' in quotation marks, whereas Riding and Graves—though they do use that word—prefer the term 'modernist', which they almost invariably use with 'poetry'. Where *A Survey* tends to stick to the specific literary form in question, the review generalizes and looks outward to the wider movement.

²⁴ John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 21.

In other words, in reviewing this very particular discussion of poetry, the *Spectator* discusses modernism itself. Even as it attempts to deny validity to modernism, the periodical cannot help but set the concept up as a publicly contested idea. Towards the end of the review, the *Spectator* writes that ‘the authors would like us to observe the complexity of the involution, sympathize with it, and even admire it’. Here, they are not so much questioning the existence of modernism as challenging the characteristics that (they suggest) Riding and Graves assign to it: an ‘involution of fright and self-pity’. At this moment—and perhaps only *for* a moment—modernism appears as a concrete force in public culture, even as it is contested. But as I have suggested, this appearance follows directly from the way in which this review represents Riding and Graves’s arguments. Therefore, it is neither recognition of cultural fact (a situation in which anyone can see what modernism is, and the *Spectator* does not like it) nor entirely obscure (a situation in which no *Spectator* reader would understand what was under discussion). Rather, it is at moments such as this that the concept of modernism emerges into public culture.

Crucially, the *Spectator*’s review plays this role even though it would prefer to dismiss modernism altogether. Indeed, one might quite mischievously suggest that that very dislike is closely related to the important transformation of Riding and Graves’s modernist poetry into the review’s more general modernism; that a more in-depth or positive review might have paid greater attention to the *Survey*’s idiosyncrasies. Although further examples of just such a generalizing approach to modernism are commonplace, the review of *A Survey* is extraordinary in its direct focus on the label and qualities of modernism. Given the nature of the text under review, this is perhaps not surprising.

Nevertheless, considering a wider range of examples is revealing. The *Spectator* will sometimes use the vaguest possible language to indicate the presence of modernist writers or texts: Fannie Hurst’s *Appassionata* (1926) is poorly received and compared to Joyce and Stein.

Miss Hurst is a clever writer [...] But there are signs that she has been over-impressed by a certain school of writers who are in every sense the worst models for others, whatever literary merit they may in themselves possess—novelists like James Joyce and the inimitably absurd Gertrude Stein.²⁵

Turning to the first pages of Hurst's novel, one can see what is gestured at:

'Y-a-w-n', said Laura, and all her muscles ran out and flexed for her to that instant ecstatic rigidity and then shimmered back again, neatly and exactly into place.

That was it! To yawn as Laura yawned made you shiver with the ecstasy of the flesh....

Then you dozed off again. So easily. Like the great cat that curled up again surely into its design.²⁶

At this moment on the first page, the narrative moves from observing Laura in third person to an attempt to link her perspective directly to the reader in second person. Indeed, most of the novel is written in second person. One might argue that this narration is not wholly successful; the separation hinted at between 'Laura' and 'you' in phrases such as 'To yawn as Laura yawned made you shiver' is unclear. However, it is certainly a narrative style influenced by modernist experimentation; as Randall Stevenson puts it 'heightened concern with individual, subjective consciousness'.²⁷

As with Riding and Graves, however, the *Spectator* review does not focus on exploring the exact nature of these experiments but generalizes. We are not given a great deal of evidence of the 'signs' of her association with modernism, but instead some members of a 'certain school'. That use of 'certain' is akin to a knowing wink: the shared qualities of this school of Joyce and Stein are assumed to be known without the need for explication. Again, vague generalization is used to avoid serious and careful discussion of modernist fiction, but one effect of this is to imply that the specific characteristics of this 'certain school' are public knowledge. This cannot help but give greater public weight to the concept of modernism itself.

E. F. Benson writes in a similar way with just a touch more detail in 1927: literature is described as 'what we may call the "jazz" of the present day'.²⁸ Again, the tone is knowing,

²⁵ '[Appassionata'. By Fanny Hurst]', *The Spectator*, 17 April 1926, p. 730. The author's name is misspelled by the *Spectator* as 'Fanny' Hurst.

²⁶ Fannie Hurst, *Appassionata* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926), p. 1.

²⁷ Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, rev. edn (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1998), p. 2. Notably, this aspect of modernist fiction is Stevenson's opening example, and is drawn from two very early critics: R. A. Scott James's *Modernism and Romance* (1908) and Elizabeth Drew's *The Modern Novel* (1926).

²⁸ E. F. Benson, 'A Notable First Novel', *The Spectator*, 10 September 1927, pp. 392-95 (p. 392).

assuming that the reader will easily recognize that which is under discussion. Here, the use of ‘what we may call’ makes the same gesture as ‘certain school’, but pushes it a little further: it is assumed that something exists to be named, and quite playfully supplies a name transplanted from music. There is, in this instance, slightly more detail. W. Seymour Leslie’s *The Silent Queen* is not referring to ‘the torrid round of night-clubs, cocktails, and pink legs’, but ‘the true jazz of the present day, the squeals and broken rhythms and general monkey-tricks of the mind and spirit’.²⁹ Again, the text itself does bear the comparison, even if it is hardly modernist prose par excellence.

The shutter of memory opens and reveals a perambulator adventuring the north-west passage amid mud-splashed omnibuses hauled by steaming foam-flecked horses, and hansoms and carriages containing real ladies and silk-hatted gentlemen. All this animation arrested by a policeman’s hand that the frail craft may pass over to the corner of our street, which reached, there is heard a thunder of hoofs, and the slow-motion traffic of a vanished London rolls once more forward. As the perambulator tips up the front-door steps, a German band explodes with a terrible gaiety into *Tarara-boom-deay*.³⁰

Rather than offering a close analysis of the exact association between ‘jazz’ and Leslie’s novel, the review depends upon the reader’s ability to infer. It imagines that knowledge of the ‘jazz of the present day’ is commonly understood and that readers would be easily able to see how such experiments might be applied to literature. The term ‘modernism’ may not be in play, but these reviews nevertheless continue to develop a sense of a certain form of modern experimental prose fiction as a matter of common public knowledge.

Terms that approach modernism do appear, though rarely. An early publication by Stephen Spender, in 1929, again uses quotation marks to play with a label, writing of ‘the experiments of the “moderns”’.³¹ More common, however, are labels that speak of forced, artificial, or unnecessary modernity. Austin Clarke refers to Joyce, Eliot, Huxley and Sitwell as ‘the more advanced writers of the day’ in 1926.³² It is difficult not to read this as an advancement beyond what is natural. J. B. Priestley’s review of Edith Wharton’s *The Writing of*

²⁹ Benson, ‘A Notable First Novel’, p. 392.

³⁰ W. Seymour Leslie, *The Silent Queen* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927), pp. 10-11.

³¹ Stephen Spender, ‘The Problems of Poet and Public’, *The Spectator*, 3 August 1929, pp. 152-53 (p. 152).

³² Austin Clarke, ‘Interpretations and Intuitions’, *The Spectator*, 4 December 1926, Literary Supplement, p. 1026.

Fiction in 1925 writes of ‘the ultra-subjective, the “stream-of-consciousness” novels that are so fashionable at the moment’.³³ The connotations of the prefix ‘ultra-’ were discussed in relation to Thomas Moul’s reviews in Chapter 1; similarly, Priestley offers little detail on what is being discussed—merely suggesting that one detail, the ‘subjective’, has been taken too far—but presumes the reader knows what is being discussed. This dismissal of a ‘fashion’ in novels develops, by implication, the sense that the stream-of-consciousness novel is a matter of common knowledge. In addition (and just as for Moul), the use of ultra- implies the possibility of a modernity that might, actually, seem more legitimate to the *Spectator*. To criticize the ‘ultra-subjective’ raises the possibility of a subjective novel that is not excessive.

In this light, more positive understandings of modern literature are often curious. Amabel Williams-Ellis, reviewing *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, describes Virginia Woolf as ‘one of the best of our modern “mystic realist” novelists’.³⁴ ‘Our modern [...] novelists’ again works towards that unsaid recognition of modernism, but the qualification of novelists with ‘mystic realist’—again, in quotation marks—is problematic. It is an attempt to conceptualize Woolf’s work, but borders on the bizarre. The source of Williams-Ellis’s terms is hard to trace; naming a novelist a realist is clearly a relatively safe form of praise, and might in Woolf’s case be related specifically to *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*. As was discussed at length in the previous chapter (albeit in terms of the earlier, periodical version), one of the arguments made in *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown* is an attempt to frame Woolf’s fiction as a new evolution of realism, another way to catch Mrs Brown.

‘Mystic’ is trickier. Leigh Wilson’s recent *Modernism and Magic* (2012) boldly argues that ‘modernism drew on discussions of the occult [...] because it saw in them the possibilities for a reconceptualization of the mimetic’.³⁵ In this context, Williams-Ellis’s deployment of ‘mystic’ is intriguing, but the use of this term in the *Spectator* seems not so much to link modernism and

³³ J. B. Priestley, ‘The Novelist’s Art’, *The Spectator*, 5 December 1925, p. 1047.

³⁴ Amabel Williams-Ellis, ‘Books of the Moment: Seven Books of Essays’, *The Spectator*, 10 January 1925, p. 47 (p. 47).

³⁵ Leigh Wilson, *Modernism and Magic* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 1.

magic but to link Woolf with mysticism. As Wilson notes, the early twentieth century did experience ‘an occult revival’ rooted in the late nineteenth century.³⁶ A mystic Woolf might therefore be a way for the *Spectator* to understand Woolf’s works as developing in a tradition, rather than turning away from one. That this mooted classification is both unusual and problematic—surely *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown* argues strongly for a turn away from a certain tradition—is highly significant. Rather than leaving modernism unspoken, the *Spectator* is here generating its own terms of reference for new literature.

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I assign this act of generation to the *Spectator* itself. Part of the reason that I am able to do this is that several of the texts discussed above—especially the crucial review of *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*—are anonymous. However, it should be acknowledged that the presence (or lack) of a name on the byline changes how descriptions of modernism are discussed. ‘Mystic realist’ is quite clearly Amabel Williams-Ellis’s term. I continue to speak of the *Spectator* generating such terms in order to emphasize the particular importance of institutional identity for this magazine, over and above the other periodicals considered by this thesis.

As I argued in the Introduction, Bakhtin’s dialogic understanding of novels can imply that a periodical can be modelled as a structuring stylistic unity for the texts within it. The question of how individual reviews interacted with and reacted to modernist literature must always be understood in the context of the institution they were writing for, and the case of the *Spectator*—long-lived, prestigious, conservative—was very different from other magazines. This periodical exhibits a sense of its own unified and stable identity unlike other weekly reviews. Returning briefly to that first example of T. E. Lawrence’s letter, he professes to know exactly what the *Spectator* will think of his values. Even though he was mistaken, the clarity of his assumption is striking. Therefore, the way in which this magazine approaches and interrogates

³⁶ Wilson, *Modernism and Magic*, p. 1.

modernism must be understood in the context of the magazine's strong and unusual institutional identity; or, as I will be referring to it throughout, the ideology of the *Spectator* itself.

Evidence for the particular and distinctive strength of this ideology abounds. An understanding of the values of a modernist magazine is often explored by way of the editor, not least because many of the most important periodicals for modernism were closely associated with particular editors. As has been well rehearsed in histories of little magazines, many if not all of the first periodicals to publish modernist texts were associated with charismatic and influential editors: Harriet Monroe at *Poetry*, Margaret Anderson at the *Little Review*, Wyndham Lewis at *BLAST*, John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield at *Rhythm*, to take only four of the most famous examples. Ian Hamilton—himself, not coincidentally, an editor—subtitled his study of little magazines ‘A Study of Six Editors’.³⁷ While most of these editors came to prominence in the 1910s, Brooker and Thacker argue that the 1920s saw in Britain ‘the emergence of a generation of editors, T. S. Eliot, John Middleton Murry, Edgell Rickword, and Desmond MacCarthy, as figures of standing and influence’.³⁸

The *Spectator*'s editorial history appears similar. The modernist little magazine did not, after all, invent the figure of the charismatic, powerful, domineering editor who comes to stand, metonymically, for the magazine itself. This chapter covers the editorship of Evelyn Wrench, who as discussed above had the unenviable task of following the acclaimed twenty-seven year career of John St Loe Strachey, usually known as St Loe. By all accounts, St Loe carried significant political influence in his own person, as his daughter, Amabel Williams-Ellis, suggested.

The party manipulators knew that father [St Loe] was honest and believed him talented. The *Spectator* was still exceedingly influential [...] He believed himself a Whig, a cross-bencher, a broad churchman, an independent, and Oliver Cromwell was one of his heroes. For many years, week by week, on one question or another, Government and Opposition statesman had courted him when they needed support.³⁹

³⁷ Ian Hamilton, *The Little Magazines: A Study of Six Editors* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976).

³⁸ *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009-2013), I, 339.

³⁹ Amabel Williams-Ellis, *All Strachey's Are Cousins: Memoirs* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 83.

One of the more insidious consequences of this personal control—like Wrench after him, St Loe was both editor and proprietor—was a microscopic, censorial influence over the paper's material, extending from the unsigned leaders to material supposedly written by other contributors. James Strachey suggests that he provided 'detailed instructions about what was to be written in the leader, the sermon or the review concerned', and corrected proofs. 'He altered a word here and there, he scribbled a fresh sentence in the margin, he struck out a whole paragraph and replaced it by one of his own'.⁴⁰ James Strachey further suggests that Lytton Strachey's later contributions to the magazine were written in full and conscious awareness of this editorial pen: that Strachey curbed his own style in order to pre-empt St Loe's alterations.

To an extent, then, St Loe was a powerful and influential editor who shared key characteristics with the editors of modernist little magazines. But the majority of those editors founded or transformed their periodicals, moulding them to express their agendas. There was no *Criterion* without Eliot. Accounts of St Loe's career also emphasize the level of his influence on the paper, but suggest that he was able to exert this influence because he was—almost serendipitously—so closely aligned with the paper's ideology. One of two full-page obituaries for St Loe emphasized that the previous editors saw him as a natural successor.

From 1886 onward the *Spectator* became the pivot of his life. Long before his position on the Paper was known to outsiders, while he was still only writing weekly leaders, and 'supplying', for each editor in turn, he knew the *Spectator* would eventually be his. Richard Hutton and Meredith Townsend, among their intimates, spoke of him as the heir-apparent, before he had completed his first year's work.⁴¹

St Loe did not seize control, but was found to be worthy of it: he and the *Spectator* prospered.

Amabel Williams-Ellis discusses the end of Strachey's tenure: she recalls that she and her brother, the (future) Labour politician John Strachey, were originally expected to inherit the *Spectator* when their father (St Loe) retired. As it became clear that John's left-wing principles were not a youthful fad, however, this inheritance was called into question.

⁴⁰ James Strachey, 'Introduction', in Lytton Strachey, *Spectatorial Essays*, ed. by James Strachey (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), pp. 8-9.

⁴¹ 'Amicus', 'John St Loe Strachey', *The Spectator*, 3 September 1927, Special Supplement, p. ii.

It was plain that the *Spectator* could not become socialist and live, though John did contribute a few Leftist articles. John knew that, however sympathetic and kind father might be, he ultimately had to be disinherited because of his new left-wing convictions.⁴²

That notion of the *Spectator* 'living' is at once a simple, metaphorical acknowledgement of the relentless periodicity of a weekly magazine—it must always go on producing, week by week—and a reference to an idea of the *Spectator* that St Loe—and John Strachey—had to be measured against. A new editor must match up to the paper's own, distinctive, ideology.

When that new editor did take over the paper, he not only emphasized a reliance on the ideology of the paper, but suggested that his own editorial style was less than dictatorial. Writing of St Loe's legacy, Evelyn Wrench argued that 'his public spirit, his enthusiasm for great causes and readiness to accept ideas, were an inspiration to all who came in contact with him. The torch he handed to us we were determined to carry worthily'.⁴³ Note the shift from singular to plural as Strachey leaves and Wrench takes over. Similarly, Wrench describes staff meetings, where the magazine was worked up, as 'informal gatherings, where there was complete freedom of speech, sparks used to fly, for the political views of the staff varied'.⁴⁴ St Loe's strong influence on the paper may have been partially enabled by his close alliance to the ideology of the *Spectator*, but when Wrench takes over even this personal influence is lessened, and the editorial team sees itself as relying more heavily on the 'torch' passed from one hand to the next, the values of the paper. The *Spectator*, then, manifests as a stable institution with a distinct ideology: very different, of course, to a modernist little magazine but also different to the other magazines under discussion by this thesis, all of which were far younger and none of which exhibit such a clear awareness of their long-maintained ideological values.

Discerning precisely what those values were is often difficult. The *Spectator* of course lacks a manifesto-like statement of its aims and ideals, so common to little magazines. This is not to say that it had none, merely that it did not lay them out clearly. This problem is well illustrated by a letter written to Evelyn Wrench by Francis Yeats-Brown towards the end of

⁴² Williams-Ellis, *All Strachey's Are Cousins*, pp. 83-84.

⁴³ Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, p. 91.

Wrench's tenure as editor. Wrench was looking for a successor, and Yeats-Brown puts himself forward, although only half-heartedly. He does not seem to want the job. Yeats-Brown was perhaps aware that Wrench did not favour him for this particular position; Wrench would later write that 'I never had any intention of entrusting him with the political side of the paper, as I did not consider his judgment reliable'.⁴⁵ Writing to Wrench, however, Yeats-Brown did make one central claim for his candidacy.

I do believe that I know that the *Spectator* readers think and want, having been a leisured *Spectator* reader myself for longer than most journalists. This is not conceit: it is merely that my mind really does work with theirs. I should very rarely want to discuss what *Spectator* readers would think about anything, for I believe I know, from 20 years experience.⁴⁶

Frustratingly, there is little detail on what *Spectator* readers want: merely the assertion that it is something readily comprehended by the right candidate for the job. Perhaps that vagueness signifies, and the nature of the *Spectator*'s ideology is best accessed from the side, as it were; from small moments rather than explicit statements.

One of these moments is a comparison, in the 1928 centenary issue, of the contemporary *Spectator* with its nineteenth-century self. Two of the paper's most famous editors were Meredith Townsend and Richard Hutton (joint editors 1861-97), and they were imagined as spectral presences in the modern offices of the *Spectator*.

Things have been changing since their time; above all, ways of thinking and speaking have been changing. [...] But we think they would not feel strangers in the editorial room together, Hutton first, adjusting his eye-glass, Townsend behind him, grasping his snuff-box.⁴⁷

This does not suggest that the *Spectator* was ignorant of modernity; instead, the institution modelled here is able both to keep touch with modernity yet also offer a stable continuity with its own past.

Continuity—temporal continuity—is thus clearly valuable to the *Spectator*. 'We think they would not feel strangers': this is posed hopefully. Similarly, the magazine exhibits a clear

⁴⁵ Wrench, *Francis Yeats-Brown*, pp. 90-91. This most likely referred to Yeats-Brown's keen advocacy of Fascist politics. He published an enthusiastic interview with Mussolini in the *Spectator* in 1926; see Francis Yeats-Brown, 'Signor Mussolini: The New Italy Incarnate', *The Spectator*, 9 October 1926, pp. 562-63.

⁴⁶ BL, Add MS 59544, vol. IV f. 84 (Francis Yeats-Brown to Evelyn Wrench, 26 October 1930).

⁴⁷ C. Townsend, 'The Story of the "Spectator"', *The Spectator*, 3 November 1928, pp. 1-8 (p. 8). It is not clear—although certainly plausible—if C. Townsend is related to Meredith Townsend (1831-1911), one of the editors discussed in this article.

spatial continuity between its political and literary material. While this continuity was not unique to the *Spectator*, it was not always present. As seen in the previous chapter, Leonard Woolf's literary half of the *Nation and Athenaeum* was somewhat isolated from the political half, and clearly a lower priority. The *New Statesman* also clearly separates the two (see Chapter 5), and tends to describe the two halves as the 'front half' and 'back half'. For that magazine's centenary issue (in 2013) Jonathan Derbyshire wrote about the literary half; he quoted V. S. Pritchett's remark that 'this paper has always been torn in half'.⁴⁸ In these cases, arguments concerning the paper's politics might not necessarily carry any weight with the cultural material. With the *Spectator*, the case that they might is far stronger.

One final attempt to characterise this ideology. Introducing Lytton Strachey's writings on the *Spectator*, James Strachey relays an old joke about the *Spectator*, that it was 'to be found [...] on the breakfast table of every vicarage in the country'.⁴⁹ While Strachey's joke is in the realm of affectionate caricature, it does apply a certain set of associations: an intimacy with state institutions; (again) stability and continuity as vicars provide a large, regular, predictable group of subscribers; perhaps a reluctance to offend; an emphasis on Christian ethics and traditions. It is difficult to describe the *Spectator's* ideology as anything other than *conservative*.

*

This is not, of course, a surprise. Conservative is how Leonard Woolf described the paper; it is the term that springs to mind when Lawrence dismisses the paper as a suitable location for his opinions, or when it comes down hard against *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, or modernism itself. It is also the political ideology most clearly associated with the periodical as it has continued to publish weekly issues into the twenty-first century. I have built the case for the *Spectator's* conservatism slowly in order to make an important point for this argument: not simply that the *Spectator's* conservative ideology is the central constitutive element of the periodical as institution (although it most certainly is) but that this ideology heavily influences

⁴⁸ Jonathan Derbyshire, 'The Pantomime Horse', *The New Statesman*, 12-25 April 2013, pp. 144-45 (p. 144).

⁴⁹ Strachey, *Spectatorial Essays*, p. 7.

the way the paper behaves, to an extent that is unlike any of the other magazines considered by this thesis.

Indeed, just as it is not sufficient to take an assertion from the contemporary *Spectator* and conclude that the periodical is conservative, the nature of its conservatism—of conservatism itself—is not simple. Just as there are moments where the paper denies the validity of modernist art, there are moments such as that in T. E. Lawrence’s letter, where his largely accurate understanding of the periodical’s ideology fails to predict its reception of his ideas. Or critical terms such as Williams-Ellis’s ‘mystic realist’ for Woolf, which is perplexing but clearly does more than just resist classifying her work as experimental. Conservatism is often described simply as a resistance to change. John Charmley opens his history of the Conservative party with what purports to be a convincingly tautological definition: ‘The Conservative Party exists to conserve [...] Unfortunately for it and its adherents, all things change.’⁵⁰ But this will not do, as both the examples taken from the *Spectator* and broader discussions of conservatism demonstrate.

Defining conservative ideology is not easy, and clear statements are few and far between. Part of the problem, perhaps, lies in the theoretical tendency (outdated yet tenacious) to define conservatism as anti-ideological in nature. E. H. H. Green describes this idea as ‘puzzlingly long-lived’, citing a range of thinkers; two examples from the twenties are Walter Elliot’s description of conservatism as ‘an observation of life and not *a priori* reasoning’, and John Buchan’s similar notion of ‘a spirit not an abstract doctrine’.⁵¹ As Green illustrates, while it is demonstrable that conservative thought tends not to make much use of ‘*formal* statements of political belief’—certainly less than, say, Marxism, to take only the most obvious example—the idea that conservatism is genuinely non-ideological in nature is laughable; as Green puts it,

⁵⁰ John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics Since 1830*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 1.

⁵¹ E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 2-3.

‘Conservatives do possess, indeed *must* possess, an ideological map of the world which enables them to identify objects of approval and disapproval, friend and foe.’⁵²

An influential illustration of just such an ‘ideological map’ was provided by Hugh Cecil’s 1912 discussion of conservative thought.

Progress whether in science or in the arts of government or of social life, requires a certain readiness to go beyond experience and to try novelties. Yet if that readiness be reckless and unbridled, disaster is certain. Desire to move forward and try what is new must be harmonized with distrust of the untried and fear of the dangers that may be lurking in the unknown. Wisdom is not so anxious for progress as not to be afraid of novelty; not so afraid of novelty as to be contented without progress. The two sentiments of desire to advance and fear of the dangers of moving, apparently contradictory, are in fact complementary and mutually necessary. The restraints of conservatism are the indispensable condition of the security and efficiency of progress in all regions of human activity from Parliament to a motor-car. In both a brake is necessary to safety. And restraint is not only essential to hinder what is foolish, but also to guide and control what is wisely intended and save movement from becoming vague, wild and mischievous. Progress depends on conservatism to make it intelligent, efficient and appropriate to circumstance.⁵³

Progress can be ‘intelligent, efficient’, but only if conservative principles are properly applied. Cecil’s motor-car image is powerful and, for 1912, intensely modern. Conservatism, as the brake, is not trying to make the car go backwards, or even stand still, but is a vital component of safe onward progress. The political theorist Michael Freeden makes a similar point, arguing that the key motivation for a conservative ideology is the notion of organically managed change.

Conservatism [...] is *not* an ideology of the status quo. It is not merely an attempt to forestall change and to arrest the historical process. Rather, it is an ideology predominantly *concerned* with the problem of change: not necessarily proposing to eliminate it, but to render it safe. [...] Predominantly, conservatives identify desirable change as growth and hence ‘natural’.⁵⁴

When modernism comes under discussion, then, a common reaction *is* to see it as unnatural growth and hence to reject it: consider, again, the use of scare quotes and of prefixes such as ‘advanced’ that are discussed earlier in this chapter.

But to characterise modernism as inimical to conservatism in all ways and at all times is too reductive, and in particular ignores the pluralisation of modernism now so important to modernist studies. The question of modernism and politics itself forms, in Michael Levenson’s

⁵² Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, p. 3.

⁵³ Hugh Cecil, *Conservatism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), pp. 13-14.

⁵⁴ Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 332.

words, an ‘abiding puzzle’.⁵⁵ Many different political viewpoints were found in many different modernisms; additionally, as David Weir points out, the link between progressive art and progressive politics is unclear. ‘The artist who rebels against aesthetic tradition may nonetheless be politically conservative. By the same token, the most reactionary political figure may *also* be the most receptive to avant-garde art.’⁵⁶ When it comes to assessing modernist literature, then, the simplest way in which the *Spectator*’s ideology can locate organic growth is to pick out those authors that seem most readily compatible with notions of steady historical change, reverent of tradition and unwilling to challenge the social order.

T. S. Eliot, of course, stands tall. While Eliot was much mocked in the early years of his career, and perceived as part of an avant-garde, by the late twenties his own drift towards a more conservative position was clear, and the *Spectator*’s reception of T. S. Eliot was very often deeply appreciative.⁵⁷ The magazine described Eliot as ‘so considerable a poet’, disliked the ‘frozen timidity’ of his *Poems 1909-1925*, yet argued that ‘technical and “mere literary” virtues [...] abound in Mr. Eliot without measure’.⁵⁸ One might expect a conservative critique of Eliot to focus on the lack of rhyme, the use of quotation and allusion, or modern subject matter, but the *Spectator* is quite happy to accept the ‘technical’ and ‘literary’ virtues of Eliot’s verse. As might be expected, his critical prose lends itself particularly well to the *Spectator*’s outlook. *Spectator* writers treat Eliot not only as an important writer but as a key critic to mention when discussing other works: acknowledging, for example, in a review of a new edition of Hazlitt, Eliot’s dislike of that writer. The *Spectator* writes that ‘It may be that Hazlitt had the least interesting mind of all our great English critics, as Mr T. S. Eliot has stated’.⁵⁹ Notably, this demonstrates a thorough knowledge of Eliot’s criticism. Hazlitt is criticized only obliquely in

⁵⁵ Michael H. Levenson, *Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 270.

⁵⁶ David Weir, *Anarchy & Culture: the Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), p. 1.

⁵⁷ For a fuller description of this change, see Chapter 5.

⁵⁸ ‘This Week’s Books’, *The Spectator*, 28 November 1925, p. 987.

⁵⁹ ‘This Week’s Books’, *The Spectator*, 28 March 1925, pp. 503-04.

The Sacred Wood (1920), Eliot's most accessible volume of criticism.⁶⁰ The *Spectator's* review offers an accurate paraphrase of Eliot's description of Hazlitt as possessing 'the most uninteresting mind of all our distinguished critics', in *Homage to John Dryden* (1924), a Hogarth Press publication on a much smaller scale.⁶¹ A later review of Eliot himself, published in 1929, expands on the importance of his criticism:

Austerity of taste and economy of method place Mr. Eliot in the small company of living writers whose work is a serious contribution to English prose. The short essays are dense with a thought which is often concerned with the chief mysteries of life; yet this density of thought is not at first perceived by us, because a deliberate purgation of the mind has given to it clarity and quietness of expression.⁶²

The review focuses not on Eliot's modernism, but instead associates his writing with a series of related attributes: austerity, economy, seriousness, density, purgation, clarity, quietness. A 'contribution' has been made to 'English prose', but this change is not forced or unnatural but measured and organic. Eliot offers progress, but progress tempered and controlled by the solid, serious, thoughtful, restrained nature of his prose. Nowhere can one see Eliot's more radical side: this is modernist criticism reimagined as something wholly amenable to conservative ideology.

But Eliot is an easy target. Only the most restrictive understanding of conservative thought could be surprised by the appeal of the measured and calm critical prose of this Anglo-Catholic Anglophile to a magazine like the *Spectator*. Nevertheless, it is vital to emphasize how the *Spectator* praises certain aspects of Eliot's work over others, crafting an image of this poet that is compatible with the periodical's ideology. It must be granted that Eliot's work might be seen as amiable to just such a portrayal, but it *is* a very particular portrayal. One is reminded of Freedom's well-chosen words on conservatism, not attempting to deny change but to 'render it

⁶⁰ T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920), pp. 17, 18.

⁶¹ T. S. Eliot, *Homage to John Dryden: Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924), p. 17; 'This Week's Books', p. 503.

⁶² [Evelyn Underhill], 'Mr Eliot's Essays', *The Spectator*, 9 February 1929, pp. 206-09 (p. 206). I assign this review (signed 'E. U.') to Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941). Several other essays in the *Spectator* under these initials are reviews of theology, and Underhill's *DNB* entry names her as the *Spectator's* theological editor (no dates given for this position).

safe'. The verb is active, and its use contains hints of both representing and making.⁶³ When the *Spectator's* conservative ideology seeks to understand modernism, to render it safe, it does not merely pick and choose the elements it judges compatible, but crafts something it can understand and praise.

Consider a review written by the Irish poet Austin Clarke in 1929, of five new collections of poetry.⁶⁴ He begins by considering Ezra Pound's *Selected Poetry*, introduced by T. S. Eliot.⁶⁵

Reform and change in English poetry have always been effected by constitutional means. But radical poets, in opposition, play a useful part by disturbing the slumbers of more successful poets upon the Front Benches; they are necessary to a tradition that has phlegmatic tendencies. The excesses of the Cockney School quickened the development of Keats; Darley's fantastic glitter may have spurred Tennyson to brighter lines. It is too soon to see how the modernist practice of Mr. Ezra Pound and others will stimulate constitutional poetry, but it is not too soon to realize how often modernists spoil their own development by remaining in opposition. The great poets have always compromised themselves: in bringing back simplicity of diction, Wordsworth and Coleridge fell into a phase of idiocy, but neither settled down to foolishness in order to spite the critics.⁶⁶

Clarke begins his review by introducing an extended metaphor: the current state of English poetry as the House of Commons, complete with established poets on the Front Government Benches, and new voices in opposition. Unlike the anonymous review of Riding and Graves, Clarke does not fail to find merit in modernism. He both praises Pound's work and argues that the introduction of 'radical' material is necessary, and has a 'part to play'. His analysis remains deeply—even carefully—ambivalent, suggesting that traditional poets are 'more successful' but also 'phlegmatic' and in 'slumbers'; Pound can 'stimulate' but might also 'spoil' if he remains too long in opposition. The image is at once entirely appropriate to the *Spectator* and a complete mismatch with the terms of modernist poetry as Pound, at least, would have seen them. Pound's emerging fascist views notwithstanding, his treatment of poetry and modernism is

⁶³ *OED*, 'render, v.', sense 3.b, 18.a.

⁶⁴ Austin Clarke (1896-1974) wrote poetry, novels, and verse theatre, alongside reviews and journalism for a range of periodicals: the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Observer*, *T. P.'s Weekly*, *Nation* and *Athenaeum*, *London Mercury*, as well as the *Spectator*. His reviews were described as 'workmanlike', although this particular example is fascinating. See *DNB*. He wrote forty-three articles for the *Spectator*, the first twenty-five of which were published under Evelyn Wrench.

⁶⁵ The other four collections reviewed: Edith Sitwell, *Gold Coast Customs and Other Poems*; Edgell Rickword, *Invocations to Angels and the Happy New Year*; Edward Thompson, *The Thracian Stranger and Other Poems*; E. R. Dodds, *Thirty-Two Poems*.

⁶⁶ Austin Clarke, 'Unconstitutional Poetry', *The Spectator*, 9 March 1929, Literary Supplement, p. 377 (p. 377).

closer to revolutionary fervour rather than parliamentary debate: the instruction that poets should 'Make It New' hardly suited to the tone of the Commons, even in opposition.⁶⁷

The chosen metaphor is thoroughly appropriate to the *Spectator*. Just as the magazine itself was compared to the institutions of the British state, it reaches for those institutions in order to comprehend modern poetry. It is a gesture so apposite to John Strachey's image of the *Spectator*—on the breakfast table of every vicarage—that it almost seems a caricature. More significantly, however, the use of Parliament denies the modernist poet an attempt at revolutionary rupture and anticipates the moment when such poets are fully integrated into the tradition of English poetry. This process is seen as inevitable, part of the regular onward drive of British culture; the only freedom that Pound and his contemporaries have is to linger in opposition and 'spoil', a concept that, given Pound's likely distaste for either side of the metaphor, is no freedom at all.

While this metaphor might be slightly humorous in intent, it can also be taken wholly seriously as an attempt to fashion English poetry along lines palatable to the *Spectator*, even if those lines are not exactly recognizable to modernism itself. The words 'modernism' and 'modernist' are used here: the first instance, a reference to the 'modernist practice of Mr Ezra Pound' is fairly straightforward, but the second—Edgell Rickword's tendency to 'mistake the first ferment of the imagination, in which useless matter is thrown up by the mind, for modernism'—is less so.⁶⁸ What, precisely, is referred to here? Clarke quotes from Rickword's poem 'Earth and Age' and suggests that he is too focused on 'incongruities to surprise us'. 'Modernism' itself is left usefully undefined, a placeholder term that could simply be replaced with 'good modern poetry'. Clarke argues only that two characteristics of Rickword's poetry—

⁶⁷ For example, Matthew Feldman's recent work on Pound's fascism emphasizes his 'oft-cited radical temperament', even before his open shift to supporting Mussolini, and argues that his drift towards fascist thought was evident through the twenties, developing into open support for Italy in the thirties. In particular, Feldman cites the importance of Lawrence Rainey's work on the *Malatesta Cantos*; Rainey suggests that this poem celebrates 'heroic individualism' and implies that 'Mussolini is a reincarnation of Sigismundo Malatesta'. See Matthew Feldman, *Ezra Pound's Fascist Propaganda, 1935-45* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Pivot, 2013), pp. 10-14; Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 142-45.

⁶⁸ Clarke, 'Unconstitutional Poetry', p. 377.

incongruities, and useless mental matter—are *not* modernism, and that the latter has been mistaken for it.

This is a crucial analytic shift: Clarke has set up ‘modernism’ as a term of potential praise, but has refrained from defining what modernism might look like, retaining the authority to label a new poem as successfully modernist or not. The implication is not only that the *Spectator*’s own evaluative ability is emphasized (certainly over that of, say, Ezra Pound or T. S. Eliot) but that a space is opened up for the *Spectator* to construct modernism as something amenable to its own cultural politics, just as Clarke’s constitutional metaphor attempts at the start of his review. Rather than simply acknowledging modernism and choosing to turn away, as with Riding and Graves, here the *Spectator* attempts to refashion modernism in its own image.

Clarke’s constitutional metaphor thus contains implications that transform modernism into something with which the *Spectator* is entirely comfortable. The periodical is evaluative, still, but this evaluative role can be perceived as active, even energetic. Alison Light, in an influential discussion of conservative fiction, taps into something very similar. She writes of

a conservative modernity: Janus-faced: it could simultaneously look backwards and forwards; it could accommodate the past in the new forms of the present; it was a deferral of modernity and yet it also demanded a different sort of conservatism from that which had gone before.⁶⁹

There is thus a need to

identify conservatism’s shifting appeals, its imaginative purchase as a fertile source of fantasy, inspiration and pleasure which, though it has had its discernable constancies, is also continually finding new sources of expression.⁷⁰

My interest here is not the novels that Light sees as representative of conservative modernity; rather, it is in her portrayal of conservatism as neither irrelevant nor important only because it was influential, but as energetic and exciting. In much the same way, the *Spectator* interrogated modernism, sometimes dismissing it, sometimes recrafting and reshaping it to form a modernism that the *Spectator*’s conservative ideology could appreciate. In the last section of this

⁶⁹ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 10.

⁷⁰ Light, *Forever England*, p. 16.

chapter, I will explore how far such conservative constructions of modernism can be pushed, and suggest that these energetic rewritings can also distort.

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The *Spectator* very often criticizes modernism. When it does praise modernism, it praises a modernism that is made accessible to conservative ideology. In certain cases, however, the transformation that is wrought on modernist texts for the *Spectator*'s purposes is drastic, and problematic. We are shown not just a conservative version of modernism but the distorted image of modernist literature that should, I propose, be understood as a *misreading*. In particular, I want to discuss two texts by James Joyce, and two by Virginia Woolf. All four reviews are positive, and all four are problematic.

James Joyce was, in the late 1920s, still a controversial figure to praise. *Ulysses* was banned in the UK and would not be available for several years. The *Spectator* tended to support the government in its efforts to ban and censor. In 1928, for instance, it came down against Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the *Spectator* praised Joyce's work, even his banned work. In 1930, E. H. Carr, writing a retrospective of the past 25 years of literature titled 'The Age of Unreason', discusses the merits of Dostoevsky, Stendhal, Proust, Lawrence, and Huxley before turning ultimately to Joyce.

It may nevertheless be confidently predicted that, when future generations wish to study this curious episode in English literature and thought, they will turn not to *Chrome Yellow* [sic], but to *Ulysses*. It is true that the former is eminently readable, and that to digest the latter is a serious strain even on the most plodding bookworm. But there are, as the schoolboy knows to his cost, many unreadable classics in English, as in other literatures; and it would be a mistake to imagine that some of them were ever readable. Into this category of unreadable classics Joyce's masterpiece will eventually fall; for it is the one serious, and in its way successful, effort in English to create a new literary form for the school of unreason. It brilliantly combines the essential elements of the child's puzzle, the dyspeptic's nightmare, and the fever patient's delirium. It is purely sub-rational; it is what might, a few years ago, have been called sub-human; but, whatever the epithet, it will

⁷¹ An unsigned article notes that the *Spectator* decided not to publish a review of Hall's novel as 'the subject of sexual perversion is one that is better ignored'. The periodical does note that 'a strong case can be made for the writer who desires to portray the life of the day in all its aspects—sordid as well as wholesome'. However, it concludes that 'In the interests of the majority it is not desirable that the millions of readers of the popular Press should be given such mental food. The public is all the better for this censorship. [...] We rightly think that the community must be protected from itself. Right thinking is the prelude to right living. Our minds must have inhibitions and restraints as much as our bodies. A discussion of sex is not on a par with that of most subjects.' See 'The Censorship of the Mind', *The Spectator*, 1 September 1928, pp. 258-59 (pp. 258-59).

remain, for those who come after, the one adequate expression and symbol of our present discontents.⁷²

Carr's text manages a largely successful interpretation of Joyce's modernism via the *Spectator's* conservative ideology. He recognizes a break with Victorian literature, but proposes this break not as a revolution, but a necessary response to 'present discontents'. As he sees it, the 'age of unreason' has seen the 'disintegration of the human personality'. Proust—the 'complete and final' writer on this—'prove[d] not merely that the human personality was an imperfectly coordinated bundle of sensations, but that even the sensations themselves were but the fantastic echoes of a half-remembered, half-imagined past'.⁷³ Thus, a conservative magazine can accommodate a work as challenging as *Ulysses* by posing its modernist form as simply the necessary response to a challenging world, something which, as a 'classic', all great literature does.

Note the crucial difference in this analysis to the way in which 'advanced' is deployed to criticize modernism. There, the work/artist is given an independent and controlled agency, and develops an idea far beyond what is appropriate or natural. One thinks again of Freedén's emphasis on organic, natural, controlled change. Here, the *Spectator* retains critical agency. The crucial act is not Joyce's reckless way with language or plot or subject matter, but (in Carr's article) the identification of 'our present discontents'. *Ulysses* is not advanced—and hence unnatural or forced—but merely appropriate. In Carr's words, uniquely 'adequate'. Not only does this analysis fit neatly with the *Spectator's* conservative ideology, it also reinforces the periodical's position as authoritative, evaluative magazine, identifying issues in contemporary society and interpreting literature on those terms. Such a reading is also, of course, hardly a controversial one: modernism as a response to modernity. But one notes, also, that in order to make this argument Carr is forced to discount any possibility of actually reading *Ulysses*. Joyce's combination of 'puzzle', 'nightmare' and 'delusion' may well be appropriate, rather than advanced, but it is a modernism that is not intended to be read. Carr attempts to pass this off

⁷² E. H. Carr, 'The Age of Unreason', *The Spectator*, 26 April 1930, p. 698 (p. 698).

⁷³ Carr, 'The Age of Unreason', p. 698.

with a glib comment about schoolboy reading, but theoretically this is a fundamental problem for his analysis.

An unsigned review of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* does suggest that modernism can be read, but presents a curious image of Joyce's work.

What is important in Joyce is what he has in common with the best writers of all ages, which is, what are generally called the human qualities. Were it not for the possession of these, and to a surprising degree, it is unlikely Joyce would be the significant figure he is.⁷⁴

On *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in particular:

The author traces the course of the River Liffey from its source to the sea. Much of it is difficult of apprehension, but for lyricism there can be few passages in literature to compare with parts of it. No spring ever welled forth so joyously, so evocatively, or pursued its course so profoundly through the deepest human sentiments. In these passages the author reveals himself as one of the great landmarks of English prose. It seems unlikely that such sheer craftsmanship will, in this particular direction, ever go further.⁷⁵

That use of 'reveals' announces Joyce's proper place in the literary canon. It is almost a fait accompli: as if the reviewer has turned the page to find one of the 'great landmarks'. The question of modernism's place in the canon is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5, but here, at least, Joyce's place in the tradition of English prose is firmly established. In particular, Joyce's 'sheer craftsmanship' is important, and unlikely to be matched. 'Craftsmanship' is an unusual noun to choose. It asks the reader to consider, perhaps, the technical skill involved in crafting the structure of the novel, in shaping sentences and characters, even in the poetic qualities of Joyce's prose. It is also fundamentally human—tactile and organic—as that first reference to Joyce's 'human qualities' makes clear.

'Craftsmanship' and 'human qualities' work to place Joyce's novel in a critical tradition that is identified ultimately with John Ruskin. In 'The Two Paths' (1859), Ruskin argues that 'All art worthy of the name is the energy—neither of the human body alone, nor of the human soul alone, but of both united, one guiding the other: good craftsmanship and work of the

⁷⁴ 'James Joyce', *The Spectator*, 22 November 1930, p. 801. Notably, the *Spectator* misspells Joyce's title, naming the text under review *Anna Livia Plurabella*.

⁷⁵ 'James Joyce'.

fingers joined with good emotion and work of the heart'.⁷⁶ Indeed, Ruskin's famous veneration of Gothic architecture is rooted in the way in which the variety and imperfection of Gothic forms preserve the craft of the individual workmen:

Go forth again to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors: examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them, for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure.⁷⁷

'Craftsmanship' thus evokes a tradition for Joyce's work to be located in. Instead of a radical, experimental form, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* is presented as a creative development in an intellectual tradition, stretching back to the mid-nineteenth century. Ruskin was at this time perhaps one of the most recognizable figures in the cultural establishment; not for nothing does Leonard Bast, Forster's archetypal autodidact, attempt to improve his cultural knowledge by reading *The Stones of Venice*.⁷⁸

In certain ways, the *Spectator's* focus on Joyce's craftsmanship has intriguing consequences. One might, for instance, connect Ruskin's idea of craftsmanship preserving humanity in a built environment to Joyce's playful evocation of anthropomorphized landscapes in *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. On the other hand, though, this description of Joyce places him quite specifically in an artistic tradition that might be seen as an alternative to modernism, rooted in mid to late nineteenth century aesthetic theory. The invocation of 'craftsmanship' denies almost all sense of modernist innovation. What is one to do, say, with Joyce's relationship with modernity? With his experiments with the mechanistic—say, the use of newspaper headlines in *Ulysses*? In *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, how does craftsmanship—with its associations with an endeavour taken seriously, resulting in the production of a finely wrought object—accommodate the text's profound aurality, or its punning humour?

⁷⁶ *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by Alexander Wedderburn and E. T. Cook, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), XVI, 385.

⁷⁷ 'The Nature of Gothic', in *Works of Ruskin*, X, 193-94.

⁷⁸ E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 61-62.

This review suggests that this form can develop ‘no further’: Joyce’s work is not the mark of something new, a trigger for further innovation, but the culmination—and therefore death—of something old. In this light, the ‘craftsmanship’ interpretation resembles not so much an intriguing thought as an argument condemning Joyce’s new experiments as fruitless: admirable, but not productive of future work. Compare a far more openly negative review of Joyce’s work.

New possibilities of speech can never be arrived at by running an artifice to death. [...] Mr Joyce is not unlike those Latinists who, in the decadence of the Empire, turned to acrostics and centos. Weary of the old tradition, they could never free themselves from it; they meddled with it, analysed it, dispersed it, rearranged it. They strove for originality of style and for uniqueness; but nothing spoke through them. There was no *élan* to make them speak; their words, in consequence, were more dead than the tradition they were trying to escape.⁷⁹

This reviewer is drawing on a line of argument about the late Roman empire that can be traced ultimately to Edward Gibbon. As this comparison makes clear, the decadence and sterility of late Rome were held to be notorious. For the *Spectator*, this is a classic allusion: moralistic, conservative, learned but not obscure. My point is that this dismissive analysis shares key similarities with the far more positive association of Joyce with craftsmanship. In both cases, a conservative modernism is an impotent, decadent, finished modernism.

One cannot, of course, argue that this unusual review of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* is entirely representative of a wholly coherent perspective on modernism. But even if this text is not typical, it is valuable to acknowledge the significant problems within it. It is both an idiosyncratic reading of Joyce and a flawed one: this does not mean that this text, or indeed this periodical, is incorrect about modernism. Rather, it performs a misreading that is itself a fascinating piece of criticism: of miscriticism, perhaps. Rather than imagining a single, accurate reading of modernism with which this text fails to align, I suggest that we might see a range of readings of modernism, and be aware of the flaws in each.

⁷⁹ ‘Mr James Joyce’, *The Spectator*, 3 August 1929, pp. 162-63 (p. 163).

Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz seize on a similar imperative in their 2008 collection of essays, *Bad Modernisms*. The unusual choice of adjective is important, as the editors discuss.

The contributions to *Bad Modernisms* concern moments in which a work or performance has been misjudged or misunderstood. Purporting to set right prior misprisions is, of course, the very bread and butter of scholarly production in our time, but a little reflection will reveal that something more than this routine manoeuvre is at work here. In each of the cases laid out by our contributors, a failure of apprehension seems fundamental to the very interest of the work; in each, the way in which the artefact was bad according to somebody (or was good in the wrong way) tells us something about its possible meaning or value for us.⁸⁰

While the collection opens by exploring how modernism was originally mad, *bad* and dangerous to know in the eyes of the wider public, Mao and Walkowitz push its remit far beyond this. By implication, misreadings and misunderstandings of modernism might thus be understood as highly significant. The *Spectator* suggests, first, that readings of modernism that with hindsight are 'bad'—in that modernist literature is dismissed—nevertheless play an important role in modernism's emergence into public life. Second, this conservative periodical was able to create its own modernism, amenable to its ideology, but only to a certain extent. Even at this early stage in its public history, the concept of modernism was not empty, and could not be made to signify in any way a critic chose.

Consider, finally, two reviews of Virginia Woolf. The *Spectator* failed to review *Mrs Dalloway*, but heaped praise on her work following this. This is Rachel Annand Taylor reviewing *To The Lighthouse*:

Enigmatic, darkly bright, flowing into the secret recesses of the consciousness, floating out its rose-pale shells, its wavering shapes, its blood-red coral, moulding people that combine a modern irony with a mystic reverie, the genius of Virginia Woolf is at once more difficult and more original than that of any other woman novelist today.⁸¹

Two years later, an unsigned review of *A Room of One's Own* appears:

Future historians will place Mrs Woolf's little book besides Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Rights of Women* and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*. It does for the intellectual and spiritual liberation of women what those works did for their political emancipation. But *A Room of One's Own* outshines them both in genius.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Bad Modernisms*, ed. by Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 15.

⁸¹ Rachel Annand Taylor, 'Fiction: Virginia Woolf and Others', *The Spectator*, 14 May 1927, p. 871 (p. 871).

⁸² 'A Female Shakespeare?', *The Spectator*, 28 December 1929, p. 985 (p. 985).

‘Genius’ is a common touchstone for both reviews, and both draw on the concept of Woolf’s writing as something different, inspired, as in the *OED*’s sense of a genius possessing ‘native intellectual power of an exalted type’, intellectual power that is formed in ‘instinctive perception and spontaneous activity’, rather than ‘processes which admit of being distinctively analysed’.⁸³

Woolf’s genius is thus powerful but fundamentally inexplicable, and something that places her apart from other writers, rather than alongside them. Assessing Woolf in this way has a different effect in each review. Writing on *A Room of One’s Own*, deploying ‘genius’ and placing Woolf with Wollstonecraft and Mill removes her writing from current political debate. Instead, Woolf is drawn into a tradition of great works about women, contributing to the ‘intellectual and spiritual liberation’ of the sex. Ironically, this removes the immediacy and social relevancy of the book’s original form, lectures delivered to some of the first female students at Cambridge University, just months after those students (if any were aged between 21 and 28) were given the vote for the first time. The review softens the radicalism which, one feels, the *Spectator*—which deplored the suffragettes and wrote against female enfranchisement—would never have approved of.⁸⁴ The review suggests that Wollstonecraft and Mill wrote for the ‘political emancipation’ of women, and it is important to remember that the emancipation concerned—presumably, enfranchisement—was not granted until over a century after Wollstonecraft and fifty years after Mill. Perhaps we are led to expect the same for Woolf’s ‘intellectual and spiritual liberation’.

In a similar sense, the ‘genius’ of *To The Lighthouse* does not seem especially modern. It has ‘modern irony’, but also the ‘mystic reverie’ that recalls the ‘mystic realist’ label used for Woolf in the 1925 review discussed above. The exact characteristics of the writing are obscured, with the writer preferring to emphasize that it is ‘enigmatic’, and calling on a variety of colours

⁸³ *OED*, ‘genius, n.’, sense 5. This definition is less helpful than it might be as it has not yet been revised for the third edition of the dictionary. It was published in 1898, predating this review.

⁸⁴ When the principle of female suffrage was accepted by the Commons in 1917, the *Spectator* admitted that ‘In the abstract we have never been favourable to Woman Suffrage’. [‘In the House of Commons on Tuesday...’], *The Spectator*, 23 June 1917, p. 690 (p. 690).

(‘rose-pale’, ‘blood-red’), the exact use of which is unclear. The use of ‘mystic’, and the lush descriptions of intense colours might perhaps be likened to the reviewer’s own poetry.

‘Duchies of dreamland, emerald, rose
Lie at your command?’
Poverty like a princess goes
In my land.

‘Wherefore the mask of silken lace
Tied with a golden band?’
Poverty walks with wanton grace
In my land.

‘The Princess of Scotland’⁸⁵

Taylor might be understood as reshaping Woolf’s modernism into a form more amenable to her own aesthetic programme, but this is also, as with Joyce and craftsmanship, a vision of Woolf that is aligned with the *Spectator*’s conservative ideology: organic and natural change. This Woolf is hardly ‘ultra-subjective’, to call back J. B. Priestley’s phrase.

Starkly put, while Taylor’s relationship to the *Spectator*’s ideology is clear, her reading of *To The Lighthouse* is not. This must not be understood as a criticism of the *Spectator*. It is all too easy to look back with hindsight and conclude that Taylor got Woolf wrong: that she made no real mention of the novel’s relationship with art, or modernity. As I have suggested throughout, the emergence of modernism into public culture was negotiated by the unusual and distinctive conservative ideology of the *Spectator*. On the one hand, moments where that conservatism caused the magazine to turn away do themselves play a key role in the growing conceptualization of modernist literature. On the other, the various images crafted by the magazine of modernism do not reflect an ever-changing view of modernism but rather a modernism that the *Spectator* can like. Sometimes, this produces intriguing and provocative visions of modernist literature. But it seems to me equally valuable to explore the ways in which these readings misconstrue modernist texts.

The strength of the *Spectator*’s ideology is such that, at times, one expects it to be able to completely rewrite modernist texts in its image. The reality is more subtle: dominant

⁸⁵ This poem is reproduced in several anthologies; for example, *The Faber Book of Twentieth-Century Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Douglas Dunn (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 12.

conservative ideology aside, the *Spectator* weaves around the emergent concept of modernism, giving shape to it even as it attacks and misconstrues it. It should not be understood as a modernist magazine, but the role it played in the history of modernism should be recognized.

4. *THE LISTENER*, 1931-33

For the last two-and-a-half years now we have published a new poem each week—occasionally by some writer with the standing and reputation of Walter de la Mare or Harold Monro, more often by younger poets almost entirely unknown to the general public.¹

Editorial, *The Listener*, 12 July 1933

This unsigned editorial has been seen before: its reflection on ‘two-and-a-half years’ of publishing new poetry opens the introduction to this thesis, as the *Listener* defends its freedom to publish modernist poetry, and requests that its readers take such poetry seriously. The editorials were usually written by Richard Lambert, editor from 1929 to 1939.² However, Lambert never demonstrated a great liking for modernist poetry, and this editorial not only defends the legitimacy of modernism, but accompanies a poetry supplement featuring woodcuts by Gwen Raverat and poems by, among others, W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, and Herbert Read. The *Listener*’s poetry—including this supplement—was entirely the province of Lambert’s deputy and de facto literary editor, Janet Adam Smith. For these reasons, I suggest that this unsigned piece was most likely written by Smith, as her carefully managed—and later controversial—supplement saw the light of day.

This chapter posits that the supplement was an extraordinary publishing event—both for the *Listener* alone, and for weekly reviews in general—and explores Smith’s career at the magazine over the previous two-and-a-half years as a case of an individual very much in favour of a particular form of modernist poetry, attempting to promote that poetry by hook or by crook in the pages of a weekly magazine. I contend that Smith’s achievement as literary editor was not simply to publish Auden, but to use poetry to rebel against the very idea of the weekly review. Where a magazine like the *Spectator* thought carefully about how modernism might be

¹ [Janet Adam Smith], ‘“Modernist” Poetry’, *The Listener*, 12 July 1933, p. 50.

² Richard Lambert (1894-1981) joined the BBC in 1927 to work on adult education. The original conception of the *Listener* included a significant educational role, with the vague idea that groups of worthy listeners would benefit most from the ability to study talks after the event. Hence, Lambert—Director of Adult Education—was transferred to run the new paper. Lambert left the BBC in 1939, in circumstances detailed below, and emigrated to Canada.

interpreted through its culturally conservative lens, in the *Listener* poems and reviews of poetry were small, guarded spaces that argued passionately for modernism.

The *Listener* was a weekly magazine published by the BBC from 1929 to 1991. It differs from the other magazines covered by this study in several key respects. Rather than covering the week's political news, and publishing political analysis and book reviews, it printed edited scripts of BBC broadcast talks, alongside a small volume of original material. The publication of new poetry falls into this latter category. Debra Rae Cohen, one of the very few scholars to seriously consider this critically neglected magazine, writes on the *Listener*'s 'intermediality', as a periodical produced by the BBC and thus linked to radio but competing with and selling next to regular sixpenny weeklies such as the *New Statesman* and *Spectator*.³ As Cohen makes clear, it was always controversial. In 1929, when the magazine was first announced, a group of periodicals petitioned the government to intervene, arguing that the BBC, supported as it was by the licence fee, should not compete with the regular (and often financially precarious) weekly press. John Reith, the BBC's charismatic, domineering and ebullient director-general, boasted of his victory in subduing these naysayers, and the journal was allowed to continue based on the odd compromise figure of featuring no more than 10 per cent of material not directly related to broadcasting.⁴

This unusual gesture, as Cohen notes, set up 'lasting tensions' between the *Listener* and the corporation that spawned it, and played into the *Listener*'s 'peculiar intermedial character', 'as archive of broadcasting and supplement to it', and 'as editorial entity and broadcasting adjunct'.⁵ Put another way, the 10% figure made clear the uncertainty that defined the *Listener*'s institutional identity, and was a clumsy attempt by the BBC to control and limit the journal's independence. This begs the question, exactly what kind of identity did the BBC intend its new paper to inhabit? It is clear from the previous chapter that the *Spectator* functioned as a cultural

³ Debra Rae Cohen, 'Intermediality and the Problem of the *Listener*', *Modernism/modernity*, 19 (2012), 569-92.

⁴ John Reith, *The Reith Diaries*, ed. by Charles Stuart (London: Collins, 1975), p. 146; Cohen, 'Intermediality', pp. 573-74.

⁵ Cohen, 'Intermediality', p. 574.

reference point for independence, prestige, and conservatism; as mentioned above, the BBC's own documents on the foundation of the *Listener* continually name the *Spectator* as the paper to emulate, emphasising 'the value of the prestige of a weekly "Spectator" to the BBC', or the aim to 'produce a weekly review of the ordinary type, or in other words, a "BBC Spectator"'.⁶ Indeed, the journal was named after that magazine, the name chosen because it was 'reminiscent of "The Spectator", which I take it is the type of journal it will be.'⁷ It seems plausible to argue that the *Listener* was intended to be a new example of the 'ordinary type': well respected but hardly exciting.

Of course, as a periodical that took the majority of its printed material from radio talks, the *Listener* may have become respectable, but it could never have been ordinary. More critical attention should be paid to the intermedial texts—somewhere between text and speech—that the *Listener* published. But as this thesis considers the weekly review, this chapter focuses entirely on material that was *not* broadcast, material produced by an editorial team who were attempting to run a magazine that was more than just a receptacle for radio talks; in Lambert's words, 'a paper to be read for its own sake'.⁸

A key part of this endeavour was the weekly publication of new poetry. The *Listener* began to print poetry in February 1931, when the magazine was just two years old. Typically, it printed one poem in every weekly issue, more frequently than the majority of its competitors. As Richard Lambert recalled in his memoir of working at the BBC, publishing poetry was at first not controversial.

New modern poetry, like a foundling wrapped in a newspaper, was laid on the doorstep of the *Listener*. We could do what we liked with this unwanted brat, that made noises not appreciated by the microphone-controllers.⁹

⁶ Caversham, BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), Publications: The Listener, R43/60/1 (K. Edwin, 'The Listener').

⁷ WAC, R43/60/1 (Nicolls to Murray, 25 October 1927).

⁸ Richard S. Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality: an Impression of the BBC from Within* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940), p. 115.

⁹ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 128.

But this ‘unwanted brat’ would later prove controversial. On 12 July 1931 (one hundred and twenty-seven poems after the first poem on 11 February 1931), the magazine published Smith’s poetry supplement, ‘Nine Poems’.¹⁰ The poems were spread out over four pages: the centre two were occupied by Auden’s ‘The Witnesses’, and elaborate woodcuts by Gwen Raverat. The first and last pages featured smaller woodcuts, and poems by C. Day Lewis, John Hewitt, Bernard Spencer, Herbert Read, John Lehmann, T. H. White, Charles Madge, and Arthur Ball. None of the poems had been previously published, and even if this supplement had passed without notice, it would have been a significant publication event for these young poets.

But unnoticed it did not go. Smith’s supplement provoked internal criticism from John Reith, as Smith later recalled.

There had been many complaints from readers about poems published in the *Listener*; there were rumblings within the Corporation too, and a few days after the supplement appeared, Jove thundered. I was summoned to Sir John Reith, the Director-General, and catechized on the poems we published in general, on this supplement in particular, and especially on ‘The Witnesses’. The D-G wanted to know why there was so much that seemed odd, uncouth, ‘modernist’, about our poems.¹¹

According to Smith, Reith wished that the poems in the magazine ‘should be recognized as having merit by responsible and informed persons beyond the paper’. Smith proposed T. S. Eliot, and Reith agreed; Smith later suggested that Reith ‘had in mind Mr Eliot the critic, the director of Fabers’ [sic], indeed, the member of the Athenaeum, rather than the poet of *The Waste Land*’.¹² Smith got in touch with Eliot through Herbert Read, and sent him a lengthy letter setting out the controversy and a packet of *Listener* poems.¹³ She also wrote, for Reith, a report on the poets published by the *Listener*, listing their credentials and quoting extensively

¹⁰ ‘Nine Poems [Poetry Supplement]’, *The Listener*, 12 July 1933, pp. i-iv. Smith was clearly the prime mover in the process of arranging this supplement, but she later emphasized the crucial support she received from the Controller of Publications (Lambert’s direct superior), Ben Nicolls. Janet Adam Smith, ‘Auden and the “Listener”’, *The Listener*, 18 October 1973, pp. 532-34 (p. 532).

¹¹ Janet Adam Smith, ‘T. S. Eliot and “The Listener”’, *The Listener*, 21 January 1965, p. 105. Smith later republished this short essay with minor revisions; see Janet Adam Smith, ‘T. S. Eliot and “The Listener”’, *The Sewanee Review*, 74 (1966), 327-30. Further references to Smith’s ‘T. S. Eliot’ essay cite the original *Listener* version.

¹² Smith, ‘T. S. Eliot’.

¹³ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland (NLS), Janet Adam Smith Papers, Acc. 12342/123 (Janet Adam Smith to T. S. Eliot, 11 October 1933). This letter is evidently a key source for Smith’s 1965 essay for the *Listener*, as she repeats key phrases (e.g. ‘odd, uncouth, “modernist”’).

from positive reviews.¹⁴ Eliot prepared a six-page report for Reith in late 1933, on the poetry that had been published by the *Listener* since 1931. Here, he robustly defended the importance of publishing new poetry in weekly papers, and argued for the excellence of the *Listener*'s suggestions.¹⁵

Janet Adam Smith was thus a forthright and crusading literary editor who deserves greater recognition. She began as secretary to editor Richard Lambert, but 'had exceptional attainments and ability, especially in literary matters', and 'it was not long before she was promoted first to be sub-editor, and later to be assistant editor of the paper.'¹⁶ A memo she wrote for her successor, J. R. Ackerley, makes clear the wide range of her responsibilities: arranging art articles and coverage of new exhibitions; sending out books for review, and writing to reviewers; editing manuscripts of reviews; making up the review pages; organizing the quarterly Book Supplements; dealing with printing the scripts of broadcast book talks, and preventing overlap with original *Listener* material; choosing short stories, and choosing poems.¹⁷ Smith also regularly wrote reviews, usually unsigned, for the collection of short reviews called 'The Listener's Book Chronicle'.¹⁸ Smith left the BBC in 1935, and married Michael Roberts, the editor responsible for *New Signatures* (1932) and *New Country* (1933), some of the key early anthologies for Auden and his contemporaries.¹⁹ Roberts would become best known for editing the first *Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936); Smith's long and prolific career included working as the literary editor of the *New Statesman* (1952-60), editing the extremely popular *Faber Book of Children's Verse* (1952), and, as a keen mountaineer (often with Michael Roberts) writing a popular memoir of mountaineering, *Mountain Holidays* (1946).²⁰

¹⁴ NLS, Acc. 12342/123 (Smith to John Reith, Summer 1933).

¹⁵ Caversham, BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), Special Collections: Pearce, S210.

¹⁶ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 98.

¹⁷ NLS, Acc. 12342/122 (Handover notes, 1935). Ackerley was not a direct successor; Smith was Assistant Editor with a general remit that included cultural matters, whereas Ackerley was specifically hired as Literary Editor.

¹⁸ For a bibliography of Smith's reviews, compiled by Andrew Roberts, see NLS, Acc. 12342/202.

¹⁹ *New Signatures, Poems by Several Hands*, ed. by Michael Roberts (London: Hogarth Press, 1932); *New Country; Prose and Poetry by the Authors of New Signatures*, ed. by Michael Roberts (London: Hogarth Press, 1933).

²⁰ See *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, ed. by Michael Roberts (London: Faber and Faber, 1936); *The Faber Book of Children's Verse*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (London: Faber and Faber, 1952); Janet Adam Smith, *Mountain Holidays* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1946). For further details on Janet Adam Smith, see *DNB*.

In previous chapters, I have discussed how weekly reviews explored developing concepts of modernism. In the case of the *Listener*, I take a slightly different tack. As an editor of the *Listener*, Janet Adam Smith did not simply explore modern literature, but promoted and defended the right to publish modern poetry. Beyond this, I hope to establish that Smith was particularly interested in a group of largely young, male, left-leaning and Oxford-educated poets who emerged in the late twenties and early thirties, described by Samuel Hynes as the ‘Auden generation’.²¹ While such group identities can be problematic, I use Hynes’s term for two reasons. First, it emphasizes the centrality of Auden to the way that this periodical thought about new poetry, a centrality made literal when Auden takes pride of place in the centre pages of the 1933 supplement. Second, the sense of a ‘generation’ has some truth simply in the *Listener*’s publishing record. Under Smith’s direction (and, for that matter, under J. R. Ackerley), the *Listener* was where a new poem by Auden, or Stephen Spender, or Louis MacNeice, or C. Day Lewis, among many others, was placed in front of tens of thousands of readers. The suggestion that the *Listener* was an important venue for Auden generation poetry is not new: Auden himself acknowledged this in a late essay, key works on thirties literature by A. T. Tolley and Valentine Cunningham point to the *Listener*, and Jane Dowson’s excellent survey and select bibliography of *Listener* poetry again emphasizes Auden generation poetry.²² More importantly, though, I focus on how Smith’s practice as editor contributed towards the sense that new young poets were, in fact, a generation, and how such actions should be understood in the context of the *Listener* as a new, aspiring weekly review.

In this chapter, then, the focus is less on how the magazine as institution encountered the developing concept of modernism, and more on how an element within that institution—Smith, the assistant editor—was able to carve out a space for the Auden generation. In its

²¹ Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Bodley Head, 1976).

²² *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden*, ed. by Edward Mendelson, 6 vols to date (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993-), VI, 360-61; A. T. Tolley, *The Poetry of the Thirties* (London: Gollancz, 1975), p. 120; Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 146, 292; Jane Dowson, ‘Poetry and The Listener: The Myth of the “Middlebrow”’, *Working Papers on the Web*, 6 (2003) <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/thirties/thirties%20dowson.html>> [accessed 27 July 2015].

publication of radio scripts the *Listener* did, indeed, wrestle with the emerging concept of modernism; Harold Nicolson's twelve-part series on 'The New Spirit in Literature' is a (groundbreaking) case in point.²³ But such moments are not the focus here. Poetry in the *Listener* represents a key area of tension between conflicting ideologies: the broader drive to create a respected BBC Spectator and move the *Listener* away from the controversy that dogged its first months, and Smith's drive to publish new, important poetry of a particular hue—come what may. To return, briefly, to Hacking's terms, it might thus be proposed that modernism emerges into public life not only when studied closely by the institution of the weekly review, but when that institution itself becomes a site of conflict. In these conflicts, the public legitimacy of modernism is once again questioned, and the concept thus takes public form.

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Alongside the wider development of work on modernism and radio, critical interest in the relationship between modernism and the BBC has intensified in recent years.²⁴ Todd Avery's 2006 work, *Radio Modernism*, remains the most relevant to this study.²⁵ Avery places John Reith at the centre of his study, and proposes Reithianism—Reith's doctrine of public service broadcasting—as a quasi-Arnoldian ethical programme with which various modernist broadcasters were forced to negotiate when they broadcast from the BBC.²⁶ Indeed, reports of working at the early BBC emphasised the intense enthusiasm for radio as a transformative technology, and for the public service ideals of Reithian broadcasting. Richard Lambert

²³ See Charlie Dawkins, 'Harold Nicolson, *Ulysses*, Reithianism: Censorship on BBC Radio, 1931', *The Review of English Studies* (forthcoming).

²⁴ For recent work on modernism and radio, see *Broadcasting Modernism*, ed. by Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle and Jane Lewty (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009); *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era*, ed. by Matthew Feldman, Erik Tonning and Henry Mead (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

²⁵ Much critical work on modernism and the BBC has focused on tracing the careers of particular modernists at the corporation: Michael Coyle on T. S. Eliot, or Peter Fifield on E. M. Forster, following the publication of a selection of Forster's radio talks. See Michael Coyle, "'This Rather Elusory Broadcast Technique': T. S. Eliot and the Genre of the Radio Talk", *ANQ*, 11 (1998), 32-42; Michael Coyle, 'T. S. Eliot on the Air: "Culture" and the Challenges of Mass Communication', in *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, ed. by Jewel Spears Brooker (London: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 141-54; Peter Fifield, "'I Often Wish You Could Answer Me Back: And So Perhaps Do You!": E. M. Forster and BBC Radio Broadcasting', in *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era*, ed. by Matthew Feldman, Erik Tonning and Henry Mead (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 57-77; E. M. Forster, *The BBC Talks of E. M. Forster, 1929-1960: a Selected Edition*, ed. by Mary Lago, Linda K. Hughes and Elizabeth MacLeod Walls (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

²⁶ Todd Avery, *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922-1938* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

recalled a remark made to him by Reith, ‘to the effect that there was no public service that the BBC would not undertake to perform, if called upon by the State to do so—not even the supply of milk to the population of London!’²⁷ Lionel Fielden, an early programme producer, similarly wrote that ‘God save us, we really believed that broadcasting could revolutionise human opinion’.²⁸ However, Avery rightly emphasizes that this shared enthusiasm and Reith’s ‘generous and benign’ intentions should be understood alongside Reith’s ‘sympathy’ for a ‘totalitarian usage of radio’, and, in a broader sense, a ‘desire for social unification’.²⁹ Reithianism was also always autocratic and didactic, seeking to control exactly how broadcasting might perform a public service, and how listeners should respond correctly to the material sent to them over the air.

This combination of earnest belief in the BBC’s mission and the desire for control often resulted in a bureaucracy that interfered with its own creative output regularly and went in fear of controversy. Lambert argues that conservatism at the BBC rarely took the form of outright censorship, but was more often a softly-spoken, insidious campaign against anything which threatened to rock the boat:

There is a kind of negative ‘impartiality’—much affected by official bodies and by those with an official training—which squeezes out of existence, *by neglect*, all extremes of thought, and *per contra* favours and makes play with mediocrity. There is here no censorship, only a gentle insistence upon ‘good taste’, a gentle repulsion of anything which may ‘offend’. As new ideas are often daring and unconventional, they can usually be convicted, by those who wish to, of ‘bad taste’.³⁰

This ‘gentle repulsion’ crept into the institutional atmosphere: Janet Adam Smith was once accused by memo of hanging a bathing suit out a window to dry, a most improper act.³¹ But in terms of output, Lambert noted that artistic material, in particular, was targeted by this kind of censorship.³² Focusing on the *Listener*, in 1936 Reith wrote to Stephen Tallents (one of

²⁷ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 44.

²⁸ Lionel Fielden, *The Natural Bent* (London: A. Deutsch, 1960), p. 100.

²⁹ Avery, *Radio Modernism*, pp. 17-19.

³⁰ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 144.

³¹ The complaint against Smith came after the *Evening News* printed a picture of the aforementioned bathing suit. It was apparently a case of mistaken identity: Smith did dry a suit ‘after a refreshing swim in the lunch-hour’, but not the ‘scanty’ one pictured in the press. Smith’s had ‘a decent and respectable skirt’. NLS, Acc. 12342/122 (20 July, 25 July 1934).

³² Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 145.

Lambert's superiors), questioning the *Listener's* publications on Picasso, for 'I think his style is quite dreadful', and hinting darkly of those who have 'strong views' on the *Listener's* art policy.³³ Reith wrote a similar memo a few months later, expressing his concerns about reviews of 'books of all kinds' in the *Listener*. He suggests that 'The Listener standard, for all kinds of books, was to be high', and the true meaning of this only comes out in the last paragraph of the memo, where it emerges that his problem is with the 'laudation' of Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza*:

[H. A. L. Fisher] thought it the most disgusting book he had read (and having struggled through it myself I more or less agree with him). At least, he says, if we review, still more recommend such a book, the reviewer should make it clear that the book is in parts quite disgusting.³⁴

The following year, Tallents wrote to Lambert directly about poetry, suggesting that instead of publishing a poem a week, they should perhaps only print a poem 'that has some outstanding merit in it'. This was, he concluded sorrowfully, 'a bad time for poetic production'.³⁵

While these individual examples constitute only a patchy record of debate within the BBC, one is left with the impression of an atmosphere that feared controversy and attempted to cultivate an artistic conservatism that recognised Huxley as 'disgusting', Picasso as 'dreadful', and modern poetry as weak and inconsistent. It is against this background that Smith's achievement in publishing a poem a week, placing anonymous book reviews and finally publishing the 'Nine Poems' supplement in July 1933 must be placed: these acts constituted a meaningful and calculated rebellion against the cultural conservatism of the Reithian BBC, within the structures of its weekly review. And yet this rebellion began in a characteristically (for the BBC) low-key fashion, with the publication of Richard Church's 'The Anchorite's Lament' on 11 February 1931 and the announcement that it was 'the first in a series of poems by contemporary writers, which will appear weekly'.³⁶ Over the next two-and-a-half years, Smith would publish 127 different poems in 125 issues, from 73 different poets. One poet had six poems (Richard Goodman), two had five (Richard Church and L. A. G. Strong), and two four

³³ WAC, R43/60/4 (Reith to Tallents, 2 June 1936).

³⁴ WAC, R43/60/4 (Reith to Alan Dawnay, 'Book Reviews', 10 September 1936). Fisher was a historian and politician, and one of the governors of the BBC.

³⁵ WAC, R43/60/4 (Tallents to Lambert, 'Poetry in "The Listener"', 15 December 1937).

³⁶ '[Editorial Note]', *The Listener*, 11 February 1931, p. 244.

(Stephen Spender and Ll. Wyn Griffith). 23 poets had either two or three poems, and 47 just one poem.

Many of these poets were, of course, quickly forgotten. If one considers the first twenty names, taken alphabetically, from the list of poets who published only once in this period, few are familiar.³⁷ Nor did many of these poets have a great impact in their own time: of three contemporary anthologies, two include none of these names, and one includes just three.³⁸ Such a spread merely reflects the reality of publishing new poetry on a weekly basis; as Eliot would write in his report for Reith, on reviewing the *Listener* poetry, ‘as one must expect of any time, the great majority is mediocre and conventional’.³⁹ Indeed, against such a background Smith’s ability to publish Spender and Richard Goodman multiple times, and her strong focus on Auden’s ‘The Witnesses’ in the ‘Nine Poems’ supplement, is all the more remarkable.⁴⁰

T. S. Eliot’s intervention in the *Listener* poetry controversy in 1933 thus represents a chance to assess Smith’s work in publishing poetry over the previous two-and-a-half years. Smith would later write that, wishing to ‘rout the Philistines’, she had hoped for a ‘glowing testimonial’ from an ‘ally’. Instead, the report was ‘much more valuable, both in its immediate effect on Sir John Reith’, and as a stimulus for Smith to ‘think more rigorously’ about choosing poems. It is of course difficult to trace any tangible difference in Smith’s decisions about poetry, but one effect is clear: ‘Mr Eliot had convinced him [Reith]’, and the *Listener* was permitted to continue publishing poetry.⁴¹ The fact that Reith, notoriously insistent on the value of his own

³⁷ The names: Marion Angus, Martin Armstrong, John Beevers, Julian Bell, Maurice Bowra, R. J. Cowlin, Walter D’Arcy Cresswell, W. H. Davies, Charles Davy, Joan Adeney Easdale, Colin D. B. Ellis, Gavin Ewart, Franklin Folsom, Edgar Foxall, Wilfrid Gibson, Robert Gittings, Brenda Green, Lesley Grey, John Hewitt, and William Hodgkins.

³⁸ *The Progress of Poetry: An Anthology of Verse from Hardy to the Present Day*, ed. by Ian M. Parsons (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936); *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, ed. by Roberts; *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, 1892-1935*, ed. by W. B. Yeats (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936). Yeats printed one poem by Julian Bell, seven by W. H. Davies, and four by Wilfrid Gibson.

³⁹ WAC, S210 (‘Report by Mr T. S. Eliot on The Listener Poems’). Further references to this report are given after quotations in the text.

⁴⁰ Richard Goodman, while little known now, was with Auden and his contemporaries at Oxford, and was one of the editors of the 1932 *Oxford Poetry*, dedicated to Auden, Day Lewis, and Spender. See Tolley, *Poetry of the Thirties*, pp. 39, 57.

⁴¹ Smith, ‘T. S. Eliot’.

opinions, was convinced by Eliot's report is fascinating, and Eliot's methods for arguing in favour of *Listener* poetry are worth considering closely.

In the report, Eliot is methodical and cautious, making a case for publishing young modernist poets as an entirely reasonable course of action for a BBC publication. He makes his points in turn, first arguing that a weekly must publish the young.

the one strong motive [for publication] is advertisement. It is only the younger poets to whom a weekly can appeal on this ground; when the best older poets give you contributions, you may regard it as an act of charity on their part. For the first ten years of his working life a poet has something to gain by having his verse seen occasionally in weeklies; later he has nothing to gain and indeed something to lose. (p. 1)

Eliot's report appeals to Reith's morals and, for want of a better phrase, business sense. Support young poets: it is a good thing to do and, as they have something to gain, they will work hard for you. Give readers a good reading experience of poetry: do not make the paper appear non-serious about poetry. He goes on to praise the *Listener* for printing the poems in such a way that emphasizes their value to the paper, as an 'intelligent weekly' (p. 2).

The format adopted by *The Listener*, of having the poem inset in a surround on the same page of every number, seems to be excellent. The readers know where to look for the Regular Feature and the form discourages the suspicion, aroused by most weeklies, that the verse is there only to fill a vacant space at the foot of a column. (p. 2)

This comment is all the more interesting because it is stretching the truth: poems *were* inset, although the degree of this decreases across the period in question, but the poems do tend to jump around the paper slightly and in certain cases do look to fill up the space at the bottom of a column. Tempting as it is to suggest that Eliot and Smith were fudging the facts to form a more coherent case for the *Listener's* poetry, this is unlikely. It is far more plausible that Eliot asked about the publication details of the poems and was told something that was frequently and (perhaps more importantly) aspirationally true.

Eliot does not use the word 'modernist'—in a 1926 letter, he described it as 'pestilential', a word 'for which I can see no excuse'—but even without this word it is difficult not to read his

text as anything other than an emphatic argument on the importance of publishing modernist poetry.⁴²

From the point of view of a service to the reading public, as well as that to the young writers, it seems to me that—I judge from the character of the other contents—a consistent policy of this kind should appeal to readers of *The Listener*. This weekly seems to aim at a public which is curious and avid of information about the latest facts, ideas and discoveries in contemporary art and thought; its readers, so far as they are interested in poetry, must want to know what sorts of verse are being written. From this point of view, whether the verse is of the highest quality does not matter much: what you want to be able to say confidently to your readers is that this is representative of the best that is being written by men and women of a certain generation. At least it will serve as a document upon the time, and if the time should not produce any poetry worth preserving, that would be an interesting fact in itself. By publishing verse in this way, you should have every hope also of publishing something by the one or two poets who will be recognised ten or twenty years hence, and thus building up a future reputation for the paper. (pp. 3-4)

This paragraph elegantly restates the aims of a quite provocative artistic policy in terms that might be more likely to appeal to a reader of Reith's conservative bent. Eliot argues, essentially, that it is an unambiguously good thing to trace the 'latest facts, ideas and discoveries'. His justification for this position, however, is unusual: Eliot suggests that the magazine should attempt to position itself as a 'document upon the time'. Following this logic, publishing a 'certain generation', even if that poetry is not immediately accepted, will be more valuable in the long term. By stretching temporally forward so that the *Listener* can look back, he places the magazine not in the avant-garde but in a respected, established, even conservative position of looking back on now-established poetic masters. To achieve this status of respected literary magazine, Eliot argues (important to a periodical just four years old, and desperately trying to leave a mark), one has to embrace the new now in order to look back on it later. Implicitly, modernist poetry is placed into a position of inevitable authority; the question is not whether poets like Auden or Spender or Kathleen Raine will become accepted, but when. Eliot offers the *Listener* the chance to take part in a movement whose ascendancy is presented as merely a matter of time.

Eliot's report does not suggest that all the poets published by the *Listener* are excellent, as quoted above; a selection of good and bad is an inevitable consequence of the weekly

⁴² Eliot went on to comment: 'What on earth is "modernist verse"? The word is almost as hopeless as "Futurist".' *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Valerie Eliot, Hugh Haughton and John Haffenden, 5 vols to date (London: Faber and Faber, 1988-), III, 344 (Eliot to A. L. Hutchinson, 15 December 1926).

publishing model. While this allows the publication of some poor poems (useful if the magazine runs into criticism on these grounds) it runs the risk of presenting the *Listener* as a fundamentally passive record of new poetry; if it attempts merely to find what is new, and currently being written by a certain generation, then any retrospective authority it might seem to hold would be almost accidental. Eliot's report gestures, although only quite faintly, towards a more specific sense of what exactly this new poetry is beginning to look like. He defines the poetry against well-known figures of conservatism in poetics: 'I do not say that the poetry is positively better than the kind that Sir John Squire would select; but there is this great difference: that Squire's kind of poetry is now completely out of date, and this is not' (p. 5). He goes on to mention Auden and Spender by name as poets that interest him and have been 'published on my recommendation by Faber & Faber' (p. 6). Finally, Eliot provides a small hint of the types of qualities he is looking for in new poetry, by offering some brief remarks on Auden. 'Of all the younger poets, Auden is the one who has interested me the most deeply, though I feel that it is impossible to predict whether he will manifest the austerity and concentration necessary for poetry of the first rank, or whether he will dissipate his talents in wit and verbal brilliance' (p. 6).

What is important here is not simply that Eliot successfully defended Smith's editorial practice, and that the *Listener* was permitted to go on publishing poetry, although this was no small achievement. The manner and tone of Eliot's report is crucial. One might argue that Eliot was never the most aggressive of prose stylists, but compared to his most famous, early pieces of criticism—'Tradition and the Individual Talent' or 'The Metaphysical Poets', for example—this report is cautious, restrained, and always orientated towards the sceptical reader. In fact, it reads much like many of the careful explorations of modernism found in weekly reviews that have been discussed by this thesis. Eliot's defence of Smith, in other words, constructs her editorial practice as precisely that of a responsible employee, attempting to establish a 'BBC Spectator' that will be able to look back on its achievements with pride. Such an angle of argument was, of course, precisely aligned to John Reith's own perspective, and it is

difficult to imagine that he would have accepted a report that had simply argued for the aesthetic supremacy of modernist poetry, and the flaws in all other poetry.

This of course begs the question of whether the report was specifically targeted to appease John Reith, rather than to merely assess the *Listener's* record as poetry journal. Eliot, as sometimes BBC broadcaster and public intellectual, must have been aware of Reith's perspective on culture, but I hesitate to suggest that the report was specifically concocted so that Smith could get away with it, as it were: there is simply no evidence for this. A more productive question asks whether this report, as a cautious defence of Smith in the manner of a weekly review, was an accurate representation of her work. Was Smith's editorial practice as balanced and careful and uncontroversial as Eliot suggests? This conclusion is difficult to support: irrespective of the fact that Eliot convinced Reith, Smith's work at the *Listener* was in many ways genuinely radical.

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By this, I mean that Smith does seem to have used the tools available to her as an editor to promote Auden generation poets. Rather than simply publishing poetry so that the *Listener* might be understood as a journal of historical record, Smith knew precisely what sort of poetry she liked, and sought to provide a prominent platform for that poetry. There is nothing wrong with this: many famous editors had very strong opinions, and made no bones about them. But they were very rarely in charge of weekly reviews, and Smith's clear angle on modern poetry, in the context of the sixpenny weekly review, might thus be understood as radical.

This being said, Smith was an intelligent and canny operator who well understood the benefits that Eliot's presentation of her editorial practice as serious and even-handed brought her. As quoted above, she had hoped that Eliot's report would 'rout the Philistines', but it was actually 'something much more valuable'.⁴³ While Smith writes of the 'rigour' that Eliot's report lent to her poetry choices, the report's influence on Smith is clearest in her publication,

⁴³ Smith, 'T. S. Eliot'.

in 1935, of an anthology of *Listener* poetry, *Poems of To-morrow*. Merely the title itself signifies along Eliot's lines of argument: Smith is offering up *Listener* poems as a kind of window into future literary history. Her selections are presented to the reader as a selection of the definitive tradition, the true and largely modernist future canon.

Indeed, the move to anthologise poetry published in a weekly magazine is unusual, implying a degree of significance to the magazine's selections that one might not expect. Smith presents the anthology in modest terms, suggesting that 'readers may like to have their poems in more handy form than the back numbers of the *Listener*'.⁴⁴ Despite this, merely by presenting itself as a handy guide to new poetry, the anthology places the *Listener* in a position of authority.

Smith writes that *Poems of To-morrow*

does not aim at presenting the work of every writer of importance of our time, but at offering a cross-section which may give the reader something of the feel and texture of contemporary poetry.⁴⁵

She goes on to make a series of typical justifications of modernist poetry, similar to those found in her 1933 editorial: poetry must change to reflect the modern world, poetry does not need to rhyme, modern poetry is not incomprehensible. Smith concludes by arguing that modern poetry requires a

certain amount of effort and patience, qualities seldom encouraged by anthologies. The pieces in the standard anthologies are usually worn round and smooth by use, presenting no obvious difficulties; but a collection of modern verse requires this effort.⁴⁶

The unargued presumption operating behind this introduction is that the *Listener* has a position of authority in contemporary verse. A *Listener* anthology is not only presented as a legitimate publishing act, but as something set apart from the 'standard anthologies'. Smith's tone (à la Eliot) is largely careful and restrained, arguing for the magazine as a neutral record-keeper, offering the reader 'something of the feel and texture of contemporary poetry'. But there are also shades of a more forceful argument for modernism, as she requests 'effort' from her readers

⁴⁴ *Poems of Tomorrow: an Anthology of Contemporary Verse*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (London: Chatto & Windus, 1935). No page numbers are given for Smith's introduction.

⁴⁵ *Poems of Tomorrow*, ed. by Smith.

⁴⁶ *Poems of Tomorrow*, ed. by Smith.

and even, to a certain extent, presuming an interest in and favour for modernism among them. This tendency is hardly in tune with the conservatism and quiet respectability the BBC envisaged for its magazine.

Furthermore, *Poems of To-morrow* serves as a clear record of Smith's attempt to shape the *Listener* not just as a location for modern poetry but specifically as a magazine for the Auden group. The anthology does not reproduce the full corpus of *Listener* poetry: it is a selection. Comparing the contents page of *Poems of To-morrow* against a fuller, unedited list of poets published in the magazine reveals that Smith pruned non-modernist poets; these may have been tried out in the *Listener*, but were excised from the anthology. Richard Church, perhaps most notably, appears not once in *Poems of Tomorrow*, even though he has five poems in the 1931-33 period alone. Stephen Spender, by contrast, is reproduced in full. Ll. Wyn Griffiths, a Welsh poet with few modernist sympathies, has only two of four poems reproduced.⁴⁷ Otherwise, the table of contents reads like a roll-call of *New Signatures*, the anthology edited by Michael Roberts that explicitly offered itself as a record of the Auden group: Auden himself, Day Lewis, Gascoyne, Lehmann, MacNeice, Madge, Raine, Read, Roberts, Spender, and Tessimond.

This distorted image of *Listener* poetry anticipates the majority of the small amount of scholarly work done on the *Listener*, which stresses its value as venue for the Auden generation. A. T. Tolley's classic *The Poetry of the Thirties* (1975) summarizes Smith's clashes with Reith and Eliot's intervention with a report, based on Smith's 1966 article, but goes on to argue that

The mere listing retrospectively of the poets published is no measure of what she had done. One has to remember that she had published all these poets by the middle of 1933, when very few of them had books out. In 1931 *The Listener* included poems by Julian Bell, Richard Goodman and Stephen Spender; in 1932, it included poems by Goodman, Spender, Tessimond, Day Lewis, and John Lehmann. All this was before these poets had had much publicity, and before *New Verse* had appeared. What was most important was that it brought them before the main body of the intelligent reading public, which the little magazines, with their circulation in the hundreds, did not reach. This must have been especially important in the earlier years.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ These are 'The Colours' and 'New Years Eve'.

⁴⁸ Tolley, *Poetry of the Thirties*, p. 120.

Tolley thus locates Smith's work on the *Listener* as not just in favour of modernism but at the forefront of the Auden group, as close to the avant-garde as a wide-circulating weekly magazine can be. Valentine Cunningham echoes the sentiment in *British Writers of the Thirties* (1988), quoting Auden describing the *Listener* as 'one of our main outlets', and mentioning a 'connection' between the magazine and the Auden group 'that began when Janet Adam Smith, wife of the Old Boys' very own anthologist Michael Roberts, was in the literary editor's chair'.⁴⁹ This isn't quite accurate—Auden is not writing about Smith, but her successor as literary editor, J. R. Ackerley, and Smith wouldn't meet Michael Roberts until 1932, when she had already published Spender, Julian Bell, and Richard Goodman (they were married in 1935, when Smith left the BBC).⁵⁰ Cunningham goes on to describe the *Listener* as 'almost the house organ of the Auden group'.⁵¹ It should be noted that Smith thought Cunningham connected the paper and the poets far too closely and clubbishly; this being said, Smith's work as editor remains in crucial ways oriented towards promoting Auden generation poets.⁵²

Whether or not the *Listener* actually *was* a 'house organ' for the Auden generation is, at this moment, almost besides the point. The key issue is that Smith sought, on the one hand, to play down her preferences to those above her, so that her power as editor might not be interfered with and, on the other, attempted to craft the *Listener* as a venue for the Auden generation. Her anthology pruned non-modernist poets while featuring Auden generation poets prominently; her retrospectives on her time at the *Listener* demonstrate, similarly, a desire to portray the magazine as wholly devoted to the Auden group's poetry. Her 1965 essay describes the process whereby she asked Eliot to be involved in the report defending the *Listener*'s poetry:

I did not then know Mr Eliot, so asked Herbert Read if he would find out, on Mr Eliot's return from America that summer, whether he would be willing to give an opinion on our poems. Mr

⁴⁹ Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, p. 146.

⁵⁰ See *Complete Works of Auden*, VI, 360-61.

⁵¹ Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, p. 292..

⁵² Writing to Cunningham, Smith acknowledged that the *Listener* was an important outlet for the Auden generation, but emphasized 'it was an outlet too for many other voices'. In the same letter, however, she notes the importance of her own preferences; once she has the permission to publish new poetry, 'I then set about finding poems: by writing to poets whose work I'd read and liked, by asking round among friends in teaching, publishing etc for other names, whom I would invite to submit their work'. NLS, Acc. 12342/38 (Smith to Valentine Cunningham, 18 January 1998).

Eliot was willing, so I sent him the supplement, and cuttings of all the poems published in the last two years. This collection included poems by Conrad Aiken, George Barker, Julian Bell, J. N. Cameron, Gavin Ewart, David Gascoyne, Louis MacNeice, Edwin Muir, William Plomer, Kathleen Raine, Michael Roberts, Stephen Spender, A. S. J. Tessimond, and R. E. Warner.⁵³

While this list gives a fair approximation of important poets that the *Listener* published in the thirties, it slightly misconstrues the nature of the collection of poetry that Smith would have sent to Eliot. Of these poets, only Julian Bell, Gavin Ewart, Michael Roberts, Stephen Spender, and A. S. J. Tessimond had been published in the *Listener* by July 1933, when the supplement appeared. None of these poets appeared in the supplement itself. That is only five poets out of fourteen on Smith's list; moreover, Bell, Ewart and Roberts had only published one poem apiece. The other poets on the list do appear later in the thirties, and it is implausible and unfair to suggest that Smith, writing thirty years after the event, was attempting to deliberately mislead. It is important to recognize, however, that in an attempt to give the public in 1965 a flavour of the poems she published in the *Listener*, Smith reaches not for the names she published but for a selection of poets strongly associated with the Auden group. In retrospect, Smith imagines the *Listener* as a place that argued for the Auden generation.

Publishing a new poet is, in contemporary terms, the purest way of arguing for the importance of that poet's work. Looking back on years of poetry publishing and emphasizing certain names is a clearer act of aligning an institution with a particular group of poets. But the *Listener's* ability to review new poetry—a role more familiar to the other magazines covered by this thesis—also plays a potentially crucial role in the emergence of new ideas about poetry. Eliot's report is notably reluctant to play the critic, offering a few remarks on 'austerity and concentration' that, even in 1933, would have been recognised as common tropes of his literary criticism. Once again, this plays into the ways in which this report seeks to align the *Listener* and new poetry with conservative and establishment values. Eliot prefers to maintain the idea of poetry that is somehow ineffably good, rather than to closely explore exactly how such poetry might differ from other, more established models.

⁵³ Smith, 'T. S. Eliot'.

But the *Listener* was not so restrained, offering a series of reviews of new poetry throughout the two-and-a-half year period under question here. As well as printing edited texts of talks on poetry by a range of writers, *The Listener* regularly published reviews of poetry in its 'Book Chronicle', a series of unsigned short reviews of new books that appeared every week. This section of the periodical represents an important part of the magazine's original material, and its continued existence was a point of friction with the wider BBC. Debra Rae Cohen notes that the Book Chronicle pages were 'Lambert's most significant gesture towards the status of "literary weekly"'.⁵⁴ These short notes were unsigned, which was standard practice for a literary weekly but unusual for the BBC, as they offered the possibility of reviewers appearing to have the full weight of the corporation behind their statements. Cohen quotes Val Goldsmith, the Assistant Controller for Administration, worrying about the appearance of 'ex cathedra statements on the merits of a book'.⁵⁵ Indeed, it was exactly such a statement (albeit reviewing a radio talk, not a book, in a short-lived radio critic section of the *Listener*) that led to Raymond Postgate being ousted from the *Listener* and the BBC. Postgate criticized the economic policy of Sir Josiah Stamp, who complained to Reith that such criticisms appeared to be coming from the corporation itself.⁵⁶

Lambert notes that the BBC viewed the reviewing of new books almost as a moral endeavour, so controversial that it was halted altogether for a time:

Reith held strong views as to the responsibilities of reviewers. He held that it was their duty to encourage 'wholesome' fiction, and discourage the 'unwholesome'. But as much of the best fiction of the day fell within the latter definition, according to the Puritans, the reviewer with a literary conscience found it hard to please his BBC employer. The service was for several years suspended—at the microphone; but as a sop to intellectuals, the *Listener* was permitted, nay encouraged, to run a fiction-reviewing feature of its own. We took the opportunity eagerly.⁵⁷

Later in the thirties, Lambert's relationship with the BBC soured, and his memoir is correspondingly eager to place himself at odds with reactionary elements within the

⁵⁴ Cohen, 'Intermediality', p. 585.

⁵⁵ Cohen, 'Intermediality', p. 585.

⁵⁶ Cohen, 'Intermediality', p. 585.

⁵⁷ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 126.

corporation.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the BBC was often unsure if it should be reviewing new fiction on the air, a worry that did not trouble the *Listener*. As the example of Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* showed, Reith could and did interfere. At the very least, it must be concluded that book reviews were perceived as an important and controversial way for the corporation to intervene in and comment on cultural matters. Furthermore, one might suggest that Smith's continual promotion of modernism through the poetry reviews amounts to a substantive defiance of Reith's clear view on 'unwholesome' literature.

Smith promoted the Auden generation through reviews in two ways: by giving generous coverage to Auden generation poets, and by giving reviews to critics who were likely to receive the poets kindly. While the 'Listener's Book Chronicle' reviews were anonymous, some can be traced. As mentioned above, Smith met her future husband Michael Roberts through her work as literary editor. While Roberts was working on anthologies of Auden generation poetry, he also reviewed Spender's *Poems* for the *Listener* in February 1933.⁵⁹ The second of Roberts's anthologies—*New Country*—was reviewed in April 1933 by F. R. Leavis, who had previously reviewed Auden's *The Orators* in June 1932.⁶⁰ To be clear, Smith should not be accused of consciously trying to generate positive reviews for Auden generation poets. It is more likely by far that Smith sent new books she liked to critics she respected, and that she respected critics who broadly shared her preference for modernist poetry.

It is, however, significant that when volumes of poetry by Auden, Spender and Roberts came to the *Listener* they were reviewed by Leavis and Roberts; not simply because such critics would write positive reviews, but because they write those reviews from a perspective that is

⁵⁸ Lambert drew the corporation's ire over a somewhat farcical case of slander known as 'The Case of the Talking Mongoose'. He wrote a light-hearted book with his friend Harry Price, *The Haunting of Cashen's Gap* (1936), about the supposed phenomenon of Gef the talking mongoose, witnessed on a farm on the Isle of Man. This book was used by Sir Cecil Levita to cast aspersions on Lambert's suitability to serve on the board of the British Film Institute; on discovering this, Lambert sued for libel. The BBC was heavily embarrassed in the case once it emerged that it had put pressure on Lambert to abandon the case, and implied that his job was at risk. While Lambert returned to work at *The Listener* in 1937, having received £7600 in damages (a huge sum), he would leave two years later in 1939, and emigrated to Canada. See Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, pp. 216-318.

⁵⁹ Attributed to Roberts by R. Hamilton; see *A Portrait of Michael Roberts*, ed. by T. W. Eason and R. Hamilton (Chelsea: College of S. Mark and S. John, 1949), p. 67.

⁶⁰ Attributed to Leavis by Smith; see Smith, 'Auden and the "Listener"', p. 532.

deeply familiar with the poets and poetry under consideration. For example, Leavis's review of Auden's *The Orators* has many reservations about the volume: 'Too often, instead of complexity and subtlety, he [Auden] gives us a blur'; he also notes 'satisfaction in undergraduate cleverness'.⁶¹ But these criticisms also come with significant praise, which seem to overrule them: 'a certain strength that makes Mr Auden's work remarkable'. More importantly, Leavis clearly has an easy familiarity with Auden's work and his place in literary culture; he writes of the 'first book of poems [that] has already won him a reputation', and sees Auden's modernism as nothing surprising.

We expect some measure of difficulty in modern verse; indeed we are suspicious when we find none. But now that fashion has come to favour modernity there is a danger that difficulty may be too easily accepted.⁶²

Crucially, Leavis's problems with *The Orators* do not come from a worry that this form of poetry is inherently problematic—compare the review of *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* in the *Spectator*—but from the more specific concern that this excellent poet might be resting on his laurels; 'modern poetry has vindicated the right to demand hard work from the reader. But we demand of the poet that he should have done his share, and in Mr Auden's case we are not convinced.'⁶³ For Leavis and the *Listener*, the poetry that Auden is writing is, in an unproblematic way, precisely the type of poetry that young poets should be crafting, even if individual instances of that poetry do not match up to expectations. Modernist poetry is what all new poets should—naturally—be writing.

Roberts's review of Spender's *Poems* is more emphatic in its praise, and even goes on to directly link the *Listener* to Spender's burgeoning career: 'Mr Spender's book, short though it is, more than fulfils the promise of the poems which have appeared in the *Listener* and elsewhere.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ [F. R. Leavis], 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: The Orators. By W. H. Auden. Tomorrow Will Be Different. By Daniel George', *The Listener*, 22 June 1932, p. 906.

⁶² [Leavis], 'Book Chronicle: *The Orators*'.

⁶³ [Leavis], 'Book Chronicle: *The Orators*'.

⁶⁴ [Michael Roberts], 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: Poems. By Stephen Spender', *The Listener*, 1 February 1933, p. 190.

For Roberts, Spender's key achievement is that his work reconciles two very different schools in modern poetry.

In recent years we have been faced with two contrasting schools of poets: those who, content to use the existing means, spoke with an accent not their own, and those who, determined not to be misunderstood, wrote poems which, if they were to be understood at all, were to be understood only as the writers intended. The former found themselves restricted to saying again that which had already been said; the latter could voice only that which was far removed from ordinary experience. We had, on the one hand, 'poetical' poetry and, on the other, 'difficult'. Mr Spender is neither 'poetical' nor 'difficult'.⁶⁵

Spender achieves 'sincerity'; he does not write 'the poems of a clique', and among 'the poverty and muddled policies and magnificent machines', Spender understands 'the certain promise of enduring change'. This is clearly a reference to the socialist views held by Spender and other Auden generation poets, and indeed the idea that these thirties poets were politically engaged—as previous modernist poets were not—runs throughout the early reception of these poets.

My point is that Roberts's review at once acknowledges the influence of earlier modernist poetry on Spender while arguing that Spender's work transcends divisions in literary culture. This may develop a wider public awareness of the changing shape of modernist poetry, but it also effectively ventriloquizes manifesto-like arguments for the work of Spender and his contemporaries. While the review of Roberts's 1933 anthology, *New Country*, is written by Leavis, it takes a strikingly similar tack. Leavis argues that while *New Signatures* 'made us aware of a new school of poetry with a certain coherence of aim showing clearly above the interest of the individual poems', *New Country* 'is a much more significant manifesto'.⁶⁶ The review then goes on to make that manifesto clear:

They are concerned with the modern poet's position in a world of all-invading political issues, more particularly with the issue of Communism. [...] Proletarian realism of the effective kind has not found a place for the kind of art which these poets, in common with others not so politically minded, instinctively practise; for the revolutionary, all art is idealist dope for which the exigencies of political action leave no place. There is no such thing as proletarian art, and if ever such a thing is to exist, it must wait for the establishment of proletarian society. Meanwhile the poet must express himself within the categories of the established tradition.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ [Roberts], 'Book Chronicle: Spender, *Poems*'.

⁶⁶ [F. R. Leavis], 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: *New Country*. Edited by Michael Roberts', *The Listener*, 12 April 1933, pp. 602-03 (p. 602).

⁶⁷ [Leavis], 'Book Chronicle: *New Country*', p. 602.

The review morphs from a simple description of an element of the new poetics of the Auden group (they are exploring the boundaries between poetry and politics) to an argument that takes on the voice of a *New Country*-style manifesto, ventriloquizing words that might be spoken by the Auden poets themselves. Whether or not this represents an authentic representation of *New Country* poetics is besides the point; the review takes on the language of a left-wing political argument (proletarian, revolutionary) and becomes something which does not assess the Auden group but identifies itself as part of that group, or, at least, as that group's voice.

At the same time, the *Listener* was quick to criticize anthologies that paid little attention to the poetry it favoured. Henry Newbolt's *Mercury Book of Verse* is heavily criticized for claiming to represent a period without bias towards any particular poetics. The *Listener* suggests that this is

a strange claim, surely, for a collection that does not contain a single line of T. S. Eliot (who, whatever views you may hold as to his permanent merits, has had more influence on the younger generation of poets and literary critics than any of his contemporaries), nor anything really representative of Mr Eliot's inspired followers, and nothing of either of the Sitwells.⁶⁸

Lascelles Abercrombie's *New English Poems* comes in for similar criticism:

We optimistically refuse to believe that the state of poetry in England to-day is as complacently mediocre as this volume would represent it to be. [...] The truth is that no book as unmindful as this is of the school of T. S. Eliot can honestly be called 'representative of the art of English poetry to-day' and, since so many of the livelier brains and acutest sensibilities have joined that school, neither can it hope to mirror the contemporary spirit.⁶⁹

Anthologies are important, as Leonard Diepeveen argues: 'modern poetry anthologies [...] record a struggle about an emergent entity and the conditions under which that entity—which became known as modernism—might be known, represented, and archived'.⁷⁰ As we have seen, Smith's own anthology pruned *Listener* poets to give greater prominence to the Auden generation; as reviewer of new poetry, the *Listener* dismissed anthologies that ignored modernism while seeming to act as full-throated advocate for those which gave it prominent space.

⁶⁸ 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: Mercury Verse', *The Listener*, 15 July 1931, p. 113.

⁶⁹ 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: New English Poems', *The Listener*, 13 January 1932, p. 64.

⁷⁰ Leonard Diepeveen, 'When Did Modernism Begin? Formulating Boundaries in the Modern Anthology', *English Studies in Canada*, 30 (2004), 137-56 (p. 137).

It could not be said that the *Listener*—or Smith—behaved improperly or wrongly in any of these activities. The magazine published, reviewed and anthologized poetry; Smith knew precisely what she liked, and her preferences influenced her editorial practice. Such behaviour only aligns Smith with influential literary editors of this period: John Middleton Murry, or T. S. Eliot. Yet as editor of a weekly review, or to be more precise an unusual periodical aspiring to the condition of weekly review, the *Listener*'s full-throated promotion of Auden generation poetry is unusual, to say the least. As I have argued throughout, these magazines envisaged themselves as neutral, authoritative evaluators of literary culture. Even if such a position was never tenable in practice, the *Listener* troubled the idea, by publishing a wide range of new poetry and then taking, in its reviews, a very specific line on that poetry. As a final example, this is best seen not in the positive reviews of modernist poets, but in the ways in which the *Listener* reads poets with an ambiguous relationship to modernism. The *Listener* published Richard Church's 'Latterday Eurydice' in February 1932; the poem would later be included in his volume *News from the Mountain*.⁷¹ It is a long poem for a weekly magazine—one of the longest published by the *Listener* in this period. Here, the poem's voice describes the pain of parting from his or her lover, as they take an escalator into an underground station:

I watched you vanish down the escalator,
 Gliding transfixed, an elegy of motion.
 Who, in that mad, electric universe
 Could think two lovers parted thus, their hearts
 Aching with faith and the deep burden of joy? (ll. 1-5)⁷²

The metrical pattern is not typical for Church, who tended to write in rhyming couplets.⁷³ The subject matter, however, is resolutely old-fashioned, posing the poem as a lover's lament and alluding to classical myth with the mention of Eurydice in the poem's title. But that mention of 'Latterday' alerts the reader to a focus on modernity, a sense which is immediately heightened

⁷¹ Richard Church, *News from the Mountain* (Letchworth: The Temple Press, 1932), pp. 58-60.

⁷² Richard Church, 'Latterday Eurydice', *The Listener*, 24 February 1932, p. 280. References to this poem are given by line number after quotation in the text.

⁷³ For example, the first poem published in the *Listener* began 'Not utterly complete | My solitude was sweet; | But my dear companion | Must needs abandon'. See Richard Church, 'The Anchorite's Lament', *The Listener*, 11 February 1931, p. 244.

by the use of ‘escalator’, a word that was only thirty years old at the time of publication.⁷⁴ While the poem presents itself on the page as unrhymed blank verse, and is indeed largely written in iambic pentameter, this first line is eleven syllables long. ‘Escalator’ itself is a slightly awkward four syllables that gives the reader pause at the end of the line. Moreover, it seems just plausible that the motion of the lover away from the poem’s point of view, moving yet not, ‘gliding transfixed’ recalls some of the ways in which modernist artists attempt to capture motion in a still painting; Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* is perhaps the most famous and relevant example.

This poem, then, is both modern and not, forcing itself to confront the trappings of modernity but remaining fundamentally anxious about their use. At the same time, the two lovers dream of a simpler time together.

The secret intimations of understanding
 Which make the world again grow young and simple,
 A trysting-place between the day and night
 With hemispheres of dew, birdjoy, blossom,
 And songs of morning when proud kings and poets
 Went indistinguishable in their crowns
 To take their white princesses to their hearts
 And thus set forth to achieve kingdoms, and song! (ll. 10-17)

The image of the lovers together is figured as a space that escapes time, tinged with the imagery and vocabulary (‘dew, birdjoy, blossom’) of an older and simpler poetry. Here, poets are quite literally indistinguishable from kings, both taking part in a quest towards kingdoms, princesses, and song. The direct references to ‘poets’ and ‘song’ turn the poem’s attention not just to modernity, but to modernist poetry, and as much as the narrator yearns for this prelapsarian poetry, it does not seem possible. Church goes on to construct a simplistic yet effective analogy that compares the underground station to hell itself:

Ah! As motionless you vanished into hell,
 Into the bright electric hell of underground
 Where stood the slot-machines for sentinels
 With lips of brass, and all their harsh viscera
 Exposed beneath their belly-walls of glass,
 Lamplit and shameless, gurgitating coins; (ll. 18-23)

⁷⁴ *OED*, ‘escalator, n.’, sense 1.a. The word is first noted in the US in 1900, but not in the UK until 1910.

Underground as underworld; the poem's use of Eurydice as a kind of ancestor myth is clear. Of course, for a modern poem to distrust modernity even as it sees a reaction to it as necessary is not unusual. And as the lover vanishes, the world of 'poets and kings' seems less viable: modernity may be divisive and distrusted, but a poetry that responds to it seems necessary. Yet the force of that earlier evocation of a 'trysting-place' remains, such that (like the overlong first line) the motion towards modernism remains awkward and unresolved. Church is neither striding definitely towards a new poetry nor manning the barricades to defend an antimodernist poetics, but hesitantly gesturing at an inevitable modernism that he does not seem enamoured by.

When *News from the Mountain* is reviewed in the *Listener* a few months later, the reviewer takes up this hesitant move towards modernism and argues for it as an unambiguously positive thing:

Admirers of Mr Church's poetry will have watched with interest his endeavours, during the last year or so, to give his work the freedom of a larger form than had conditioned it hitherto. [...] Mr Church is a worker in pastel who begins to feel a chisel in his hands. The development, the increase in power, in these longer poems can scarcely be overlooked even by the severest critic; and it is no essential indictment to say they do not stand being subdued to a muffled theme or being packed out with lyrics of a blameless nineteenth-century quality. To come upon any one of them, after an arid stretch of the shorter verses, is to realise at once that the dryness is one of husk rather than heart: much is to be forgiven a poet who makes a few false mental steps in the excitement of approaching by instinct the core of his creative faculty. *News from the Mountain* may be unsatisfactory as a book (though readable to a degree) but as an augury it is full of signs and portents.⁷⁵

Instead of the awkward wavering in 'Latterday Eurydice', Church's new poetry becomes an 'endeavour': he is 'a worker in pastel who begins to feel a chisel in his hands.' This draws on modernist imagery of the poet as sculptor, and places Church on one side of a clear binary.⁷⁶ Older poetic forms are figured as dull and dry, and Church's missteps are thus forgivable because they are an 'augury': modernism is apparently going to win out in the end. Even if 'Latterday Eurydice' does not offer the clear omens that this review ascribes to *News from the Mountain* as a volume, I am not suggesting that this review is necessarily misreading Church's poetry, merely that the publication of this poem and then, a few months later, the review,

⁷⁵ 'The Listener's Book Chronicle: News From the Mountain. By Richard Church', *The Listener*, 21 September 1932, pp. 426-27.

⁷⁶ Michael H. Whitworth, *Reading Modernist Poetry* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 27-28.

illustrates a clear commitment to promoting modernism in poetry that goes far beyond the task proposed by Eliot, that of the magazine as a mere public record of contemporary writing. Instead, the *Listener* concurrently hosts new poetry and, through reviews, attempts to shape a way of reading that poetry that almost always praises modernism.

*

These reviews, and their relationship to the poetry that Smith was publishing, clearly carve out a space in the *Listener* that argues for the Auden generation. Given what we know of the weekly review, it might be suggested that such actions pushed the boundaries of Smith's responsibilities as assistant editor. It is hard to argue that the literary editor of the *Listener* was intended to encourage and explore the new poetry of a single group of poets to quite this extent. In Chapter 2, I explored the problem of an editor who disliked his job; here we are faced with the problem of an editor who rebelled against her superiors. Once again, this has theoretical ramifications, made clear in Matthew Philpotts' essay on Bourdieusian habitus and literary editors. Philpotts usefully argues that habitus ('a deeply ingrained but readily transferable set of attitudes which generates the perceptions and practices of individual agents in the field') can be applied to periodicals, as well as to individuals.⁷⁷ Following Bourdieu's work on Gide and the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Philpotts suggests that

a literary journal is characterized by what we can identify as its own 'common habitus', the defining ethos which unites the members of its 'nucleus' and which acts as 'a unifying and generative principle' for their cultural practice. In turn, this simple theoretical move has three key consequences for the argument developed in this essay. First, and of broadest significance for the study of periodicals, it follows that the literary journal can be conceptualized as an agent in its own right, participating in the cultural field in the acquisition and exchange of capital in its various forms: literary, economic, and social; material and symbolic. The role of the editor, then, is to maximize the sums of capital acquired and maintained by the journal.⁷⁸

While powerful, this point of view depends utterly on the assumption that the literary journal as agent is a broadly collaborative entity, and that the editor acts as the focal point for the journal's wider intentions. In Leonard Woolf's case, it is clear that this point is null and void;

⁷⁷ Matthew Philpotts, 'The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Editorial Habitus', *Modern Language Review*, 107 (2012), 39-64 (p. 42).

⁷⁸ Philpotts, 'Editorial Habitus', p. 42.

rather than focalizing wider intentions, he disliked his job but nevertheless guarded a space for critics to think about modernism. The case of the *Listener* is very different, and it seems at least plausible that a literary journal might participate in the cultural field as an agent even if its habitus is not unified or collaborative. I contend that the *Listener*'s publication of new poetry (especially the 1933 poetry supplement) represents just such a rebellious intervention, confounding the notion of *common* habitus and threatening to fracture the identity that the BBC imagined for its new magazine.

Reith's criticism of the poetry in 1933 is a perfect example. The mere existence of Eliot's report implies a wish to paper over cracks at the BBC, and to gently argue for a reconciliation between cultural viewpoints that were in many ways ultimately divergent. Moreover, conflicting narratives exist which suggest that the combative nature of the BBC was not as simple as the *Listener*'s modernism against Reith's conservatism. Peter Parker paints Richard Lambert as the voice of Reithian conservatism, apt to be fooled by a wily Janet Adam Smith:

Knowing that Lambert was as likely as Reith to be suspicious of poem like Auden's 'The Witnesses', she [Smith] waited until he had returned from a good lunch, then presented him with a sheet of poems, at the top of which was the most innocuous and easily understandable of the batch. As Lambert cast a woozy eye over the page, Adam Smith would engage him in conversation so that he rarely bothered to read the entire sheet before passing the poem for publication.⁷⁹

Lambert, by contrast, presents himself as a cautious advocate for modernism against Reith. With tongue firmly in cheek, he suggests that the architecture of the new Broadcasting House, and Eric Gill's statues of Prospero and Ariel in particular, are evidence that 'the BBC had no bias towards aesthetic orthodoxy. And as Sir John Reith had thus blazoned the trail towards modernism, I felt that the *Listener* might safely follow a little way in his footsteps'.⁸⁰

'Safely follow a little way': this is precisely the tone that we have come to expect from the weekly review. If it examines modernism, it does so carefully, always considering how new

⁷⁹ Peter Parker, *Ackerley: A Life of J. R. Ackerley* (London: Constable, 1989), p. 185.

⁸⁰ Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, pp. 138-39. Reith was not of course a fan of Gill's Prospero and Ariel: Fiona MacCarthy writes of 'the scandal of Ariel's pudenda: the governors of the BBC, after a preview of the carving behind a tarpaulin, asked Gill to make the organs more diminutive'. See Fiona MacCarthy, *Eric Gill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 247. Sadly, a story that Reith climbed Gill's scaffolding and attempted to personally chisel off the offending genitalia seems to be apocryphal.

ideas might soon become a part of official culture. It is the tone, too, of T. S. Eliot's report: the publication of brash young poets as a generous, paternalistic gesture towards future literary history. My point, though, is that the *Listener* did *not* 'safely follow a little way'. It did not simply attempt to take modernism seriously, but under Smith embraced the challenge of publishing and reviewing new poetry. Whether or not one takes Smith's point of view—and given the now secure position of Auden in literary history, it is easy to agree with her—her behaviour as assistant editor to publish and promote the Auden generation was not uncontroversial, and Reith's unease at the poetry supplement was not simply a storm in a teacup. Smith was testing the boundaries of what could be achieved in a weekly review, challenging the identity of the *Listener*, and in many ways the BBC had every right to worry.

All weekly reviews are of course a network of overlapping influences and agendas. This can be seen at the *Nation and Athenaeum*—Keynes's committed Liberalism against Woolf's professional apathy—and at *Time and Tide*, as the politically feminist programme sat sometimes uncomfortably with the literary pages. It is less evident at the *Spectator*, with its anomalously unified identity. But at the *Listener*, different members of staff pushed for different things, and the paper's overall identity was formed from the complex and unclear collision between different agents within the magazine. This periodical was caught between its own journalistic intent and the desire of the Talks Department, source of its broadcast scripts, to keep it as a 'Hansard for Talks'.⁸¹ It was overseen by Reith and his senior management, whenever it was perceived to have stepped out of line. And it was altered, internally, by Smith's actions as assistant editor.

As with the *Nation and Athenaeum*, it might thus be profitable to understand the *Listener* spatially. In this context, Janet Adam Smith's work as editor was a form of spatial practice that established, within the frame of this BBC weekly review, a rebellious space that argued for

⁸¹ Lambert makes the *Hansard* comparison in his memoir, though it was a common refrain in the corporation's musings on the *Listener*. Cohen clearly documents how the *Listener* and the Talks Department clashed regularly over the access the paper had to scripts, and the extent to which it was permitted to edit them. Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, p. 106; Cohen, 'Intermediality', pp. 577-78.

modernism. Crucially, this does not make the *Listener* into a modernist magazine. If this is a rebellious spatial practice, it is a practice that rebels within its institutional context, that of an institution that was trying—quite desperately—to look like a respectable weekly review. The poetry supplement aside, it is also a spatial practice that, like most editorial practices associated with the weekly review, is rooted in the everyday, not the event: the appearance of one short poem on a small section of one page, each week, and every few weeks a single paragraph reviewing new poetry. Smith's rebellious spatial practice might be read alongside Michel de Certeau's famous discussion, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), of the potentially subversive nature of walking in the city.

One can analyse the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay; one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, developed and insinuated themselves into the networks of surveillance, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization.⁸²

De Certeau's walkers are able to tactically subvert the overall controlling strategies of the city: these are 'multiform, resistance, tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised'.⁸³ Rephrasing de Certeau for a mainstream periodical, the particular importance of this perspective is that it permits a dual focus: on the institution of the *Listener* and the weekly review more generally, and on the rebellions within that institution. These rebellions do not challenge the overall institutional fabric, but this makes them no less significant.

This concept might be applied to *Listener* poetry in different ways. First, de Certeau's focus on the tactical potential of everyday spatial practice emphasizes the power that individual readers have to read the *Listener* as they will. They can pass over the poems in disgust—a possibility examined by Smith's 1933 editorial on modernist poetry, discussed in the Introduction—just as they can choose to read the *Listener* for its poems alone. As de Certeau

⁸² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 96.

⁸³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 96.

writes, ‘readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves’.⁸⁴ By developing a space for modernist poetry within the *Listener*, Smith not only permits but arguably encourages such rebellious practices.

But one can go further, and see Smith herself as a reader of the magazine’s institutional strategies, and as a member of that institution that uses poetry and poetry reviews in a rebellious fashion. Different aspects of Smith’s practice as editor—her overall desire to publish the Auden generation, her everyday practice to source and select poems and reviewers, her reaction to opposition as she reached out to T. S. Eliot to defend the poetry supplement—combine to establish *Listener* poetry as a dissonant element within the *Listener*, one with ‘surreptitious creativities’ that is nonetheless contained within the weekly review.

To this point, I have considered how the institution of the weekly review reads the emerging form of modernist literature, and how such interpretations themselves formed a key element in modernism’s emergence into public culture in Britain. Janet Adam Smith’s rebellious practice as editor demands a slightly different perspective. Rather than offering cautious analysis of how modernism might fit into official culture, the *Listener* effectively dramatizes the conflict between the new poetry that Smith promotes and the institution of the weekly review. In Smith’s 1933 editorial, for example, the tone may address the sceptical reader, as is common for the weekly review. This piece is most similar to Leonard Woolf’s discussion of modern poetry in 1925:

It is easy to put on the black cap and, calling the names of Alfred Tennyson and William Wordsworth, to pronounce all this nonsense and not poetry.⁸⁵

But Smith’s editorial contains a potential undertone of scorn.

Obviously, many think, if you have eyes to read Bradshaw you have eyes to read poetry: and so when they *do* come across a poem they are aggrieved if it does not immediately please—blandly

⁸⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 174.

⁸⁵ Leonard Woolf, ‘The World of Books: Modern Poetry’, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 18 April 1925, p. 76.

unconscious of the fact that a fine sensibility to poetry is probably as uncommon a gift, and as hard an acquisition, as a fine sensibility to music or painting.⁸⁶

The sceptical reader is taken seriously by the overall thrust of the magazine, and of the review, but mocked and dismissed in these tiny flashes of criticism in Smith's editorial. Here, one might again turn to de Certeau, and his distinction between strategy and tactic: if the strategy of the *Listener* is to take that sceptical reader seriously, Smith's tactical move is to dismiss them, at small moments in her poetry reviews.

Crucially, she suggests that modernism emerges into public culture not only when the cautious weekly review collaborates with the reader (to explore whether or not modernism deserves a place in official culture) but also, sometimes, when it opposes the reader. By rebelling against the strictures of the weekly review, within the structure of that same review, Smith presents readers of the *Listener* with a series of challenging poems that drive a debate about the place of modernist poetry in a magazine like this, and hence a debate about the nature of modernism, and its place in wider literary culture. Smith's readers, with their own de Certeau-esque tactical readings, can of course ignore the poems. But if they choose to read them, the nature of the weekly review means that the reader is inevitably challenged by those poems, a fact of no small significance.

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What, then, of the 1933 poetry supplement itself? Smith's retrospective article calls attention equally to the poems, and to the images that surround the poetry, describing 'Nine Poems' as 'a four-page supplement of poetry and woodcuts'.⁸⁷ The woodcuts were by Gwen Raverat, a granddaughter of Charles Darwin who knew many of the Apostles in pre-war Cambridge, and would later write art criticism and provide illustrations for *Time and Tide* in the thirties, as well as illustrating books of poetry and later writing a popular memoir, *Period Piece* (1952).⁸⁸ Wood engraving was her preferred medium, and she would describe it as being 'hard,

⁸⁶ [Smith], "'Modernist' Poetry".

⁸⁷ Smith, 'T. S. Eliot'.

⁸⁸ Frances Spalding, *Gwen Raverat: Friends, Family & Affections* (London: Pimlico, 2004), pp. 323-24. See also *DNB*.

tight, definite' and having 'no room for vagueness'.⁸⁹ The images in the *Listener* are striking, unlike anything seen before or after in that magazine, or indeed any of its contemporaries. A title woodcut on the first page gives the supplement title in bold sans serif, showing a windswept mountain range, two gesturing human figures, and a nude figure pinned by a giant bird (presumably in reference to John Hewitt's 'Anti-Promethean Ode'). The last page has a small cut of a factory, a walled city, and a biplane. Poems from C. Day Lewis, John Hewitt, Herbert Read, Bernard Spencer, John Lehmann, T. H. White, Charles Madge and Arthur Ball take up these first and last pages.⁹⁰

But it is the central woodcut that remains the most striking image. Frances Spalding, Raverat's biographer, describes it as a 'bold response to W. H. Auden's highly allusive poem'.⁹¹ The poem is 'The Witnesses', likely composed during late 1932 and published here for the first time.⁹² This particular publication has largely escaped critical notice, beyond acknowledgments by Tolley and Cunningham that the *Listener* was an important venue for Auden. Andrew Thacker, in a recent essay on Auden and periodicals that mentions the *Listener* as an outlet for Auden, is of course correct to describe the periodical as a 'middlebrow and financially stable institution', but 'The Witnesses' itself should not be understood in this way.⁹³ As Thacker rightly emphasizes, returning texts to their original place of publication means that we read 'different poems, with different meanings'.⁹⁴ We have to pay attention not just to 'other themes and issues in the magazine', but 'size, design and typography'.⁹⁵ To read the *Listener* against

⁸⁹ Gwen Raverat, quoted in Spalding, *Gwen Raverat*, p. 323.

⁹⁰ A full list of titles on the outer pages: C. Day Lewis, 'Demigods and Heroes'; John Hewitt, 'Anti-Promethean Ode'; Bernard Spencer, 'How Must We Live?'; Herbert Read, 'Logos'; John Lehmann, 'As the Day Burns On'; T. H. White, 'A Dray Horse'; Charles Madge, 'Birdseye'; Arthur Ball, 'The Spirit's Arming'. See 'Nine Poems'.

⁹¹ Spalding, *Gwen Raverat*, p. 323.

⁹² *The Witnesses* as printed in the *Listener* is collected in Mendelson's *The English Auden* (pp. 126-30). On its textual history, 'The poem first appears in Auden's notebook as an inset in a long, unfinished dream-vision poem in Cantos which dates from September 1932 to around January 1933. Auden used a slightly cut version of the third part of the present text in *The Chase* and *The Dog Beneath the Skin*.' W. H. Auden, *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927-1939*, ed. by Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 423. Further references to this poem are given by line number after quotation in the text.

⁹³ Andrew Thacker, 'Auden and Little Magazines', in *W. H. Auden in Context*, ed. by Tony Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 337-46 (p. 338).

⁹⁴ Thacker, 'Auden and Little Magazines', p. 337.

⁹⁵ Thacker, 'Auden and Little Magazines', p. 344.

and sighed;
 Above the blue sky arching wide
 Two black rocks on either side,
 and then he died. (ll. 102-06)

It is at this point that the poem begins to rapidly modulate in tone. It again addresses the reader directly ('Now ladies and gentlemen' (l. 108)) and the voice of the poem takes on a character and makes itself plural: 'Listen, while my friend and I | proceed to explain' (ll. 112-13). The final column, the third part of the poem, makes clear that this plural voice is 'The Witnesses' of the poem's title, the two standing stones gifted with malevolent intelligence and magical power. They continue to speak to the reader, suggesting that 'I shouldn't dance' (l. 149):

For I'm afraid in that case you'll have a fall;
 We've been watching you over the garden wall
 for hours,
 The sky is darkening like a stain,
 Something is going to fall like rain
 and it won't be flowers. (ll. 150-55)

The threatening undercurrent of violence has exploded out to dominate the poem, which now attempts to speak to, threaten and manipulate the reader.

Except it does not quite manage this. The form and content, which before undercut the idyllic heroics of Prince Alpha, here undercut the threatening rhetoric of the Two. They watch not from a great distance, but over a garden wall. The sky may be darkening, but it resembles something as inconsequential as a 'stain'. The last line in this stanza has threatening overtones, but amounts to little more than a promise to not drop flowers. The uncomfortable (and sometimes polysyllabic) rhymes continue: fall/wall and stain/rain, hours/flowers.

'The Witnesses', then, continually plays with and manipulates the reader's expectations. Certainly, at no point does the poem contain the violence and threat of Raverat's illustrations. Auden's careful moves towards bathos in the last part of the poem continue to undercut the reader's impression of the poem's mood and narrative, a mood only heightened by Raverat's never-quite-suitable images. Here, modernist poetry does not just innovate with poetic form and metre, but places pressure on that cultural awareness of the divide between modernist and anti-modernist impulses; placed against a presumed conservative reader, the poem gains an

awareness of an expectation of narrative and rhyme, which it then refuses to quite fulfil, manipulating the reader and leaving them aware of this fact. Again, I do not wish to suggest that the poem was conceived to operate in this way, given that it was written in 1932; merely that when placed against the peculiar place of modernist poetry in the *Listener*, the poem has potential to work in just this way. Just as the weekly poems placed by Smith are energized by their rebellious appearance in a more conservative surround, Auden's poem, in this extraordinary supplement, can be seen to take that power relationship and make poetry from it.

In the *Listener*, then, Smith rebelled against the institution of the weekly review in order to publish the Auden generation. In this context, Auden's 'The Witnesses' can be read as occupying this dissonance. Against the weekly review's usual desire to take the sceptical reader seriously, this poem delights in toying with such a reader, seeming to offer clear poetic structures and narrative, but always undermining that offer, and tending ultimately towards bathos. The very readers that the BBC hoped to entice in to read the *Listener*—those who pay proper attention to serious broadcast talks, and read their *Spectator* from cover to cover—are here not taken seriously as participants in a conversation about modern literature, but are, as it were, the butt of Auden's joke. Recalling Thacker's argument about Auden in periodicals, this is how Auden's poem is quite drastically *different* when read in the context of the *Listener*.

What consequence, finally, does 'The Witnesses' in the *Listener* have for the emergence of modernism into public culture? It is not simply the regular appearance of modernist poetry in a periodical with an average weekly circulation (in 1933) of 42,627 copies, significant though this no doubt was.⁹⁶ To return to Hacking, I have argued throughout that our processes of naming and classifying interact with those things that we name and classify. This is at its clearest when it is broadly collaborative—when the magazine and its imagined reader seem to come together in a mutual desire to understand the nature of modern literature. But it occurs throughout Smith's editorship too. Tactical subversions of the strategy of a weekly review may

⁹⁶ See Appendix B.

be read as rebellious, but they must be understood within the context of that weekly review. To print 'The Witnesses', or other Auden generation poetry, is thus both a rebellion against the weekly review and a demand that such content be read as part of that weekly review. Naming and classifying Auden generation poetry—a process that changes the concept of the Auden generation, and by extension modernism—thus does not take place collaboratively between reader and review, but in awkward unclear combat, as readers wrestle with the place of these texts in this type of magazine. As they wrestle, modernism emerges ever more into public culture. It is an uncomfortable, troubling process: in other words, as Director-General Reith had every right to be concerned.

Yet it is also clear that Smith's ability to successfully defend her editorial practice—the fact alone that T. S. Eliot was accepted as an authority—speaks volumes about how much more public, and publicly legitimate, the concept of modernism was by 1933. In the following and final chapter, I explore the *New Statesman*, and this complex question of modernism's place as a now accepted element in official culture.

5. *THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 1931-37*

In October 1935, the *New Statesman* printed a review of F. O. Matthiessen's new work of literary criticism, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*.¹ The reviewer, Desmond Hawkins, suggested that Eliot's poetry had become part of the literary tradition. This argument seems to imply the end of the task posited by this thesis, to trace the emergence of modernism into public culture.

The title of Mr Matthiessen's book comes as a reminder that the 'terrible moderns' are no longer terrible. Mr Eliot has ceased to be the cult of the few and the joke of the many; and indeed it is now unsafe, even in the Sunday papers, to make play with the obscurity of *The Waste Land*. A generation has grown up which in adolescence read Eliot with no more fuss than any other poet. The only difference lies in the degree of influence. It is true, I believe, that there is today in England no younger poet deserving pen and paper who is not indebted, by more or less, to Eliot's work. [...] Between poetic taste and practice in 1910, and in the present time, there is a degree of difference amounting to revolution.²

Matthiessen's *Achievement* was one of the first monographs on Eliot's poetry, written while Eliot had been resident at Harvard—where Matthiessen was a member of the faculty—for a series of lectures in 1932.³ Not insignificantly, Lawrence Rainey has suggested that Eliot's return to Harvard for these lectures was 'triumphant' and would 'seal the fateful association between modernism and the academy'.⁴ Beyond the academy itself, one might also point to the rapid increase of works on Eliot that occurred at this point in history, as a study of T. S. Eliot bibliographies suggests.⁵ Indeed, Matthiessen treats the importance of Eliot's poetry as a matter of established fact.

¹ As discussed in further detail below, the periodical founded as the *New Statesman* was published as the *New Statesman and Nation* between 1931 and 1957, due to a merger with the *Nation and Athenaeum*. However, there were greater continuities between the *NSN* and the *New Statesman* than there were with the *Nation*; to emphasize this, the periodical is referred to simply as the *New Statesman* throughout.

² A. Desmond Hawkins, 'Mr Eliot', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 5 October 1935, pp. 460-62 (p. 460).

³ F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

⁴ Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 105.

⁵ In the 1920s Eliot was discussed in between twenty and thirty articles per year: 22 in 1922, 18 in 1925, 28 in 1928. This rises at the end of the decade: there are 38 items for 1929, 55 for 1930, 81 for 1932, 118 for 1934. While there is a slightly dip in 1937 (40 items), the overall trend is clear, and Hawkins's article is clearly part of the explosion. These numbers are calculated by combining figures from two major bibliographies. Both cover the same period, and the work by Frank et al. is supplementary to Martin's earlier work. The figures can thus be combined without risk of duplication. See Mildred Martin, *A Half-Century of Eliot Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles in English, 1916-65* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972); Mechthild Frank, Armin Paul

Along these lines, Hawkins's article—like Matthiessen's book—might simply be taken as further evidence that Eliot's place in literary history as an elder statesman was now assured; one might point to further comments in the magazine, from Virginia Woolf's description of Eliot as among the 'tolerably old' to David Garnett's comparison of Eliot with Coleridge; from Peter Quennell's emphasis that 'almost every modern critic has had his say' on the value of Eliot's work, to his reference—with no need to mention a name—that Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* has 'appeared under the aegis of the most eminent Anglo-Catholic poet of the present day'.⁶

Matthiessen's book does indeed make this argument: apart from a momentary acknowledgement that Eliot used to be 'experimental', his canonical status is taken as unquestionable.⁷ These arguments do not just canonize Eliot but begin to characterize him as the very model of canonical respectability. They are early forays in a line of argument ultimately taken up by Cynthia Ozick in 1989: Eliot as 'an autocratic, inhibited, depressed, rather narrow-minded, and considerably bigoted fake Englishman'.⁸ Not for nothing does Rainey characterize the association of modernism, Eliot and the academy as 'fateful'.

Retroactively, one might expect to see an earlier Eliot as a type of artist, as Fredric Jameson puts it, 'waiting patiently in line for a room in [...] a museum'; this is certainly Ozick's position.⁹ It is curious, then, that in an article that seemingly argues so clearly for Eliot's canonicity so much should be dedicated to recounting what Eliot used to be but is no longer: 'the cult of the few and the joke of the many.' Even now, the omnipresence of Eliot in anthologies and literary histories means that this sense of Eliot as rebellious poet can be hard to

Frank and K. P. S. Jochum, *T. S. Eliot Criticism in English, 1916-1965: A Supplementary Bibliography* (Edmonton: Yeats Eliot Review, 1977).

⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'All About Books', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 28 February 1931, pp. 14-15; David Garnett, 'Books in General', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 4 August 1934, p. 154; Peter Quennell, 'Mr T. S. Eliot', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18 April 1936, pp. 603-04; Peter Quennell, 'New Novels', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17 October 1936, pp. 592-93.

⁷ Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, p. 1.

⁸ Cynthia Ozick, 'T. S. Eliot at 101', *The New Yorker*, 20 November 1989, pp. 119-54 (p. 121).

⁹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 302.

recover. It is perhaps telling that Ozick's essay was cited a number of times by Eliot scholars wishing to defend their subject as a poet still worthy of study.¹⁰

Hawkins's article might therefore be read not merely as evidence of Eliot's canonical status, but as a critical argument that emphasizes the immensity of the change that has taken place: as he puts it, a 'revolution' has taken place. While the examples given above emphasize Eliot's orthodoxy, others, like Hawkins, always choose to recall that the new orthodoxy represents a shift from what came before. One might draw attention to Peter Quennell's comment that Eliot 'is now essentially orthodox', or Julian Bell's suggestion that Eliot has 'the air of being the real thing, safe to remain in the central corpus of English poetry'.¹¹

Rather than merely dwelling on Eliot's canonical status, these critics choose to perceive that status as newly minted: Eliot is orthodox 'now', 'safe' now, with the inevitable implication that all too recently he most certainly was not. In the Introduction, I quoted Perry Anderson's remarks on modernism as an 'empty' cultural category. In the same essay, Anderson argues that modernism was able to emerge against a formalized, academicized official culture, enshrined in a series of powerful cultural institutions.¹² These critics propose a similar form of official cultural status for modernism—for Hawkins, one feels, the 'Sunday papers' are one of the key cultural institutions—but this proposal is always tentative. Modernism's own role in such an official culture is never quite secure, and remains always troubled by a revolutionary avant-garde past. Put another way, Hawkins's article does not assert canonicity but rather brings it into question: Eliot's status as canonical poet *now* is always haunted by his status as rebellious and troubling literary outsider *then*. In many ways, this is the exact inverse of the

¹⁰ For example, Marjorie Perloff's 'Avant-Garde Eliot' is a thoughtful discussion of 'Prufrock' in the context of American poetry in 1910-11, and an attempt to rediscover the avant-garde nature of Eliot's poetry, which takes Ozick's essay as part of a general trend. Sebastian Knowles's appendix on Ozick in his bibliography is a more direct, vituperative attack on Ozick's claims. See Marjorie Perloff, *21st Century Modernism: The 'New' Poetics* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 10-12; Sebastian D. G. Knowles and Scott A. Leonard, *T. S. Eliot: Man and Poet: Volume 2, An Annotated Bibliography of a Decade of T. S. Eliot Criticism: 1977-1986* (Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, 1992), pp. 394-95.

¹¹ Peter Quennell, 'T. S. Eliot the Critic', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 1 October 1932, pp. 377-78 (p. 378); [Julian Bell], 'Stewed Poetry', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 17 February 1934, p. 242. 'Stewed Poetry' is initialled 'J. H. B.'. I ascribe this to Julian (Heward) Bell, a sometime *New Statesman* reviewer.

¹² Perry Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review*, 144 (1984), 96-113. This perspective is heavily influenced by Arno Mayer's work on the pre-war *ancien régime*, also discussed in the Introduction.

problem explored by Marjorie Perloff in her essay ‘Avant-Garde Eliot’: for Perloff, ‘Prufrock’ marked ‘a clear-cut break with the dominant poetics of Eliot’s day’, but this poet then became ‘in just a few short years, the conservative editor of the *Criterion*, and then the Elder Statesman of the Eliot legend’.¹³ For critics at the *New Statesman* in the early to mid thirties, Eliot’s early avant-garde nature is not lost, but inescapable.

These critics—but Hawkins in particular—do not restrict themselves to Eliot but generalize: what are we to make of the previously terrible moderns? What are we to do with the condition of being—in a literary sense—modern? Despite the assertion of safe canonicity, such gestures are troubling, and Hawkins’s argument has complex undertones: modernism’s past as rebellious outsider haunts it still, and certain question marks remain. These questions orient themselves around the status of modernism in 1935: for Hawkins it is at once no longer new but not entirely unthreatening, moving towards obsolescence yet not superseded. This last chapter will explore modernism’s cultural status in the 1930s, in a magazine that could never successfully resolve the question of canonicity: the *New Statesman*. As Hawkins recognizes, to a certain extent modernism was recognized as canonical, and this deserves and receives attention. But the troubling undertones perceived in Hawkins’s review persist; rather than naming and dating a moment of clear emergence and stable canonical status, I contend that, as for Hacking, canonicity remains elusive and troubling.

*

This chapter opens as Kingsley Martin—who would turn out to be the paper’s most famous and longest-serving editor—began his career. In 1931, this was still a new magazine: the *New Statesman* was founded by a group of Fabian intellectuals in 1913, including George Bernard Shaw and Beatrice and Sidney Webb.¹⁴ From this point on, the magazine was

¹³ Perloff, *21st Century Modernism*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁴ For a general history of the *New Statesman*, see Edward Hyams, *The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years, 1913-1963* (London: Longmans, 1963). While useful, it should be noted that this work was produced for the magazine’s half-centenary, and is thus a largely uncritical celebration of the *New Statesman*. For particular criticisms of this work, see Denis Brogan, ‘A History of the “New Statesman”’, *The Historical Journal*, 8 (1965), 135-39. More

orientated broadly around the politics of the British left, as it continues to be today. The literary pages were edited by Desmond MacCarthy throughout the twenties, and regularly featured influential (male, established, and traditionalist) critics such as J. C. Squire, Gerald Gould and Robert Lynd.¹⁵ Towards the end of the decade, however, the paper endured a problematic period described by Edward Hyams as ‘the doldrums of a tedious calm’ as the paper’s first major editor, Clifford Sharp, retreated further into alcoholism and his deputy, Mostyn Lloyd, only ever replaced him on an acting basis.¹⁶ In late 1930, Kingsley Martin—who had just moved to London after working on the *Manchester Guardian*—was appointed as editor of the *New Statesman*. J. M. Keynes had tired of owning the still loss-making *Nation and Athenaeum* (as discussed briefly in Chapter 2), and, having convinced himself that Martin would make a fine editor, proposed that the two papers be brought together. Martin was editor of both papers for a short time, but they were soon amalgamated, and the first issue of the renamed paper was published on 28 February 1931.¹⁷ Traces of these other papers remained: for a time there was, alongside the ‘*and Nation*’ in the title, the subtitle ‘incorporating the Athenaeum’. From 13 January 1934, this subtitle was altered to reflect the incorporation of the *Week-end Review*.¹⁸ However, while Keynes had apparently desired a ‘genuine union’, his paper was in reality swallowed up. John Roberts, the *New Statesman*’s business manager, ‘intended that in every respect the *New Statesman* should be on top’ and ‘Maynard confessed he came off second best in the negotiations’.¹⁹

Hyams suggests that Martin injected an invigorating ‘anger’ into the paper.²⁰ While it is certainly true that Martin was influential and the paper sold well, he continued to develop an upward trend rather than turning around a failing paper. As detailed in Appendix B, the *New*

recently, Adrian Smith has written a history of the magazine’s political half up to 1931: *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly, 1913-1931* (London: Cass, 1996).

¹⁵ Hyams, *The New Statesman*, p. 95.

¹⁶ Hyams, *The New Statesman*, p. 101.

¹⁷ Kingsley Martin, *Father Figures: A First Volume of Autobiography, 1897-1931* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1966), pp. 188-99.

¹⁸ A small image of Athena, taken from the *Athenaeum*, remained on the front page.

¹⁹ Martin, *Father Figures*, p. 198.

²⁰ Hyams, *The New Statesman*, p. 121.

Statesman reported a circulation of 10,000 in 1925; by 1931, when Martin took over, C. H. Rolph suggests a circulation of 14,000. A few years into Martin's tenure, an advertisement in February 1936 reported an average net weekly circulation of 20,833 copies for July-December 1935, and a similar notice the following year reported 24,221 copies for July-December 1936.²¹ This last figure, according to the magazine, was the largest circulation ever achieved by a sixpenny weekly review.²² Martin writes that profits began to be made once the *New Statesman* absorbed the *Week-end Review* in 1934.²³ By the end of the decade, Rolph states that the circulation had reached 30,000 copies.²⁴

The relationship between Martin's leadership and the paper's literary half is not clear. While Martin provided energy and stability, the paper lacked a prominent and long-term figure on the literary side. Between 1931 and 1937, there were five literary editors; Ellis Roberts had occupied this position for two years when Martin took over, but lasted only a few months before he was fired. After this, the position was vacant for a short time, although G. W. Stonier was the de facto literary editor while Harold Nicolson took over writing the principal 'Books in General' column. David Garnett was appointed in 1932 but was unpopular, and left in 1934. It was only at this point that the magazine found a more long-term editor in Raymond Mortimer, who would stay at the *New Statesman* until 1946.²⁵

Furthermore, the two sides of the paper do not seem to have shared a close working relationship. Martin relates two telling anecdotes in his autobiography: first, when discussing the lunches where key business was done, he adds, almost as an afterthought, that 'One or two of our literary staff usually joined us at lunch'.²⁶ Second, he praises his first long-term literary editor, Raymond Mortimer, as 'the sort of literary editor with whom I scarcely ever wished to

²¹ See Appendix B.

²² 'Our Net Sales', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 16 January 1937, p. 84.

²³ Martin also notes the surprise expressed by ex-*Nation* directors such as Keynes and Rowntree when, rather than being forced to raise funds, they were presented with dividends on their investments. See Kingsley Martin, *Editor: A Second Volume of Autobiography, 1931-45* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p. 14.

²⁴ C. H. Rolph, *Kingsley: The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin* (London: Gollancz, 1973), p. 221.

²⁵ Hyams, *The New Statesman*, pp. 160-69.

²⁶ Martin, *Editor*, p. 7.

interfere'.²⁷ Martin's ideal, one presumes, was a literary half that would run itself, allowing him to get on with the business of political journalism. Heretofore, I have discussed relationships between periodicals and strong institutional identities, whether these were possessed (*Spectator*), desired (*Time and Tide, Nation and Athenaeum*) or rebelled against (*Listener*). The impression one gets from the *New Statesman* in the early 1930s is far more haphazard, and this seems to have permitted an engagement with modernism less concerned with working out a 'newstatesmanly' position and more with wider cultural rumination.²⁸

As I have already proposed, the key question around modernism for the *New Statesman* in the 1930s was one of canonicity. This is a notably different perspective from that taken by critics now, and it is perhaps fair to argue that much recent work on modernism in the 1930s has found it useful to introduce the distinctive concept of *late* modernism. Having said this, the concept is itself not stable; both the location of a period of late modernism and the nature of its literature are contested.²⁹ Far more than modernism itself, the term is a critical imposition, first used by critics such as Alan Wilde to discuss a transitional period in between modernism and postmodernism that contained elements of both.³⁰ More recent work has begun to argue that late modernism is not just a pause between movements but a literary mode with its own distinctive characteristics. Tyrus Miller's *Late Modernism* (1999) has been particularly influential, arguing for the existence of a transnational late modernist avant-garde. He reads Barnes, Loy, late Lewis and early Beckett as part of a movement that rejected the utopian promise of modernism yet found, in that rejection, artistic energy. These artists created works characterized by, among other features, a deauthenticated world, disembodied laughter, and grotesque bodies.³¹

²⁷ Martin, *Editor*, p. 7.

²⁸ Hyams, *The New Statesman*, p. 53.

²⁹ For a fuller history of this term, see *Modernism*, ed. by Michael H. Whitworth (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 272-96.

³⁰ Alan Wilde, 'Surfacings: Reflections on the Epistemology of Late Modernism', *boundary 2*, 8 (1980), 209-27.

³¹ Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 62-64.

Since Miller, the term late modernism has spread far beyond this quite specific remit: Fredric Jameson traces different uses of the word ‘modernity’ across the first half of the twentieth century, concluding by reading late modernism as a largely postwar category contingent upon ‘the emergence of some full-blown ideology of modernism’.³² Marina Mackay argues that (unlike modernism and the Great War) late modernism aligns itself with a renovated public sphere in the Second World War.³³ Jed Esty emphasizes not the emergence of new writers, but the changing role of older writers: late modernism signifies the reclamation by literature of a national identity as Britain moved towards becoming a post-imperial state.³⁴ Perhaps most divergent of all, Anthony Mellors dismisses Miller’s twenties and thirties periodization and argues that under that model, modernism was ‘dissolving almost before it had begun’: for him, late modernism is the long poetry of Williams, Zukofsky, Olson, Bunting, Prynne, and Celan, texts not completed—in some cases—until well into the latter half of the twentieth century.³⁵

These different arguments are in some cases contradictory, and it may be easiest to understand late modernism as plural, like modernism itself; I am not convinced that in order to accept, say, Mellors’s discussion of poetry it is necessary to dismiss Miller’s thirties avant-garde. For the purposes of this argument, though, I am less concerned with the characteristics of late modernist art—however they might be constructed—than I am with the implications that models of late modernism have for the public reception of modernism. A theme that runs consistently through these different critical theories is the possibility of simultaneous canonization *and* further creation; from Miller’s evocative image of his avant-garde writers crafting ‘disfigured likenesses of modernist masterpieces: the unlovely allegories of a world’s end’, to Fredric Jameson’s argument that late modernism requires ‘the emergence of some full-

³² Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 200.

³³ Marina Mackay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁴ Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

³⁵ Anthony Mellors, *Late Modernist Poetics from Pound to Prynne* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 3.

blown ideology of modernism'.³⁶ Marina Mackay is clearest of all, identifying late modernism as

[a] historical moment in which modernism was simultaneously a way of writing (a formal and often a political challenge) and a way of reading (already an institution, a canon).³⁷

Across these very different critical arguments, then, late modernist art seems to require that modernism be understood as canonical. In this context, the weekly review does not, of course, identify late modernism but instead interrogates the cultural background of a canonical modernism that these critical arguments depend upon. If, in the 1930s, modernism came to be viewed as canonical, how did such a transition occur? How do these evaluative magazines begin to treat modernist writers and modernist texts, the very concept of modernism itself, differently? In many ways, and at many moments, weekly reviews—invested defenders of official culture—behave in such a way that modernism's public emergence appears complete. And yet the question of late modernism has further ramifications. As MacKay recognizes, this historical moment was one where modernism was open for both reading and writing: new art could be crafted even as canonicity seemed assured. In other words—and just as one sees in Hawkins—that canonical status was not stable.

Of course, the question of canonical status is itself complex, and by speaking of modernism in this way I run the risk of representing a canonical modernism as somehow inevitable and right. Indeed, the very idea of a literary canon now often proves controversial. Ankhi Mukherjee relates a vituperative debate between Rita Dove and Helen Vendler over Dove's *Penguin Anthology of Twentieth Century Poetry*: in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, Vendler accused Dove of collecting together inferior poets; Dove replied by directly accusing Vendler of racism.³⁸ As Mukherjee puts it, this 'canon war' is 'unpleasant and disturbing'.³⁹ Yet it is often so, of course, for very good reasons.

³⁶ Miller, *Late Modernism*, p. 14; Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, p. 200.

³⁷ Mackay, *Modernism and World War II*, p. 20.

³⁸ Ankhi Mukherjee, *What is a Classic?: Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 10-12.

³⁹ Mukherjee, *What is a Classic?*, p. 12.

This is not an argument for establishing a canon of authoritative aesthetic value: strikingly, even works that do argue for such a thing acknowledge that they are out of date. Witness Harold Bloom's note, opening *The Western Canon* (1994), that one studies a canon of twenty-six writers with 'a certain nostalgia'. He goes on to reminisce, and bemoan the current state of affairs: 'Things have however fallen apart, the centre has not held, and mere anarchy is in the process of being unleashed upon what used to be called "the learned world".'⁴⁰ This suggests—with that slightly highfalutin reference to Yeats—that things were not always this way. While references to an older and better world are par for the course in these expressions of cultural conservatism, in this case there is I think some truth to his argument that things used to be very different. Frank Kermode makes a similar argument more clearly, with less of Bloom's nostalgia.

There was a time when discussion of canons was angry but simple in the manner of Dr Leavis: should Milton be disadvantaged or Shelley saved from demotion to the apocrypha. [...] Under the older dispensation, one might choose between several critical methodologies which had in common only the assumptions that it was permissible to speak of literary quality and that one could read with a degree of attention that warranted the issuing of judgments, even of declarations, that some works demanded to be read by all who claimed the right to expound and instruct.⁴¹

The *New Statesman's* discussions of modernism were in no ways simplistic, but the magazine did perceive the achievement of some form of canonical status as broadly desirable. Having said this, it is also notable that the magazine did not use the terms 'canon' or 'canonical', as they were not yet in common parlance. The *OED* notes the first appearance of the term in relation to literature in 1929.⁴² Thus while the *New Statesman* wrestled with the question of admitting modernist writers to what would more usually have been called the 'tradition', the very words used to describe that tradition were also in flux. A close exploration of exactly how and why 'tradition' became 'canon' is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it might tentatively be argued that modernism's place in the tradition should be linked with an alteration in how the

⁴⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 1.

⁴¹ Frank Kermode, *Pleasure and Change: the Aesthetics of Canon*, ed. by Robert Alter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 15-18.

⁴² *OED*, 'canon, n.¹', Draft Additions, sense a.

tradition was named: yet further evidence that modernism's public emergence was complex and momentous.

This chapter will explore the question of canonicity in two principal ways. First, it will consider how modernism was treated as canonical, and the consequences of this for the weekly review, in two examples: a series of laudatory reviews of Virginia Woolf, and a pastiche of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* by Robert Bartlett, produced for a competition. Second, it will explore the idea that this new canonical status was always troubled, in two final examples: first, the relationship between negative, metacultural assessments of modern novels and the deeply positive reviews given to the poetry of the Auden group, in the context of a pervasive interwar awareness that civilisation might be entering a late stage. This chapter closes by discussing the extraordinary—and problematic—publication of a short work by James Joyce, 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer', in the *New Statesman* in 1932.

Finally, it should be noted that this argument represents an explicit attempt to destabilize the potential for a neat ending to this thesis. Ian Hacking's suggestion that classifications and classes might emerge 'hand in hand' has dominated my understanding of modernism's emergence into public life. Hawkins's discussion of T. S. Eliot and the 'terrible moderns' seems to signal a moment of clear emergence; while the term 'modernism' was not in common parlance, that which it described was widely understood and accepted. To rephrase Hacking, this is modernism and its critics 'each egging the other on', emerging into the light. But the uncertainty in Hawkins—and, as I shall argue, in a number of *New Statesman* texts—suggests that no clear moment of emergence exists, and that modernism's place in the canon remained, at least for the weekly review, perpetually uncertain.

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This being said, modernism was often discussed as canonical, and this is a matter of no little significance. Reviews of Virginia Woolf's work run throughout this thesis, from Sylvia Lynd's qualified praise for *Jacob's Room* and her rejection of *Mrs Dalloway* in *Time and Tide*, to

Rachel Annand Taylor's unusually lush admiration of *To The Lighthouse* and the patronizing review of *A Room Of One's Own* in the *Spectator*. In this context, the unqualified praise given to Woolf's novels in the *New Statesman* is significant as a sign of the times: the modernist novel is publicly embraced as great and canonical. This is true even of some of Woolf's least accessible work; Gerald Bullett reviews *The Waves* in October 1931, proposing that 'what Mrs Woolf does [...] is little short of miraculous'. He goes on to address the modernist technique of the novel, and justify its difficulty.

Because it is her constant endeavour to record the psychological minutiae of experience, to snare in words an incommunicable secret, and to show the bubble of consciousness shining, expanding, reflecting—in its depths and on its surface—the changing colours of the universe around it, Mrs Woolf's writing has always been 'difficult': by which I mean that it will yield its motive, its clear and luminous core, only to a reader who is ready to empty himself of preconceptions and to become in the highest degree receptive, patient, searching.⁴³

The novel's difficulty is framed in terms of aspiration and necessity: it may be complex, but the result of reading the novel (if one is 'ready') is to understand its valuable 'clear and luminous core'. Moreover, the difficulties are a necessary manifestation of the complexity of the task that Woolf sets herself ('to record the psychological minutiae of experience'), betraying an unspoken assumption that the modernist novel reflects an unquestionable reaction to the complicated reality of modernity.

Compared, especially, to Lynd's reviews in *Time and Tide*, Bullett's argument represents a form of critical maturity. Lynd questions the legitimacy of Woolf's 'method', but for Bullett modernism has emerged to the point where a review of Woolf's new novel can directly analyse the novel's depiction of consciousness. Moreover, the metaphor used for this discussion (a 'bubble of consciousness shining, expanding, reflecting [...] the changing colours of the universe') has crucial antecedents in Woolf's own fiction. 'Bubble' is important to Bernard throughout *The Waves*; following Neville's suggestion that he should 'burble on', Bernard returns time and again to the concept of images appearing in his mind as bubbles: 'Up they

⁴³ Gerald Bullett, 'Virginia Woolf Soliloquises', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 10 October 1931, Autumn Books Supplement, p. x.

bubble—images.’⁴⁴ Later, ‘The bubbles are rising like the silver bubbles from the floor of a saucepan: image on top of image.’⁴⁵ Bullett’s image in its entirety—a ‘bubble of consciousness’—might also be traced further back: to Woolf’s ‘semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end’ in ‘Modern Fiction’, and to Mary Datchet’s description in *Night and Day* of ‘arrows of sensation striking strangely through the envelope of personality which shelters us so conveniently from our fellows’.⁴⁶ Bullett’s critical appreciation of *The Waves* is thus not only positive and receptive to its innovations, but deeply influenced by Woolf’s own thinking.

Though something similar to this has been seen before—in the *Nation and Athenaeum*, Vita Sackville-West’s allusions to *The Waste Land* while reviewing Ernst Toller—the two texts are very different. The presence of Eliot behind Sackville-West’s review seems to function for those who recognize the allusion: a wry wink at the initiated. I read Bullett’s review as a fundamentally more open approach to analysing Woolf’s representation of consciousness, engaging directly with her own language in order to study her work.

To pursue this distinction further, consider E. B. C. Jones, writing not on Woolf in particular but on the modern novel in 1933.

In the last decade it [the novel form] has been stretched even looser to accommodate *Ulysses*, *Mrs Dalloway* and the ten volumes of Miss Dorothy Richardson’s single and still unfinished work of art [*Pilgrimage*]. Our conception of the ways in which character can be presented has been enlarged; and sometimes we have had to relinquish our desire for character altogether—to lose that in order to gain something else: a sense of the passage of time; of the powerful realm of the unconscious; of conflicts that go deeper than personality; of the part of man, underlying character, which is in some obscure relation to the universe. In such books, to ask for a coherent John and Mary you would recognize in the Tube would be irrelevant. But when a novel fails to impose its own alternative to character-interest, then John and Mary will be missed.⁴⁷

Jones’s focus is clear: she aims to explore the experience of reading the contemporary novel, and how readers’ expectations have shifted in recent decades. Jones argues that modernism has

⁴⁴ Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, ed. by Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 28-29.

⁴⁵ Woolf, *The Waves*, p. 39. Further examples: ‘More and more bubbles into my mind as I talk, images and images’ and ‘as I move, surrounded, included and taking part, the usual phrases begin to bubble up, and I wish to free these bubbles from the trapdoor in my head’. Woolf, *The Waves*, pp. 68, 157.

⁴⁶ *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and Stuart N. Clarke, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1986-2011), IV, 160; Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day*, ed. by Julia Briggs (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 228.

⁴⁷ E. B. C. Jones, ‘New Novels’, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 28 October 1933, p. 518.

transformed the novel while still recognizing that such changes are recent: she uses the present perfect ('has been stretched') throughout and suggests that the ghost of 'our desire for character' is still present, to a certain extent. However, in a way that seems almost to acknowledge the tenacity of this desire, Jones deploys a series of first person plural pronouns in order to orient the reader and her review toward an earnest attempt to explore the nature of the modernist novel. The insights that this offers may not be particularly surprising—a focus on time, interiority and the unconscious—but the tone in which they are offered is significant. Jones's description of these different aspects of the modernist novel is tentative and vague: we gain 'something', a 'sense', of how man is in 'some kind of obscure relation to the universe'. This represents not so much a denial of the validity of modernist form—there is no sense of a challenge offered to *Ulysses*, for example—but an acknowledgement of a still partial understanding of modernist form and an open-minded desire to learn.

Once again, like Bullett's review of *The Waves* one can trace Woolf inside the argument of Jones's essay. The quotation above refers to 'a coherent John and Mary you would recognize on the Tube', which might plausibly be understood as an allusion to a famous image from the start of Virginia Woolf's essay 'Character in Fiction'.⁴⁸

One night some weeks ago, then, I was late for the train and jumped into the first carriage I came to. As I sat down I had the strange and uncomfortable feeling that I was interrupting a conversation between two people who were already sitting there. Not that they were young or happy. Far from it. They were both elderly, the woman over sixty, the man well over forty. [...] The elderly lady, however, whom I will call Mrs Brown [...] Mr Smith (as I will call him).⁴⁹

Woolf imagines witnessing a conversation, and goes on to explore how fiction must attempt to live up to the conversation between Mrs Brown and Mr Smith on a train. Jones's two figures are almost identical: John (Smith?) and Mary (Brown?), on a train.

Of course, in some ways Jones's argument seems to work against Woolf: where Woolf insists that the novel must endeavour to capture Brown and Smith, Jones warns the reader not to expect 'John and Mary [...] in the Tube'. Then again, perhaps the emphasis should be

⁴⁸ The complex history of this essay is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

⁴⁹ *Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 423.

placed on Jones's use of 'coherent': in order to truly capture Smith and Brown (as Woolf desires), one must dismiss coherence (as Jones warns) and instead focus on Woolf's request that we 'not expect just at present a complete and satisfactory presentment of her [Mrs Brown]'. One must 'tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure', because we might be 'trembling on the verge of one of the great ages of English literature'.⁵⁰

Jones and Bullett do not use the term 'modernist'. But they do engage directly and intimately with modernist thought, acknowledging difficulty and hoping to explore, via the medium of the weekly review, complex ideas. Compared to worried concerns over the legitimacy of modernism, this surely represents a higher level of analysis, and a key precursor for this analysis is the issue of modernism's canonicity. Bullett and Jones have some tolerance for readerly scepticism (Jones's seeming nostalgia for a 'coherent John and Mary' might be understood in this way), but by and large they operate with the knowledge that their audience will easily accept that Woolf's work is great, and canonical: in several important ways, modernism has emerged into public life.

The image of Woolf as a canonical writer is addressed more directly in David Garnett's review of *The Years*. Leonard Woolf famously kept his criticisms of *The Years* to himself, as he was concerned for the state of Virginia's mental health.⁵¹ David Garnett was not faced with the same problem: for him, it is perfectly clear that he is reading the latest and greatest masterwork from an artist operating at the height of her powers.

She [Woolf] is a supreme imaginative artist, of extraordinary originality and, in my opinion, *The Years* is the finest novel she has written. It is altogether on a bigger scale than *Jacob's Room*, and has a fullness and richness in conception and execution which were lacking in *To The Lighthouse*. There is an awareness of old age, and of sympathy with it, in the last part of the book which is new.⁵²

It is an almost fawning review, and while log-rolling is not quite the correct accusation, Garnett's social acquaintance with Woolf should not be dismissed entirely: he and Julian Bell had visited the Woolfs on Sunday 15 March for tea and a long conversation, a week before the

⁵⁰ *Essays of Virginia Woolf*, III, 436.

⁵¹ As he put it, 'To Virginia I praised the book more than I should have done if she had been well'. Leonard Woolf, *Downhill All The Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939* (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), p. 155.

⁵² David Garnett, 'Books in General', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 20 March 1937, p. 481.

review was published.⁵³ The praise has force and weight: for Garnett, Woolf is not just canonical but one of the greats, ‘supreme’ and ‘extraordinary’.

Indeed, perhaps the crucial element in this review is its emphasis on biography alongside literary criticism. Garnett writes Woolf into a carefully constructed narrative of her own artistic career, where *The Years* is both a high point, and a rich and mature culmination of Woolf’s modernism. It has that ‘bigger scale’ than *Jacob’s Room*, a ‘fullness and richness’ absent from *To The Lighthouse*; *Orlando* and *Flush* are dismissed as ‘wild disjointed poetry’. The very serenity of this progress towards the majestic greatness of *The Years* is slightly unnerving. Note Garnett’s use of descriptive nouns (‘fullness and richness’) redolent with a sense of maturity and old age, and his explicit argument that one of the key innovations in *The Years* is ‘an awareness of old age, and a sympathy with it’. Modern readers are aware that *The Years* was Woolf’s penultimate novel, but Garnett, of course, was not; yet this review still seems to understand *The Years* as the product of Woolf’s late career. Furthermore, Garnett constructs a biographical arc that makes new sense of old work in the awareness of this new one.

As literary criticism, this is highly problematic. Gordon McMullan has written illuminatingly on the problems of reading three of Shakespeare’s later plays—*Coriolanus*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest*—as the late plays. McMullan explores how this intensely biographical critical mode sets up boundaries on interpretation.

The idea of ‘late Shakespeare’, in other words, contributed to the establishment of what I will call a *discourse of lateness*—that is, a construct, ideological, rhetorical and heuristic, a function not of life or of art but of the practice of reading or appreciating certain texts within a set of predetermined parameters.⁵⁴

Garnett’s review seems to operate along similar lines: his admiration for *The Years* is clear, but develops into a construction of Woolf’s career as leading up to that novel. Critically troubling though this may be, it is revealing as a depiction of a modernist novelist. As far as this model of

⁵³ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-1984), V, 68-69 (15 March 1937).

⁵⁴ Gordon McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing: Authorship in the Proximity of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 5.

a serene late style goes, Shakespeare may be the archetype, but Woolf is similarly read by this review as an unquestionably great novelist, producing canonical literature.

Unlike Hawkins's review of Eliot that opens this chapter, these reviews identify modernism as canonical and do not worry about that canonization. Where Hawkins seems to worry about the potential consequences of canonizing something that was 'previously terrible'—and so recently—Garnett rewrites Woolf's career as building up to her late, 1930s greatness. Rather than always referring back to modernism's former presence as 'terrible', Garnett's biographical criticism seeks to efface any traces of the avant-garde from the supremely powerful figure of *The Years*-era Virginia Woolf. This, too, might be regarded as troubling, and raises the question of how exactly modernism might be regarded as securely canonical. To explore this further, I turn to a very different type of text.

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When the *New Statesman* absorbed the *Week-end Review* in 1934, it continued that periodical's tradition of printing a competition at the end of each issue. These rapidly became a *New Statesman* institution.⁵⁵ The usual format was for a staff member or regular contributor to propose a humorous brief and request creative responses. The best answers would be collected, discussed, published, and small prizes would be awarded. Cultural (especially literary) subjects were dominant. In May 1937 a fascinating competition provoked answers that addressed modernism. The brief asks for

the best advertisement concerning gin, halitosis, rejuvenation, night starvation, soap, book of the month clubs, beauty preparations, adverts, milk, mowing machines, wireless sets, chocolates, undertakers, bookies, missionary societies, stays, umbrellas, magazines, or encyclopaedias, in the style of D. H. Lawrence, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Hemingway, Huxley, Miss Compton-Burnett, Gertrude Stein, Ronald Firbank, T. S. Eliot, Spender, Barrie, A. E. Housman, Dr Johnson or Sir Thomas Browne. Any product may be mated with any author, and the advertisements should be not longer than 300 words in prose or 25 lines in verse.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The competitions continue to this day, and selections have been published over the years; the first of these was edited by G. W. Stonier. See *New Statesman Competitions*, ed. by G. W. Stonier (London: Faber and Faber, 1946).

⁵⁶ G. W. Stonier, 'Week-end Competitions No. 375', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 22 May 1937, pp. 860-62. Stonier's articles and reviews will be quoted throughout this chapter; C. H. Rolph described him as 'that quiet, elusive and enchantingly inventive writer [...] whose work seemed to some of us like a specially lucid kind of modern verse pushed into conventionally-shaped *New Statesman* paragraphs'. He was not especially influential on paper, but his association with the paper was long and deep. In the twenties, there were apparently publication

A group of largely modernist writers—Housman, Barrie, Browne, and Johnson are the oddly chosen exceptions—are brought together with a group of commercial products, and advertisements are requested. It speaks volumes about the cultural position of these writers that they are acceptable fodder for such an exercise; one wonders, though, what precisely is expected from this competition. It is immediately noticeable that adverts for these things would not be found in the *New Statesman*, and that the list describes better a cheaper weekly with a far greater circulation, a twopenny magazine such as *John Bull*. When the *New Statesman* printed this competition, the issue of *John Bull* for the same week advertised hair lotion on the front page, pain relief medication (p. 2), binoculars (p. 3), a double page spread for cutlery (pp. 4-5), furniture via credit agreement (p. 12), shaving soap (p. 8), and railway holidays (p. 22), to take just a few examples out of dozens.⁵⁷

Crucially, not only subject but volume differs: a magazine like *John Bull* would carry far more advertisements than the *New Statesman*. While too much significance could be placed on the odd inclusion of ‘adverts’ in the list of products to be advertised, it is perhaps further indication that what is evoked here is not the items themselves but the cultural position associated with such items and adverts for them: a more popular, commercial periodical culture that this magazine is expressly not a part of.

The perspective of this prompt is thus deeply hierarchical, and not a little condescending: it takes a group of writers—more than this, a certain group of writers that are knowingly placed together, exceptions aside—and requests that their ‘style’ (Stonier’s term) be performed in a way that is imagined as below the writers in terms of content (they write novels or poems, not adverts) and below the magazine in terms of form (the *New Statesman* does not print adverts of this type, but a cheaper magazine might). It is a form of carnivalesque play that is always clearly safely delineated, and is thus harmless. As such, the competition is an activity

days when the editor (Clifford Sharp) was drunk and the literary editor (Desmond MacCarthy) was out for a too-lengthy lunch; in these situations, Stonier ‘was *de facto* editor, and put many an issue to bed unaided.’ See Rolph, *Kingsley*, pp. 220-21.

⁵⁷ See *John Bull*, 22 May 1937.

that reinforces the *New Statesman's* position in the periodical sphere: it is at once not the proper location for these adverts, but is able to mock and play with those magazines that would house these texts.

Two weeks later, the results were printed. Stonier provides a short precis of the various responses he received, praising a 'fair Hemingway' but a series of poor 'Joyces, Lawrences and Barries'.⁵⁸ One entry on Stein was praised for the line 'The fleet is the fleet is all lit up', a (very contemporary) reference to Tommy Woodroffe's notorious inebriated broadcast of the fleet review of 20 May 1937, and Stein's famous line 'Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose'.⁵⁹ The prize was shared equally between three entries: 'Compton and Burnett, Undertakers', by 'Eremita' (pseudonyms were commonplace); 'Sir T. B. of the Product AMBROSIA, which sweeteneth a Foul Breath', by 'S.E.R.A', and Robert Bartlett's extraordinary take on T. S. Eliot.⁶⁰

The *New Statesman's* competition, then, generates a series of parodies of modernism; while the readers are not given access to the 'fair Hemingway' or poor work on Joyce and Lawrence, entries on Stein and Eliot are reproduced, the former only as a fragment. Exploring these parodies is complex: any attempt to parody modernism is faced with the importance of parody *to* modernism. As Sarah Davison has it, 'high modernist practice is distinguished by the way it draws on and utilizes the creative, self-reflexive potentialities of the [parodic] mode'.⁶¹ At the same time, it should be noted that texts that mocked the distinctive novelties of modernist texts—especially the poetry—were present from the very earliest days of modernism itself, as Leonard Diepeveen has recently demonstrated.⁶² Indeed, the fragment of a parody of Stein might be understood in just this tradition: it combines Stein and Woodroffe to transform Stein's argument about aesthetics into a drunken ramble. There is no indication of what this

⁵⁸ G. W. Stonier, 'Results of Competition 375', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 5 June 1937, pp. 938-40 (p. 940).

⁵⁹ See Gertrude Stein, *Geography and Plays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 187. This is merely one early instance of the phrase, which recurs throughout Stein's work.

⁶⁰ Stonier, 'Results of Competition 375', p. 940.

⁶¹ Sarah Davison, 'Parody and Modernism: The Practice of Parody and Pastiche in Early Twentieth-century Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2009), p. 15.

⁶² See Leonard Diepeveen, *Mock Modernism: An Anthology of Parodies, Travesties, Frauds, 1910-1935* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

might have been advertising, but the point is that Stein's distinctive syntactical structure is aped—and very closely—in such a way that makes the reference clear while simultaneously mocking Stein's pretensions to poetry: that which she thinks is poetry is here revealed as merely inebriation. Put bluntly, one does not have to engage with the aesthetic challenge of Stein's rose in order to get the joke.

In an earlier work on modernist difficulty, Diepeveen discusses J. C. Squire's famous 1924 short story, 'The Man Who Wrote Free Verse'.⁶³ Here, poet Reggie Twyford reinvents himself as a writer of free verse in order to demonstrate that such modernist poetry is meaningless and easily mimicked.⁶⁴ The parody of Stein reveals essentially the same perspective, and one might conclude from this that modernism exists in parodies only to be dismissed as nonsense: these competitions, then, might seem to work against the more open-minded engagement with modernism that one locates in the reviews. If modernism has emerged, it has emerged in certain parts of the magazine only.

However, this argument is stymied by Robert Bartlett's extraordinary take on T. S. Eliot, which the magazine prints in full, and is reproduced below.

'An Advertisement for Polythymol Toothpaste in the Manner of T. S. Eliot'

Lovely but lonely
 La Belle Helène, famous Beauty Queen
 Acclaimed the Toast of Surbiton
 With a wicked pair of hips. Notwithstanding
 'A year ago to-day he brought me Buttercups'
 Could never bring it off
 Exhaling sighs as gentle as a breeze on softly flowing Thames
 Blown upwards from a Chelsea Embankment sewer
 Butter No Butter Butta Butta Cups

You ought to do something about it, I said
 Nellie ain't no blooming rose he said to me
 O did he, she said, and socked me one
 SORRY YOU'VE BEEN TROUBLED

Polythymol deriding Halitosis

⁶³ J. C. Squire, 'The Grub Street Nights: VII—The Man Who Wrote Free Verse', *The London Mercury*, June 1924, pp. 127-37.

⁶⁴ Twyford plans to reveal his deception, but never does as his poetry is so successful; following a communist revolution, he is anointed 'Poet Laureate of the Revolution'. See Leonard Diepeveen, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 2-9.

Forgot the wailing saxophone and the swaying backsides
and the Dividend Account
Restoring Ernie to the arms of Helen

Herr Doktor Klaus the German Dentist
White coated with a pocket full of golf balls
Guessed my handicap first time
Remains lie rotting in impenetrable caves
Picked over by the tooth-pick only week to week
Il est cocu le Chef de Gare
Clean your teeth with Polythymol Clean your teeth
Clean⁶⁵

I contend that this text is still a parody, but one of a very different nature.

Borrowing terms from Gérard Genette's influential work on parodies, Bartlett's work is a hypertext: it gains meaning from an earlier hypotext, Eliot's *The Waste Land* (just as 'The fleet is the fleet is all lit up' gains meaning from Stein's rose).⁶⁶ Genette goes on to provide a series of distinctions between different forms of hypertexts, but the principal one that concerns me is the very first one made between transformative and imitative texts.

Imitation, too, is no doubt a transformation, but one that involves a more complex process: it requires, to put it in roughshod manner, a previously constituted model of generic competence (let us call it an epic model) drawn from that singular performance that is known as the *Odyssey* (and perhaps a few others), one that is capable of generating an indefinite number of mimetic performances. This model, then, introduces between the imitated text and the imitative one a supplementary stage and a mediation that are not to be found in the simple or direct type of transformation. In order to transform a text, a simple and mechanical gesture might suffice (an extreme example would consist in tearing off a few pages—a case of reductive transformation). But in order to imitate a text, it is inevitably necessary to acquire at least a partial mastery of it, a mastery of that specific quality which one has chosen to imitate.⁶⁷

The parody of Stein is reductive and, in Genette's terms, transformative. But I suggest that Bartlett's text is more complex, imitative, implying a 'partial mastery' of *The Waste Land*. The significance of this is, I hope, clear: this manner of parody is not simply mocking modernism, and portraying it as nonsense, but engaging intimately with the modernist text in order to parody it. In turn, this ascribes a form of canonicity to *The Waste Land* similar to that proposed by the reviews. It is not just there to be mocked, but to be engaged with, even if that engagement is humorous in nature.

⁶⁵ Robert Bartlett, 'An Advertisement for Polythymol Toothpaste in the Manner of T. S. Eliot', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 5 June 1937, p. 940.

⁶⁶ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 4.

⁶⁷ Genette, *Palimpsests*, p. 6.

Consider, for example, the second stanza. Bartlett stages a fragment of conversation between two figures, an unidentified narrator and Helen/Nellie/Helène, the focus of the poem. This is a compressed reworking of the pub scene in 'A Game of Chess', where the two characters gossip about criticisms of Helen, who then punches the narrator. Helen's shout to accompany the outburst of violence—'SORRY YOU'VE BEEN TROUBLED'—mimics that of the disembodied barman in Eliot's poem, 'HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME'.⁶⁸ But this differs profoundly from the reductive reworking of Stein's rose: this text engages directly with the conversation between two women in Eliot's poem.

He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
 And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
 Oh is there, she said. Something o'that, I said.
 Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
(ll. 148-51)

Significantly, one of the issues in this dispute is Lil's teeth: 'poor Albert' (l. 147) had given her money for 'a nice set' (l. 145) because as it stands, 'I can't bear to look at you' (l. 146). Similarly, as Ernie says to the poem's speaker, 'Nellie ain't no blooming rose'.

Rather than simply copying the structure of urban conversation and capitalised interjection, Bartlett imitates and restages a moment of Eliot's poem; though here, unlike the original, the threat of violence ('a straight look') between speaker and Lil explodes into actuality. Helen is far more dynamic than her original, and achieves the resolution she strives for: she attacks the person she sees as a threat, cures her bad breath (thanks, of course, to Polythymol toothpaste), and gains Ernie. Lil's lack of good looks is attributed to 'them pills I took, to bring it off' (l. 159), and she achieves no resolution as the pub, and section, closes. But Bartlett's reworking is an advertisement, and thus the key pharmaceutical is not dangerous and scarring but effective, and miraculously so. Eliot's image of a woman forced into an illegal and damaging abortion is refigured into a necessarily happier narrative of a woman whose troubles with her man are cured by toothpaste. Morally speaking, the change is quite horrifying, but it

⁶⁸ See *The Waste Land*, l. 141, in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 59-80. Further references to this poem are given by line number after quotation in the text.

remains (in Genette's terms) a masterly imitation of some of the finer details of Eliot's poem, while directing the rewrite towards the narrative required for advertisements.

One could turn to further examples of Bartlett's skilful imitation: for example, of Eliot's characteristic tonal shifts between the portentously lyrical and the everyday; 'Lovely but lonely | La Belle Helène' followed shortly by 'the Toast of Surbiton | With a wicked pair of hips' recalls, I think, the fortune-telling lines in 'The Burial of the Dead':

Madame Sosostriis, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
(ll. 43-48)

My point here is not to present Bartlett's poem as an undiscovered modernist masterpiece: it is not. It is, however, an imitation of some quality, one that reads *The Waste Land* as it creates its own version. Moreover, one could tentatively suggest that this act of rewriting draws attention to the recurring importance of suburban conversation in *The Waste Land*, a side of Eliot's poetry that is not now revolutionary in critical terms, but was rarely discussed in 1937.⁶⁹

Indeed, I would argue that Bartlett's parody of Eliot represents some of the clearest evidence for modernism's emergence into public form. Here, *The Waste Land* is essentially treated as canonical public property, available not just for mockery but for creative engagement and humorous parodic play that in no way snickers at the poetic value of Eliot's work. It is these competitions—mundane, everyday engagements with literary culture—that, in the *New Statesman* at least, most firmly place modernism in the literary canon.

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Canonicity may be stable in Robert Bartlett's parody, but as I have already argued it was not throughout the magazine, and I turn now to explore more closely how that canonicity becomes problematic. Janet Adam Smith's editorial work on the *Listener*, discussed in Chapter 4,

⁶⁹ For example, David Chinitz's work has been enormously influential in recent years, directing attention to Eliot's interest in certain aspects of popular culture; see *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

would imply that the key literary event of this period was the emergence of a new group of poets centred around W. H. Auden.⁷⁰ Indeed, in the *New Statesman*, reviews of Auden generation poets—especially, though not uniquely, those written by G. W. Stonier—often seem to propose a seamless development whereby Eliot has become canonical and, in turn, has inspired a new generation; a logical counterpart, one might suggest, to Hawkins’s discussion of Eliot.

Mr Stephen Spender is one of a group of young poets whose work attracted attention in the pages of *New Signatures* [...] He is more closely associated with Mr. Auden and Mr. Day Lewis, whose work is better known. Together, they form the wedge of a new forward movement in English poetry, of which Eliot is the master and Lawrence the hero.⁷¹

Stonier, too, makes gestures towards the canonisation of T. S. Eliot (and adds D. H. Lawrence). If that canonisation is tentative and unsure, as argued above, how confident can Stonier’s proposal of new poetry building on the previous work of the old generation be? One might argue that to see Spender, Auden and Day Lewis as inheritors of the Eliotic/Lawrentian mantle is itself a form of reading that speaks to the canonical status of modernism, as they offer new work that depends upon the reading of an (accepted) older generation of modernist writers.

However, such optimism in the presence of new British poetry must be tempered against negativity: a common critical turn, especially in the journalistic situations that lend themselves to broad-brush metacultural analysis. The *New Statesman*’s ‘New Novels’ column—covering several novels per week in a single column—was an ideal location for this. Consider Cyril Connolly in 1935.

My advice to anyone going on a holiday is to get detective stories. That is where some of our best brains go. When I reviewed novels in the late twenties there was still an aesthetic interest in the process. Gide, Forster, Huxley, Hemingway, Wyndham Lewis, Garnett, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf—these wrote novels one could write a whole page about. At present reviewing novels is like living in some decaying idior-rhythmic community in Crete or Mount Athos.⁷²

Hawkins’ binary assessment of Eliot’s career (*then* terrible, *now* de rigeur, even on Sundays) is here refigured for the modern novel: *then* aesthetically interesting, *now* a ‘decaying idior-

⁷⁰ Following the previous chapter, I borrow the term ‘Auden generation’ from Samuel Hynes.

⁷¹ G. W. Stonier, ‘A Poet of Iron’, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 4 February 1933, p. 136.

⁷² Cyril Connolly, ‘New Novels’, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 3 August 1935, pp. 166-67.

rhythmic community'. Such an argument not only casts aspersions on new novelists (and, slyly, on the continuing work of Joyce, Woolf, Lewis et al.) but attempts to inscribe modernism into cultural authority. To borrow a phrase from Arno Mayer's discussion of the *ancien régime*, this is the modernist novel as one of the '*chiens de garde* of official culture.'⁷³ Indeed, the lack of emphasis on modernism's now occluded identity as rebellious avant-garde might even suggest that Connolly's cynical view of contemporary novels is in fact a more successful attempt to canonize modernist texts.

The construction of an unambiguous binary between modernist past and woeful present was not uncommon. Raymond Mortimer—again writing the 'New Novels' column—wrote in 1933 of the 'bracing aesthetic climate' of the twenties, and again gives a list of examples. While Connolly explicitly limits himself to novelists, Mortimer ranges from musicians to architects, visual artists to actors: Picasso, Le Corbusier, Matisse, Maillol, Stravinski, Freud, Charlie Chaplin, plus writers; Strachey, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, André Gide, Aldous Huxley. Sadly, he laments, 'the next generation has just failed to appear'.⁷⁴ The philosopher C. E. M. Joad wrote a more extended (and generalised) treatment of the same idea in the following year, entitled 'The End of an Epoch'. He meant 'to suggest that somewhere around 1926 a cultural epoch, having reached its culmination, began to decline, and that about the same time there was born a new epoch, radically different in respect of its thought, its values and its habits'.⁷⁵ Analysis of the key aspects of this generation was largely focused around the idea of 'disintegration':

The outstanding characteristic of the 1918 to 1926 period was analysis, analysis leading to the disintegration of what was analysed. [...] In the cultural sphere Bloomsbury reigned supreme. Its standard dominated literature, criticism and art. The high lights were Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf. [...] Mrs Woolf presented her reader with a flux of scenes linked only by temporal sequence and of experiences which only courtesy could assign to the same character. [...] The other writers who chiefly employed Bloomsbury's blessings were Lawrence, Joyce, Proust, especially Proust, and later Huxley—writers who analysed, disintegrated and rebelled.⁷⁶

⁷³ Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 210.

⁷⁴ Raymond Mortimer, 'New Novels', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 22 April 1933, p. 507.

⁷⁵ C. E. M. Joad, 'The End of an Epoch—I', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 1 December 1934, pp. 785-86 (p. 785).

⁷⁶ Joad, 'The End of an Epoch—I', p. 785.

While this praise is clearly double-edged at best, Joad went on in his second part to make it clear that however disintegrative Woolf's work was, the successors were far worse.

Mankind, it appears, is incorrigible. Sooner or later there will be another war. This, whomever wins it, will see the end of our civilization. [...] In literature the tone is set by such writers as Hemingway, an intellectual who seems at times to delight in catering for half-wits, and, writing deliberately in words of one syllable and sentences of half a dozen words, glorifies the passions of the savage and fawns upon the possessors of brute courage and physical strength.⁷⁷

The overall arc of the argument made by Connolly, Mortimer and Joad is recognisably as old as the hills: dissatisfaction with the present, and a sense of nostalgia projected back on the recent past to imagine a faded golden age (even if, for Joad's disintegrative model, the gold was always impure). But such a gesture of cynical metacultural analysis is also temporally and geographically specific. Richard Overy has argued that the British interwar lived experience was fundamentally morbid. A series of public debates that interrogated the state of the world were redolent with the perception that Western civilization was on the wane, and some form of apocalyptic crisis was close to hand.⁷⁸

Under this model, then, the inscription of modernism into some form of official culture is entirely contingent upon an awareness of impending crisis that was very real, if unwarranted: as Overy notes, the UK was relatively insulated from economic chaos, social unrest and political extremism.⁷⁹ In other words, the condemnation of contemporary novels signifies not only as critical argument but as cultural pose, the assumption of a morbid negativity about the present and future that colours readings of the past.

Criticism that claims to locate authentic newness in poetry must therefore be considered carefully: what does it mean to be new in a morbid age? It does not seem entirely sufficient to conclude that the magazine thought that British poetry was in good shape while novels were not: the cynical arguments made by Connolly, Mortimer and Joad are too broad, and tap into a wider cultural malaise. Similarly, the identification of promise in the Auden generation was not just a good review but a wide-ranging claim for optimism.

⁷⁷ C. E. M. Joad, 'The End of an Epoch—II', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 8 December 1934, pp. 820-21 (p. 820).

⁷⁸ Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilisation, 1919-1939* (London: Allen Lane, 2009).

⁷⁹ Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p. 7.

We are always, of course, on the brink of a poetic revival—that is taken for granted. [...] Nevertheless, it is true to assert that English poetry to-day is in a far more interesting state than it was five years ago; and this change has been due to the poets of *New Signatures*. [...] And the pleasure of finding, once more, a *definite movement* among English poets has been at least partially responsible for its success; for we may be sure that many who have followed in its train have only the vaguest idea of what it is all about, but are glad to know that there is something astir somewhere. It has needed a concerted movement, and not merely a number of individual efforts, to awaken even a minor general interest.⁸⁰

G. W. Stonier (the critic here) wrote repeatedly to promote these poets as a group. Reviewing Auden's *The Orators* in 1932, he emphasized that 'The reader will probably understand Mr Auden better if he reads at the same time his contemporaries, Mr C. Day Lewis and Mr Stephen Spender, who are akin to him'.⁸¹ In 1933 he wrote of Auden, Day Lewis and Spender in a review quoted above, as forming 'the wedge of a new forward movement in English poetry'.⁸² The *New Statesman* employed these poets infrequently as reviewers, too. At the end of 1933, for instance, Stephen Spender published a critical review of T. S. Eliot's *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.⁸³ In addition, like the *Listener* the *New Statesman* did publish poetry—typically one poem every two issues—and played a role in bringing Auden and his contemporaries to a wider audience. Taking just the poets that Stonier acknowledged as a group in 1932, between that year and 1937 the *New Statesman* published four poems by Auden, six by Spender and three by Day Lewis.⁸⁴

More interesting than this simple evidence of promotion, however, is the way in which Stonier is able to assert a sense of positivity and construct a cultural background against which this '*definite movement*' is able to emerge. The analytic structure under which Stonier is able to construct the Auden generation as the great hope of British poetry depends upon a two-fold assertion: that 'poetic revival[s]' are cyclical ('we are always on the brink') and that such revivals must necessarily take the form of 'a concerted movement'. This is curious. While the

⁸⁰ G. W. Stonier, 'New Country Revisited', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 27 October 1934, pp. 588-89.

⁸¹ G. W. Stonier, 'The Private Face', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 28 May 1932, pp. 710-11.

⁸² Stonier, 'A Poet of Iron', p. 136.

⁸³ Stephen Spender, 'The Use of Poetry', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 18 November 1933, pp. 637-38.

⁸⁴ W. H. Auden: 'Poem', 16 July 1932, p. 69; 'Poem', 14 March 1936, p. 392; 'Noah's Song', 13 June 1936, p. 931; 'Song', 16 January 1937, p. 81. C. Day Lewis: 'You That Love England', 3 December 1932, p. 691; 'Sonnet', 26 May 1934, p. 798; 'Address to Death', 1 May 1937, p. 721. Stephen Spender: 'The Bird', 27 May 1933, p. 684; 'Perhaps', 4 November 1933, p. 549; 'The Town Shore at Barcelona', 11 April 1936, p. 566; 'Two Armies', 8 May 1937, p. 770; 'Regum Ultima Ratio', 15 May 1937, p. 811; 'War Photograph', 5 June 1937, p. 922.

temporality assigned to the previous (movement-based) revival is imprecise ('once more'), it is difficult not to detect a reliance on modernist poetry as providing the historical basis for this framework. Thus previous modernists are not only acting as poetic models, as in Stonier's citation of Eliot and Lawrence as 'master' and 'hero', but as templates for criticism: this is now simply what new poetry must look like in order to qualify as, in Stonier's words, 'interesting'.

This might be understood as a perspective on modernism that depends upon canonicity: new work is published, but its newness is understood strictly in relation to an older, accepted generation of modernist writers. But this will not quite do. The presence of those cynical, metacultural assessments of new novels must be reckoned with, together with the insinuation that many of these enthusiastic proponents of the Auden generation are blind followers, uninterested in what exactly the poets might have to say. To repeat Stonier's phrase, he argues 'we may be sure that many who have followed in its [Auden generation] train have only the vaguest idea of what it is all about, but are glad to know that there is something astir somewhere'. Surely, this cynicism reflects two ways: openly, on the audience who blindly follow, but also covertly on the poets themselves. If the Auden generation are followed simply because they are a readily identifiable group, what does that imply about the calibre of their ideas and poems? That search for 'something [...] somewhere' might both contain optimism and conceal a certain desperation: what if Auden et al. *are* being followed just because they are a group, and thus identification is easy? Certainly, the centrality of the group as organizing principle for the poetry runs strong. Samuel Hynes' *The Auden Generation* addresses the group head on; other major, broad studies of the period tend to treat these poets as a group.⁸⁵ Not for nothing does Orwell's scathing attack on the Auden generation describe 'a sort of Boy Scout atmosphere of bare knees and community singing': being in the group matters.⁸⁶ The issue identified in Stonier's largely positive discussion of the group is that nagging sense of faintly desperate doubt

⁸⁵ See, for example, A. T. Tolley, *The Poetry of the Thirties* (London: Gollancz, 1975); Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁸⁶ George Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), p. 30. It is worth noting Janet Montefiore's argument that Orwell's attack on the Auden generation is fundamentally flawed: see *Men and Women Writers of the 1930s: The Dangerous Flood of History* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 11-16.

that, again, owes a lot to Overy's morbid age: what if this poetry isn't what it purports to be, and thus there is no revival at hand?

One might fairly argue that such worries are endemic in criticism that heavily promotes new work: the intellectual cost of doing business with propaganda, perhaps. Additionally, they do not discount the genuine promise found in these poets, something the *New Statesman* critics do believe in. But it remains true that these assessments cannot be entirely separated from the awareness that this poetry's newness is always defined relative to the modernist poetry that came before it. The developing imposition of morbid cynicism—seen best in Connolly, Mortimer, and Joad—means that this awareness of Auden et al. cannot be separated from a worry that this praise might be unfounded. This is not simply a reiteration of Hawkins' consideration of modernism and T. S. Eliot: worry is centred not around the haunting presence of modernism's rebellious past but around a morbid fear of broad, irreversible cultural decline. In itself, the existence of this question mark over the poetry is not entirely problematic. But it does mean that, for the *New Statesman*, praise for the Auden generation is never simply a matter of enjoying poetry that builds upon the now-canonical modernist poets of the 1920s: that very canonicity is always compromised by metacultural cynicism.

*

If praise for the Auden generation was subtly undercut by this cynicism, the *New Statesman* was, as a rule, more openly concerned—confounded, even—by the work of James Joyce. Even critics predisposed to appreciate Joyce's new work struggled with *Work in Progress*.

Personally, I read all of *Work in Progress* I can get hold of, partly because I cannot believe that the author of *Ulysses* is wasting his time, and because in other fragments I have found a genuine new folk humour and fresh orchestration which will be found nowhere else in literature.⁸⁷

The tone is defensive, almost plaintive, haunted by the possibility that Joyce's new work might not be worthy of 'the author of *Ulysses*'. Stonier's account of *Work in Progress* pivots around the hope that Joyce might produce another *Ulysses*, coupled with the fear that he is not fulfilling his

⁸⁷ G. W. Stonier, 'Crazy Week', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 3 December 1932, pp. 698-700 (p. 700).

promise. Indeed, Stonier would go on to refer to *Work in Progress* as ‘that baffling work’.⁸⁸ This being said, *Finnegans Wake* could never be described as easy to read and analyse, and one might argue that Stonier’s attempt to understand *Work in Progress* should be aligned with, say, Gerald Bullett’s earnest discussion of consciousness in *The Waves*, even if Stonier eventually turns against Joyce’s text.

Assessing how the *New Statesman* understood Joyce is of particular importance because in 1932 the magazine published a short text by Joyce. For a mainstream sixpenny weekly, this was a publishing moment without precedent; the publication history is illuminating, and worth detailing. Joyce had moved from Paris to London in April 1931. As Eleni Loukopoulou has argued, from 1929 Joyce had his sights on London rather than Paris, and this was meant to be a permanent move.⁸⁹ While this would not turn out to be the case, for a short time in 1931 Joyce moved in the London social scene. A key friendship, it seems, was with Robert and Sylvia Lynd, who according to Brenda Maddox Joyce had known ‘since he was struggling to get *Dubliners* published’.⁹⁰ The Joyces saw the Lynds a few days before their wedding (on 4 July), and then again for their wedding lunch—which the Lynds hosted. The following week, on 15 July, the Lynds hosted one of their ‘literary parties’, with James Joyce as the guest of honour.⁹¹ Accounts suggest an unusual, memorable occasion: Joyce wearing two pairs of glasses, singing Irish songs at the piano, and either reading part of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* or playing the Charles Ogden recording (accounts differ).⁹² Presumably due to the *New Statesman*’s long association with the Lynds, Kingsley Martin was also at the party, and wrote of what appears to be a serendipitous meeting between himself and James Joyce.

He was standing in a corner in the deep shadow when I was introduced to him. I could see nothing except a dark suit and the outline of his spectacles. He began talking volubly about a singer named

⁸⁸ G. W. Stonier, ‘The Author of “Ulysses”’, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 3 February 1934, p. 158.

⁸⁹ Eleni Loukopoulou, ‘Joyce’s Progress Through London: Conquering the English Publishing Market’, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 48 (2011), 683-710 (p. 683).

⁹⁰ Brenda Maddox, *Nora: A Biography of Nora Joyce* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), p. 355.

⁹¹ See Maddox, *Nora*, pp. 358-9; Máire Gaster, ‘Joyce’s Party Music’, in *Writers and Hampstead: Observations on the Place and the People, 101 Commentators from Domesday to Drabble*, ed. by Ian Norrie (Hampstead: High Hill Press, 1987), p. 106.

⁹² See Gaster, ‘Joyce’s Party Music’, p. 106; Victor Gollancz, *Reminiscences of Affection* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1968), p. 90.

Sullivan, who had been recently banned in England. His words poured out indignantly. Sullivan was the greatest living singer. People talked of singing *Otello*. In *Otello* there were so many Gs in alt and so many lower Cs. This was nothing. Sullivan could sing *Guillaume Tell*, which needed a far greater range; in that part there were some hundreds of Gs in alt and even more lower Cs. [...] I suggested that he might write for the *New Statesman and Nation* about Sullivan. Eventually, after some correspondence, he agreed, not to write an article direct for the paper, but to send us a letter to his favourite singer.⁹³

The suggestion that the piece was written after the party, specifically for the *New Statesman* is unlikely, as discussed below. Martin then proceeds to misquote the last lines of the piece.⁹⁴

Several months later, the piece appeared in the *New Statesman*, under the title 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer'.⁹⁵ On 27 February 1932, readers of the periodical would have been able to open their copies and read, over a double page spread, new and original work by James Joyce.⁹⁶

He strides, booted with anger, along the spurs of Monte Rossini, accompanied solely by Fidelion, his mastiff's voice. They quarrel consonantly about the vocality of the wind, calling each and its other clamant names.⁹⁷

These are the opening lines of 'From a Banned Writer to a Banned Singer', a text that explores and plays with opera and the performances of the Irish-French tenor John Sullivan (1877-1955). It has received scant critical attention.⁹⁸ The piece was published in the middle of the magazine, following directly on from the letters page and under the heading of the 'Miscellany' section. It is thirteen paragraphs written in the lexically dextrous, richly allusive and punning style in which Joyce was writing what would become *Finnegans Wake*. Yet to describe 'From a Banned

⁹³ Martin, *Editor*, pp. 31-32.

⁹⁴ Martin corrects Joyce's spelling, changing 'Guard safe our Geoge!' to 'Guard safe our George!'. See Martin, *Editor*, p. 32.

⁹⁵ For brevity, this piece will usually be referred to as 'From A Banned Writer'.

⁹⁶ The piece was reprinted in a Harvard journal, *Hound & Horn*, later in 1932. See James Joyce, 'From A Banned Writer To A Banned Singer', *Hound & Horn*, 5 (1932), 542-46. This reprinting contains two small changes: in paragraph seven, *Hound & Horn* has 'yoelling' against the *New Statesman*'s 'yodelling'. Paragraph thirteen, *H&H*: tussle-tusculums; *NS*: tussletusculums. In the absence of any further evidence, these are most likely printing errors.

⁹⁷ James Joyce, 'From a Banned Writer To a Banned Singer', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 27 February 1932, pp. 260-61 (p. 260). This piece has been republished; see James Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. by Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 212-15.

⁹⁸ Eleni Loukopoulou's conference paper is the only scholarly work to focus on Joyce in the *New Statesman*; her doctoral work on Joyce and London is forthcoming in print. Eleni Loukopoulou, 'James Joyce in the *New Statesman* and the Modernist Public Sphere', paper at 'MSA 15: Everydayness and the Event', Brighton, 30 August 2013. There is a critical body of work on Joyce and opera, but this tends to focus on *Finnegans Wake* and only mentions 'From A Banned Writer' in passing. In *Joyce's Grand Operoar* (1997), Hodgart and Bauerle discuss Sullivan and trace his appearances in the *Wake*, but do not mention the earlier piece. Judith Harrington writes of 'From A Banned Writer' only to state that 'Even opera buffs find it hard going'. See Matthew John Caldwell Hodgart and Ruth Bauerle, *Joyce's Grand Operoar: Opera in Finnegans Wake* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Judith Harrington, *James Joyce: Suburban Tenor* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 2004), p. 32.

Writer' as merely an exercise in Wakean language and form is to diminish its importance. As has rarely been acknowledged, this text is like nothing else Joyce published at this stage in his career. By 1932, he had been publishing what was then *Work in Progress* for several years in *transition*, and had issued short sections of that text in pamphlets.⁹⁹ 'From a Banned Writer' stands unique as the only thing Joyce published that was in the style of what would become the *Wake*, yet was not a part of it.¹⁰⁰

Where 'From A Banned Writer' has been discussed it is usually in terms of its subject, the 'Banned Singer' John Sullivan. Joyce met Sullivan in 1929 and promoted him heavily in the following years; as Nino Frank, a friend and translator of Joyce would recall, for a time 'Finnegans Wake did not exist. Only O'Sullivan existed. The work was interrupted because Joyce was only interested in O'Sullivan and opera.'¹⁰¹ Judith Harrington suggests that Joyce 'became in effect Sullivan's (unwanted) agent', and Joyce promoted Sullivan in three ways.¹⁰² The first was to attend performances by Sullivan and his closest competitors, to cheer on Sullivan theatrically and wildly, and abuse Sullivan's competitors. On one particular occasion, Joyce claimed loudly that Sullivan's singing had restored his sight.¹⁰³ The second way was to publish letters promoting Sullivan's singing in newspapers and periodicals. In a letter written to Harriet Shaw Weaver in March 1930, Joyce claimed

⁹⁹ The first extract from *Work in Progress* was published in the *transatlantic review* in August 1924. Joyce continued to publish the text in a variety of magazines, but above all Eugene Jolas' *transition*. Seventeen issues of the magazine would contain sections of *Work in Progress* between April 1927 and May 1938. Joyce also published parts of *Work in Progress* in pamphlets. For full details, see Appendix 2 in *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake: a Chapter-by-chapter Genetic Guide*, ed. by Luca Crispi and Sam Slote (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 490-94.

¹⁰⁰ Joyce did also publish in newspapers and periodicals, but he was never prolific. He started writing *Finnegans Wake* in 1923; in between this point, and his death in 1941, he authored just six pieces in periodicals. If publication of letters between Joyce and other private individuals are included—which does not sufficiently describe 'From a Banned Writer'—the total rises by just five. See John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, *A Bibliography of James Joyce, 1882-1941* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1957).

¹⁰¹ Nino Frank is here quoted by Arnold Goldman, who interviewed Frank for a Radio 3 documentary on Joyce and Sullivan. Note also that Sullivan's surname was actually O'Sullivan, as Frank recalls, but that Joyce encouraged him to drop the 'O' for British audiences. See Arnold Goldman, "'Send Him Canorous"—Arnold Goldman writes about James Joyce's "Sullivanising"', *The Listener*, 3 August 1972, pp. 142-44 (p. 142).

¹⁰² Harrington, *Suburban Tenor*, p. 32.

¹⁰³ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 624-25.

to have got him [Sullivan] very fine notices in the *Morning Post* (twice), *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Statesman*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *New York World*, *New York Sun* (twice), *Daily Mail*, *New York Times* with photograph, *l'Intransigeant* and *La Rampe* of Paris.¹⁰⁴

Note the distinction between these notices—perhaps published at Joyce's instigation but not written by him or directly associated with his name—and the act of publishing 'From a Banned Writer'. Third, Joyce did use his influence as a writer: Ellmann relates how Joyce went to visit Nancy Cunard—whom he had not met—and insisted that she ask her mother, Lady Cunard, to suggest to her friend the orchestra leader Sir Thomas Beecham that Sullivan should be engaged. Suggestions that he should appeal to Beecham directly were of no avail, and Joyce even suggested at a later meeting that 'if Sullivan were engaged, a little piece of writing by a well-known author might find its way to the Hours Press [owned by Nancy Cunard] for publication. She spoke to her mother again.'¹⁰⁵ Harrington also suggests that Joyce asked the composer George Antheil to collaborate with him on an opera expressly for Sullivan.¹⁰⁶ None of these activities quite resembles the act of publishing the experimental prose of 'From a Banned Writer'. A few months after publication, Stonier would write his worried account of Joyce's new work. If this fairly represents the opinion of even a sympathetic reader, the achievement of placing twelve paragraphs of deeply experimental prose in front of an audience of tens of thousands must be emphasized.

'From a Banned Writer' explores different aspects of Sullivan's career as a tenor. Consider the fourth paragraph.

Who is this that advances in maresblood caftan, like Hiesous in Finisterre, his eyeholes phyllistained, his jewbones of a crossbacked? A little child shall lead him. Why, it's Strongman Simpson, Timothy Nathan, now of Simpson's on the Grill! Say, Tim Nat, bald wine-presser, hast not one air left? But yeth he hath. Regard! Auscult! He upbraces for supremacy to the potence of Mosthigh and calls upon his baiters and their templum: You daggones, be flat!¹⁰⁷

Joyce deploys a series of allusions to the narrative of Samson. There is a man with 'eyeholes phyllistained' (stained or blinded by the Philistines (Judges 16:21)), led by a little child he is

¹⁰⁴ *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Stuart Gilbert and Richard Ellmann, 3 vols (London: Faber and Faber, 1957-1966), I, 290 (to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 18 March 1930).

¹⁰⁵ Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 626.

¹⁰⁶ Harrington, *Suburban Tenor*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁷ Joyce, 'From a Banned Writer To a Banned Singer', p. 220.

‘Strongman Simpson’ (16:26), with associations to ‘Tim Nat’ (Timnath, home of Samson’s first wife (14:1-2)), who becomes ‘bald’ (16:19); in his last ‘air’ he attacks ‘his baiters and their templum’ (16:29-31). As Samson pulls the temple down around them, they are to ‘be flat’, which is also the last note (B b) sung by Samson in Saint-Saens’s opera, *Samson et Delila*.¹⁰⁸ Joyce had witnessed Sullivan perform the role.¹⁰⁹

The piece as a whole rehearses a variety of operas that Sullivan performed. Alongside *Samson et Delila*, there are allusions to Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, Berlioz’s *Damnation of Faust*, Verdi’s *Otello*, Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell*, Wagner’s *Die Valkyre* and *Tannhauser* and Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*. My intention here is not to offer a full commentary on this piece, although it does deserve close consideration. Suffice it to say, though, that in this compressed form Joyce’s text is at once deeply allusive and playful, nodding to different operatic characters and moments while cramming the text with puns and noise and urban landscapes and comedy. Sullivan’s voice was often characterised as *strong*, rather than elegant, and one of Joyce’s ways to argue for Sullivan was to emphasize his technical ability to hit the high notes in operas (such as *Guillaume Tell*) shunned by singers with a lesser range.¹¹⁰ Similarly, this piece is Joyce at his loudest and brashest, and might be understood best as an extraordinary, virtuosic *performance*: Joyce’s attempt to render in words what Sullivan does with music.

Is not the mere presence of a text such as this in a sixpenny weekly review evidence of modernism’s canonical status? To an extent, it should be acknowledged that the fact that Kingsley Martin, as editor, was able to meet Joyce at a London party and argue that the *New Statesman* could play a role in publishing his new work speaks volumes about the public role of modernism at this time. At this time, *Work in Progress* was appearing in *transition*, a little magazine with a typically small circulation; short sections of Joyce’s work were printed as

¹⁰⁸ The analysis of this passage is indebted to Kevin Barry’s notes on ‘From a Banned Writer’. See Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, pp. 346-7.

¹⁰⁹ Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 620.

¹¹⁰ Harrington, *Suburban Tenor*, pp. 32-33. Stuart Gilbert wrote of attending performances with Joyce and collating statistics of the high notes that Sullivan was able to sing. See *Reflections on James Joyce: Stuart Gilbert’s Paris Journal*, ed. by Randolph Lewis and Thomas F. Staley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), p. 15.

pamphlets and, as mentioned above, gained some praise but also baffled the critics.¹¹¹ The *New Statesman* printed what would now be referred to as Wakean prose for an audience in the tens of thousands.

However, the relationship between this text and the magazine that carries it is complex; furthermore, I contend that a reading of ‘From a Banned Writer’ sympathetic to Joyce—such as the one given above—becomes difficult to sustain once the periodical context is taken into account. Clearly, this was an unusual text for a periodical of this type to publish, a fact perhaps best borne out by the odd implications of its location in the magazine. As has been discussed throughout this thesis, location can indicate form: the book reviews are not at the front. What, then, is this piece? Is it a letter, as it appears directly following the letters, is titled ‘From...To’, and is labelled as such in the introduction? Is it in some strange way a poem, as poems were most typically printed immediately after the letters, and it does not following regular prose rhythms? Or is it a light-hearted middle, as other entries in the ‘Miscellany’ section of the *New Statesman* often were? I am not attempting to suggest that a better, clearer position is possible: merely that the nature of this piece, combined with the nature of this periodical, means that the identity of this text is rendered unclear, or at least unstable.

In the *New Statesman*, ‘From a Banned Writer’ has a key paratext: it is published with a preface, which offers an explanation of the text’s route to the magazine, and suggests how it might be read. It is quoted in full below.

In this remarkable document, Mr James Joyce gives his impressions of his friend, Mr Sullivan of the Paris Opera, in several of his leading roles. Many competent critics regard Mr Sullivan as the most extraordinary dramatic tenor that Europe has listened to for the last half century. Mr Joyce complains that Mr Sullivan is ‘banned’ or at least unknown in England. The reflections written here were sent in a letter to Mr Sullivan by Mr Joyce after an occasion on which the singer was carried shoulder high by his Marseilles admirers after an astonishing performance in ‘Guillaume Tell’. One knows of no other similar documents, no letters in a tone of intense admiration and sardonic banter sent by, say, Manzoni to Rubini, or by Flaubert to Gilbert Duprez, or by Ibsen to the Swedish Nightingale. Lovers of grand opera will recognise the operatic situations and phrases with which the text is studded and detect under the mark of their Christian names the three divi

¹¹¹ According to a table drawn up by Thacker, the peak circulation of *transition* was 4000 copies. Andrew Thacker, ‘General Introduction: “Magazines, Magazines, Magazines!”’, in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume II, North America 1894-1960*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 1-28 (p. 17).

who feature in the final quartette. The document which the singer has kindly placed at our disposal is published with Mr Joyce's permission.¹¹²

That use of the word 'document' (twice) to describe the text that follows is an oddly formal choice. It seems to indicate simply that the *New Statesman* was not entirely sure how to classify exactly what they were publishing. Given the unusual nature of 'From a Banned Writer', this is entirely understandable. But the introduction gives useful contextual information—in that it introduces Sullivan—before attempting to proffer what seems to be an authoritative interpretation of the text's provenance and nature. There are three claims: first, that these thoughts were sent 'in a letter' from Joyce to Sullivan, following a specific performance of *William Tell* in Marseilles. Second, the letter should be likened to historical discussions between artists (for example, Flaubert/Duprez); third, sufficient operatic knowledge will allow one to 'recognise the operatic situations and phrases with which the text is studded'.

The first of these three claims—that the text was inspired by a specific performance of Sullivan's in Marseilles, and the proceeding celebrations—may well be true, though it does gloss over the fact that 'From a Banned Writer' refers not just to *Guillaume Tell* but to a range of Sullivan's performances. But the second and third claims are more troubling. To trace this text to a letter and liken it to communication between artists imagines that this is simply Joyce's equivalent of a thank-you note, written in the normal course of friendship and reproduced here.¹¹³ The modernist writer is thus envisaged as a strange being alienated from regular epistolary prose. In fact, it is quite clear that the piece was not simply a letter sent for the purposes of communication but a carefully crafted and revised literary text. Hans Walter Gabler, editing this text for the *James Joyce Archive*, suggests that the piece was composed in two halves. The first half moves from a transcription in Sylvia Beach's hand to a typescript, with

¹¹² Joyce, 'From a Banned Writer To a Banned Singer', p. 260. This piece of text is included in Barry's *Occasional, Critical and Political Writing*, but in the notes to the text, rather than as a preface.

¹¹³ Martin's account of the text's route to the *New Statesman* in his autobiography is more demonstrably misleading. He implies that Joyce's piece was conceived following the party in July 1931, but manuscript evidence strongly suggests that the text was already largely complete by this stage: a letter sent from Joyce to Herbert Gorman proposes some small corrections and is dated 1 April 1931. See James Joyce, *Notes, Criticism, Translations, & Miscellaneous Writings: A Facsimile of Manuscripts & Typescripts*, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler, The James Joyce Archive, 2 vols (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), I, 326.

additions and edits. The second half exists in Joyce's hand, and then both halves are combined in a typescript that is close, but not identical to the version published in the *New Statesman*.¹¹⁴

Envisaging the text as communication sets the stage for the instructions on how to read this piece: if one knows enough about opera, one will be able to 'recognise' and 'detect' the allusions and references. Reading Joyce is now an act of decoding. This places the *New Statesman*'s introduction to Joyce's piece in the context of a key trend in Joyce's reception in the thirties, as *Ulysses* was cleared for publication and came into the public sphere. Barbara Leckie discusses a number of reading guides to *Ulysses* that appeared around this time, guides that offered the tantalizing possibility 'to transform *Ulysses* from an obscure and difficult book to a simple and *easy* read'.¹¹⁵ Notes and guides to *Ulysses* are clearly useful to many readers, then and now, and might be said to be even more so for a text like 'From a Banned Writer' that operates in very specific musical contexts. But there is a crucial distinction between useful notes and a preface that offers an explicatory key: the latter models the Joycean text as something that only makes sense once it has been rewritten in a particular way. And as great as these problems might be for a reading guide that sits alongside *Ulysses*—Leckie considers, among other texts, an advertisement for the novel in the *Saturday Review of Literature* that offers a schemata for the book's sections—such reading guides were not published as prefaces. Leckie relates a key anecdote:

Before the 1933 trial a misunderstanding arose between Paul Léon, Joyce, Herbert Gorman, and Bennett Cerf, the Random House publisher, over a key (a chart detailing the correspondences, colours, organs and so on) that Cerf wanted to include in the Random House edition of *Ulysses*. Léon, on Joyce's behalf, refused: 'I imagine an American reader', he wrote, 'seeing the chart and concluding that since he has to study it before reading it is not worthwhile reading the book. It may defeat its purpose.'¹¹⁶

The case of 'From a Banned Writer', with that introductory paragraph sitting in front of the text, is thus a more serious case of the above problem: it is almost truistic to note that Joyce's text is not reducible in this way, and cannot be decoded.

¹¹⁴ Joyce, *Notes, Criticism, Translations*, I, xxx.

¹¹⁵ Barbara Leckie, "'Short Cuts to Culture': Censorship and Modernism; or, Learning to Read *Ulysses*", in *Joyce's Audiences*, ed. by John Nash (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 9-28 (p. 23).

¹¹⁶ Leckie, 'Learning to Read *Ulysses*', p. 22.

Jacques Derrida, perhaps one of the most sensitive readers of the ways in which reading Joyce can be difficult, writes of the intimidating complexity of the prose before remarking that

I have the feeling that I haven't yet begun to read Joyce, and this 'not having begun to read' is sometimes the most singular and active relationship I have with this work.¹¹⁷

John Nash makes a similar case more bluntly: arguments that emphasize the importance of a hyper-competent reader are troubling simply because Joyce's 'writing undermines the very idea of competence through its resistance to explication'.¹¹⁸ When the *New Statesman* proposes that we should read the text in this way, something is lost.

Reading 'From a Banned Writer' simply as a letter containing a mesh of 'operatic situations' is ultimately deeply frustrating. Odd questions become legitimate: if this is a letter to Sullivan, why does he appear throughout the text? Why, in the very first lines, is he accompanied by a version of Nipper, the dog from the famous 'His Master's Voice' advertisements?¹¹⁹ Discussions of (say) musicality, rhythm, the play and tension between meanings—all the complexities of Joycean prose that Derrida writes of memorably, the 'quasi-infinite speed of the movements of Joyce's cables'—all these are lost in the quest for simple meaning, the quest to ask *why*.¹²⁰

But still, there are further problems. Those who do come to the text with operatic knowledge will find that their knowledge is put to work deciphering puns: seeing 'Philistined' in 'phyllistained', or 'B b' in 'be flat'. The *why* that the introduction pushes the reader to search for thus rewards the *New Statesman* reader not with the promised evidence of Joyce's artistic communion with Sullivan, but with moments of empty revelation: poor jokes. Joyce's dexterous and intelligent punning becomes, under this interpretative frame, a mechanism that continually promises meaning only to deny it utterly.

¹¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'Two Words for Joyce', in *Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French*, ed. by Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 148-59 (p. 148).

¹¹⁸ John Nash, *James Joyce and the Act of Reception: Reading, Ireland, Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 9.

¹¹⁹ Peter Martland, *Recording History: The British Record Industry, 1888-1931* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), pp. 55-56.

¹²⁰ Derrida, 'Two Words for Joyce', p. 147.

The following week, the *New Statesman* published a letter sent in by a reader, Alex R. Andreae. It was a mocking rejoinder to ‘From a Banned Writer’, an argument in cod Joycean prose that Joyce’s own work is childlike nonsense.

Ah Yah! to bestrew the nursery-kitchen of language with pepperous tumult! Babysense, nonsense, innocence, horse-sense sneezed into a stickfast coryza of snufflewords and tishoo sounds! Allons and alors, let him in with his blik blak night idiom and eclipse tricks. No banned even if mistrepanned at bottleage, or stonedropped—crok, crak goes the wobble Kindskopf! Rien ne va plus!¹²¹

Like the parody of Stein’s rose, discussed above (though Andreae’s letter lacks the pithy wit of that phrase), this text unsubtly transforms Joyce’s text into nonsense prose. It is quite easy, retrospectively, to look back and look down on this sardonic dismissal of Joyce’s work. This is, one perceives, a reader who fails to see what Joyce is trying to do with language, someone who looks at modernism and sees only nonsense. The problem with this is that under the frame that the *New Statesman* sets out for ‘From a Banned Writer’, a reaction like that of Andreae remains in many ways entirely legitimate. Under these terms, the text might well be ‘horse-sense sneezed into a stickfast coryza of snufflewords’.

Such a situation emerges because of the problematic nature of the *New Statesman*’s paratext. While ‘From a Banned Writer’ can of course be read however a reader chooses—and it is perfectly plausible to imagine a contemporary reader studying Joyce’s piece closely and deciding to dismiss the magazine’s introduction—it is nevertheless significant that the magazine promotes, as strongly as such paratextual elements allow, an interpretation of Joyce’s prose that is concerned with achieving the necessary level of competence in order to successfully decode it. The attempt to model Joycean prose in this specific way is profoundly flawed. Modernism’s place in the literary canon is thus troubled not by a deep-seated critical worry about legitimacy—as, I argue, is true in the case of the Auden generation—but by the lack of such a worry, in the presence of an ultimately reductive interpretation that impinges upon, and thus alters, Joyce’s difficult and extraordinary text. To be blunt, the *New Statesman* treats Joyce’s new work as that of a canonical author, there to be published and marvelled at. There is, naturally,

¹²¹ Alex R. Andreae, ‘A Banned Writer [Letter]’, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 5 March 1932, p. 292.

no problem with this. But the magazine develops this conviction of canonicity into a critical perspective that can only be seen as limited, and problematic.

The consequences of these troubles may well be far-reaching. In the weekly reviews, in the 1930s, modernism emerges into public life: the *New Statesman* begins to treat modernist texts as canonical even as it worries about the implications of granting such canonicity. But the case of 'From a Banned Writer' suggests that some modernist texts may operate in such a way that actively resists the ultimately normalizing process of such canonization. If there is such a thing, any longer, as a literary canon, then Joyce is certainly in it; if that fact was still uncertain in the 1930s, it can hardly be said to be so now. Yet one wonders, had 'From a Banned Writer' been completed yet remained unpublished, and were the contemporary *New Statesman* to publish it as a new text by Joyce, might there not be a letter, very similar to that by Alex R. Andreae, sent in to the magazine the following week? This is not a derisory glance at inadequate audiences; instead, it is the suggestion that in some ways, certain aspects of modernism resist their own canonization even as they emerge, hand in hand with their critics, into public life. Recall Derrida's argument above, that he engaged with Joyce's work by recognizing that he had not even begun to read it.¹²² This may well be central to the type of art that Joyce was producing, but it is not something that the weekly reviews—guardians of official culture—successfully appreciate. In the *New Statesman*, in the 1930s, one can see the emergence of modernism into public culture: not, in the end, clear-cut and triumphant, but murky, troubled, and forever incomplete.

¹²² Derrida, 'Two Words for Joyce', p. 148.

CONCLUSION

I return to *Time and Tide*. On 30 November 1927, this young magazine held an event at the Hyde Park Hotel named an ‘At Home’, for its readers. All those who had subscribed since 1922 or earlier were sent invitations, but any other readers were also welcome. Guests heard ‘speeches from the Directors’ and took part in a discussion; the paper claimed that ‘this is a good method of keeping that close touch between the paper and its public which is essential to the well-being of any journal’.¹ To mark the occasion in the magazine, two of the speeches (by Rebecca West and Margaret Thomas, Lady Rhondda) were transcribed and printed. The record of Rhondda’s speech makes it quite clear just how highly she valued her endeavour with a weekly review.

I believe that the day will come, and that fairly soon, when no educated household will be found without a Weekly Review on its table. The Weekly Reviews to-day have comparatively small circulations, but they have a high office—the highest office, I believe, in journalism. More and more already this is coming to be realised. More and more as time goes on it will be appreciated, and they will come to be recognised for what they are, the opinion-papers. But for that two parties must share, for that those who read as well as those who write are necessary... The Weekly Review, the paper which is trying not merely to talk but to think—requires if it is to be fully alive and to take advantage of all its possibilities, an intimacy of relationship between public and paper which is quite a peculiar thing, a kind of building up of an organic whole so that it does come to represent the approximate point of view of its public, whether they be writers or readers. Only so can it be effectively one of the opinion makers of the world...²

Of course, it must be remembered that Rhondda edited the magazine; a number of her friends wrote for it; she was speaking to subscribers and interested readers, and she had invested some of her personal fortune in the magazine. In other words, it is hardly surprising that she speaks as if *Time and Tide* will change the world, in perhaps a week’s time. I mention this not to mock Rhondda’s belief in her magazine, but merely to place her remarks in a proper context and to acknowledge just how seriously some people took the project of a new weekly review.

Yet from a scholarly perspective, it is vitally important that this slightly overblown rhetoric does not bewitch us into over-inflating the importance and impact of these magazines,

¹ [‘It is now three years since...’], *Time and Tide*, 28 October 1927, p. 955.

² Margaret Haig Thomas and Rebecca West, ‘The Function of the Weekly Review’, *Time and Tide*, 9 December 1927, pp. 1114-15 (p. 1114).

especially when it comes to exploring their relationship with modernism. *Time and Tide*, the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, the *Listener*, and the *New Statesman* were important, culturally influential magazines that circulated to tens of thousands of people, but they neither changed the world nor single-handedly introduced the concept of modernism to the British public. They played a part in a broader narrative, though I do maintain that their part was an important one. At the same time, the image that I have constructed is limited. While I hope to have provided some fragmented, partial histories that shed some light on how modernism came into public being in the 1920s and 1930s, and on a group of woefully under-read magazines, I think this thesis can only have value if it recognizes that the narratives it charts remain incomplete: there is far more to be done.

On the one hand, these periodicals deserve far more in depth histories than I have been able to provide. While *Time and Tide* is well served by Catherine Clay's on-going work, the same cannot be said for the other magazines studied here. Keynes's reign at the *Nation and Athenaeum* has not been adequately addressed here or elsewhere, to say nothing of Massingham's *Nation*. The *Spectator* and the *New Statesman* have published institutional histories to mark important anniversaries, but that fact that these texts originated in celebration results in an unfortunate tendency towards hagiography: these fascinating magazines require more. The *Listener* is discussed in Debra Rae Cohen's upcoming work on the BBC and interwar print culture, but such is the richness of this extraordinary publication that there is ample scope for further work. Furthermore, I have focused only on an eighteen-year span in the early twentieth century. One wonders what could be made of the role of the mainstream literary periodical in the later years of the twentieth century, as literary studies grew as an academic discipline, and academic journals rose in number and influence.

In this thesis, however, my focus has been on representations of and responses to modernism. I have argued that weekly reviews played an important role in developing a public concept of modernism, not merely when they embraced new, experimental literature, but when

they reacted with scepticism; from across the spectrum of responses, modernism emerged. The essays in this thesis have explored this argument in different ways. In *Time and Tide*, I argued that at the start of the 1920s modernism's place in the public eye was not clear. In some cases, the magazine studied modernist texts only to reject them robustly; at best, the magazine's reviews were demonstrably unsure whether or not this new literature was legitimate. In the *Nation and Athenaeum*, the weekly review proved far more willing to closely read and praise modernist texts, but Leonard Woolf's dislike for his job demanded a model for reading a periodical that did not depend upon editorial passion. In the *Spectator*, a conservative periodical remained sceptical about modernist literature, but was in fact able to read and review that literature in such a way that refashioned it as acceptable to the *Spectator's* conservative ideology.

This move towards the latter half of the 1920s notes a clear shift in modernism's public emergence. If *Time and Tide* was unsure about modernism, and the *Nation and Athenaeum's* praise was surely coloured by its association with Bloomsbury (and hence the identity of its reviewers), the *Spectator's* ability to find cultural value in Eliot and Woolf and Joyce—even if its critical refashionings do sometimes prove problematic—is significant. In the *Listener*, a quietly radical editor carved out a space to print, review, and thus promote new poetry by W. H. Auden and his contemporaries. Janet Adam Smith's editorial practice was undoubtedly a rebellious challenge to the form of the weekly review that the BBC wished to produce, and, in 1933, she succeeded in confronting readers with the heady mix of Raverat's art and Auden's 'The Witnesses'. In the *New Statesman* in the 1930s, modernism's place in the literary tradition seems, at times, assured: when the magazine heralds the latest great work by Virginia Woolf, or prints a particularly intelligent and witty pastiche of *The Waste Land*. But from the poetry reviews, and the analysis of Joyce's 'From a Banned Writer', it becomes clear that modernism's emergence into public being is not so simple, and its place in the canon remained uncertain.

In many ways, rehearsing the coverage of these chapters prompts only calls for further study. While Rose Macaulay's *Potterism* perhaps goes too far in its classifications of the 'penny,

the twopenny, the threepenny, and the shilling public', not to mention the sixpenny public and that of 'the new Pinkerton fourpenny', the magazines covered here are by no means the only mainstream literary journals to study modernism.³ There is, especially, more work to be done on the cheaper magazines that had less of a political focus, and did not take themselves quite so seriously. Furthermore, the nature of studying magazines with such a high periodicity results, always, in texts and critics that deserve attention and do not—cannot—receive it. Take, for instance, a 1926 review in the *Nation and Athenaeum* of Herbert Read's literary criticism, titled 'Machines to Think With'. One wonders if the title echoes Le Corbusier (refashioned, of course, for writers), yet it also seems to link Read with the analytical tone of I. A. Richards's literary criticism.

Mr Read makes his machines work. These essays are austere, learned, compact, and brief. There is here no easy floating on the tide of emotional appreciation to nowhere in particular. The writing is as scientifically precise as the union between a science and an art will allow.⁴

Or, a very different review in the *Spectator*, as Richard Church (before he began to publish poetry in the *Listener*) seems to resolve the agonies that *Time and Tide* experienced reading Lawrence, and locates in Lawrence's work the prospect of stability in the chaos of modernity.

In all the agony of this modern life, with the harsh noise of it, destroying thought, and faith, and the sweet lingering enjoyment of solitude and all its timeless love, I find myself turning to Lawrence again and again with a sense of companionship; saying that here is one who knows this modern danger, this crash of beliefs, this sudden loss of enthusiasm; one who is fighting to find the meaning of it, and to locate the something permanent that it cannot destroy.⁵

This from a magazine that endorsed the ban on *The Well of Loneliness*, and did not even deign to mention *Lady Chatterley's Lover* until 1930. Even for my necessarily partial reading of these periodicals, there are always more intriguing examples to turn to, worthy of scholarly attention—though I remain unsure what precisely to do with T. S. Eliot's short, informative letter to the *New Statesman* in 1935.

³ Rose Macaulay, *Potterism: A Tragi-Farcical Tract* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1920), pp. 251-52.

⁴ 'Machines to Think With', *The Nation and Athenaeum*, 7 August 1926, pp. 532-33.

⁵ Richard Church, 'D. H. Lawrence: The Artist', *The Spectator*, 19 April 1930, pp. 670-71 (p. 670).

Mr David Garnett (reviewing Mr Osbert Burdett's book) is in error in supposing that there is no tolerable American cheese. There is a delicious cheese of Port Salut type made by Trappist monks in Ontario.⁶

Eliot was, at least, clearly a careful reader of the sixpenny weekly review.

The problem of selective reading remains: to read and then quote from these magazines can sometimes feel like taking water from a swimming pool with a teaspoon. Nevertheless, I argue that these magazines show how modernism emerged into public life, in Britain, in the 1920s and 1930s. The idea that we have come to call modernism did not begin in these magazines. Its origins are perhaps too disparate and multiple to ever fully trace. But they are not to be found here. When these magazines come to think about modernism, they are well and truly late to the party. However, this tardiness has its own value. When these magazines do turn, in seriousness, to modernism, they think publicly on how such new, striking, challenging, terrifying literature might, in time, be accepted as wholly legitimate. The modernism that sat comfortably on a university syllabus in, say, 1960 was clearly something very different to the cultural phenomenon vaguely gestured at when Thomas Moulton sneered, in *Time and Tide*, at 'the spell of the ultra-modern'.⁷ Put another way, though these magazines may be broadly reactive in nature—their normal role is not to publish new literary texts, but to evaluate and analyse publications—they do not simply record a concept of modernism that sits concretely in early twentieth century literary culture, independent of its representations in periodicals such as these. To return a final time to my reading of Ian Hacking, modernism emerged 'hand in hand' with these discussions of modernism, taking public form even as it was explored by these periodicals.

Yet these magazines—particularly, here, the *New Statesman* in the 1930s—imply also that this public emergence had no easily placed end date, no moment of final, public clarity and legitimacy. As much as these magazines proved more and more willing to take modernist texts seriously, there always seem to be cases where they could not get completely comfortable. This

⁶ T. S. Eliot, 'Cheese [letter]', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 21 December 1935, p. 977.

⁷ Thomas Moulton, 'Poetry: Emily Dickinson to May Sinclair', *Time and Tide*, 7 November 1924, p. 1091.

should not, I think, be seen as a failing. For if modernism is certainly canonical now, it seems never to stop exerting pressure on literary culture. David James and Urmila Seshagiri write on the concept of ‘metamodernism’, arguing that modernism has a ‘surprisingly persistent legacy’ in ‘twenty-first century arts and letters’: that a number of contemporary novelists are writing new fiction that engages with old modernism.⁸ But the point is that modernism is *not* old, closed, or finished, but something that still demands attention from new novelists, and (later) their critics. As James and Seshagiri ask, ‘What artistic issues emerge when innovators today open up alternative futures for fiction through engagements with their modernist past?’⁹

To point out that modernism continues to be of interest is no great claim, but the particular value in the idea of ‘metamodernism’ is that the concept puzzled over by the weekly reviews still impinges on literary culture now. Perhaps the weekly reviews were never entirely satisfied with modernism, even as it emerged into public life. But if modernism continues to excite, frustrate, and make demands of writers today, this uncertainty is only to be expected. Modernism may now be canonical, but it is rarely quiet and comfortable: this, too, was first echoed in the weekly reviews.

⁸ David James and Urmila Seshagiri, ‘Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Resolution’, *PMLA*, 129 (2014), 87-100 (p. 87).

⁹ James and Seshagiri, ‘Metamodernism’, p. 88.

APPENDIX A: FINANCES

Weekly reviews were not by and large profitable enterprises. Anecdotally, it is clear that most made a loss and were supported by patronage of one form or another, as is discussed throughout this study. In the case of the *Nation and Athenaeum*, financial reports have survived that document the loss-making endeavour in detail; these are adapted here for the reader's interest. Note that these include some figures that predate Keynes's ownership of the *Nation and Athenaeum*; these presumably refer to Massingham's *Nation*.

Source: Cambridge, King's College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, King's/PP/JMK/NS/3/23.

Table 1: The Nation and Athenaeum finances, 1917-30

<i>Year ended April</i>	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
Expenditure	£6871	£7943	£9547	£12,997	£16,765	£15,034	£14,430
Receipts	£4800	£5798	£7001	£9094	£10,280	£11,262	£12,002
Loss	-£2071	-£2145	-£2546	-£3902	-£6485	-£3772	-£2428
Chief Costs							
Paper	£1023	£1405	£2246	£1936	£3058	£1889	£1314
Printing	£1264	£1514	£2011	£3444	£4697	£4721	£4445
Salaries	£1602	£1712	£1899	£2924	£3485	£3908	£3789
Contributors	£1718	£2034	£1828	£2398	£3004	£2809	£3129
Chief Receipts							
Advertisements (Net)	£362	£840	£1284	£2752	£3062	£3912	£4382
Sales (Net) (including Subscriptions)	£4372	£4910	£5655	£6199	£7131	£7327	£7567
<i>Year ended April</i>	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930
Expenditure	£15,873	£15,934	£17,244	£17,626	£18,033	£18,450	£18,559
Receipts	£13,505	£15,189	£16,105	£16,981	£17,743	£18,259	£18,278
Loss	-£2368	-£747	-£1139	-£645	-£290	-£200	-£279
Chief Costs							
Paper	£1582	£1772	£1898	£1868	£2047	£1992	£1930
Printing	£4558	£4715	£5129	£5235	£5351	£5243	£4965
Salaries	£4247	£4371	£4930	£5134	£5022	£5369	£5703
Contributors	£3686	£3236	£3232	£3462	£3575	£3568	£3888
Chief Receipts							
Advertisements (Net)	£5232	£5958	£7229	£7698	£8574	£8441	£8193
Sales (Net) (including Subscriptions)	£8230	£8924	£8567	£9028	£8932	£8919	£9046

APPENDIX B: CIRCULATIONS

The table below summarizes my attempts to gather circulation data for the five periodicals covered by this study. Historical circulation data is frustratingly incomplete and can be hard to come by. The managers of a magazine could of course calculate their circulation by adding together their sales and subscription figures. However, this data was rarely published, and therefore has not been preserved in all cases. Circulation figures were of great interest to advertisers—naturally, an advertisement in a higher circulation periodical was more expensive—and in some cases circulation figures can be found for 1922-30 in the *Advertiser's ABC*, an annually issued directory. However, these figures were provided by publishers, and not independently audited. Several periodicals record identical figures year-on-year, or provide suspiciously round numbers, suggesting that the publishers either did not always submit data or provided estimates. In the latter case, it is also likely that the estimates were on the generous side, as the publisher had every reason to talk up the popularity of their periodical. In 1931, the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) was set up to provide independently audited figures. This body still exists today.¹ However, its early reports are not publicly available.

I have not included circulation figures given in biographies in the table, as these tend to be provided in an anecdotal form, and are less easy to verify. These numbers are instead given in the notes below on individual periodicals.

Time and Tide

Almost no figures are available for *Time and Tide*. Work on this periodical tends to cite Shirley Eoff's figure of 12,000 to 15,000 copies, taken from notes held by Rebecca West. Eoff attributes this figure to 'the early 1920s', but her source is end of year financial reports for 1927 and 1928,

¹ See abc.org.uk

so she may be referring to these years.² Angela V. John, Rhondda's most recent biographer, suggests that 'Circulation rose steadily during the first three years'.³ The *Advertiser's ABC* records, in 1923 and 1924, a circulation of 4,000 copies weekly for a fourpenny magazine named *Time and Tide Table*.⁴ The price and periodicity are correct, and I can find no other record of this magazine, so I have attributed these figures to *Time and Tide*.

The Nation and Athenaeum

Detailed financial data for the *Nation and Athenaeum* is preserved in Keynes's archive in Cambridge. Circulation figures are largely recorded in monthly reports; to obtain annual figures, I have taken the mean. It is unclear whether these figures—which are substantially lower than those provided to the *ABC*—include subscriptions. I have chosen not to add to these figures, but it is recorded that across 1928 and 1929 there were around 1,500 subscribers to the *Nation and Athenaeum*.⁵

The Spectator

I have not been able to access archival material for the *Spectator*, and do not know if historical circulation data has been preserved; figures are taken from the *ABC*.

The Listener

Detailed figures for the *Listener* are found in the BBC Written Archives Centre; the numbers given below are taken from a 1953 report on the state of the *Listener*.

² Shirley M. Eoff, *Viscountess Rhondda: Equalitarian Feminist* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), pp. 121, 168 n. 14. Eoff locates these reports in the Rebecca West papers at the University of Tulsa.

³ Angela V. John, *Turning the Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda* (Cardigan: Parthian, 2013), p. 298.

⁴ T. B. Browne Ltd, *The Advertiser's ABC*, 45 vols (London: T. B. Browne, 1887-1931), XXXVII-XXXVIII (1923-24).

⁵ Cambridge, King's College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, King's/PP/JMK/NS/4/2/110.

The New Statesman

The *New Statesman* archives from this period have not survived. Figures are taken from the *ABC*, and in the thirties from numbers provided in the paper as subscriptions rose. There is no indication that these later figures were audited, but there is also no reason not to include them. In his biography of Kingsley Martin, C. H. Rolph suggests that the *New Statesman* had a circulation of 14,000 when Martin took over in 1931. He places the circulation at the end of the 1930s at 30,000 copies.⁶

⁶ C. H. Rolph, *Kingsley: The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin* (London: Gollancz, 1973), p. 221.

Table 2: Amalgamated Circulation Figures

	<i>Time and Tide</i>	<i>Nation and Athenaeum</i>	<i>Spectator</i>	<i>Listener</i>	<i>New Statesman</i>
1920					
1921					
1922					
1923	4000 ^a	11,571 ^a			8000 ^a
		7747 ^b			
1924	4000 ^a	11,571 ^a			10,000 ^a
		7008 ^b			
1925		6567 ^b	19,166 ^a		10,000 ^a
1926		6752 ^b	21,293 ^a		
1927		11,500 ^a	21,293 ^a		
		6521 ^b			
1928		11,562 ^a	21,734 ^a		
		6147 ^b			
1929		11,500 ^a	21,734 ^a	27,772 ^c	
		6137 ^b			
1930		11,500 ^a	22,360 ^a	33,803 ^c	
		6139 ^b			
1931			22,360 ^a	37,586 ^c	
1932				38,087 ^c	
1933				42,627 ^c	
1934				50,670 ^c	
1935				52,379 ^c	20,833 ^d
1936				50,626 ^c	24,221 ^c
1937				48,180 ^c	

Sources

- ^a T. B. Browne Ltd, *The Advertiser's ABC*, 45 vols (London: T. B. Browne, 1887-1931)
- ^b Cambridge, King's College Special Collections (KCSC), J. M. Keynes Papers, King's/PP/JMK/NS/3, 4.
- ^c Caversham, BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC), Publications: Listener Articles: Policy, R43/85/2 ('The Listener', G.97/53)
- ^d Average weekly sales July-December 1935. 'Our Net Sales', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 1 February 1936, p. 152.
- ^e Average weekly sales July-December 1936. 'Our Net Sales', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 16 January 1937, p. 84.

APPENDIX C: FRONT PAGES

Weekly reviews were uniform and sober in appearance. As evidence of this, as well as to give a visual impression of these periodicals, I reprint the front pages of each of the magazines under study. The front pages are all taken from the week immediately following the crash in Wall Street. Note that the *Listener*, which lacks the political and economic focus on the week's news of the other magazines, does not cover the crash.

TIME AND TIDE

INDEPENDENT NON-PARTY

Vol. 10.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1929

No. 44.

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REVIEW OF THE WEEK

The Parliamentary Programme. Although the Government met the House in a wait-and-see mood—questioners were stalled off in all directions by promises of statements later, and replies at the earliest opportunity—Mr. Snowden's list of work for the pre-Christmas weeks makes it clear that the Government is going to drive Parliament hard this session. With the Conservatives divided against themselves, and trouble in the Liberal group over the old question of the Lloyd George fund, Mr. MacDonald is probably not worrying much at this stage. Events so far have played pleasantly into his hands, and the acid test, which must eventually be applied to the Government and the whole parliamentary situation, appears to be considerably further off than the optimists of the Opposition surmised when Parliament rose for the holidays. But it looks as if there is going to be concerted hostility towards the type of legislation which hands more despotic power to the bureaucracy by enabling a Department to make Orders in Council that have the force of law. Criticism of the Coast Erosion Bill introduced by Mr. William Graham focussed on this point, and forced the Government to promise amendments in Committee. But Conservative indignation is

party of the Right which began these encroachments upon the democratic system.

.

The American Slump, and Mr. Thomas It is just possible—although no one can do more than speculate on these things—that the ill wind in the States will blow Britain in general and Mr. J. H. Thomas in particular, some good. If American business recedes, and the captains of industry draw in their horns and play safe for a while, British business may be able to achieve more progress than would otherwise be possible. On the other hand, if domestic demand in the States contracts, there may be a concerted effort to dump surplus products, and especially motor-cars, on foreign markets at cost prices, or less. This prospect may decide Mr. Snowden to maintain—against his free trade principles—the safeguarding duties which protect the motor industry here. Mr. Thomas seems to have given some assurance on this point to the motor manufacturers and distributors, who now have high hopes of expanding trade in their industry. Money will certainly tend to cheapen, and this will relieve Mr. Thomas not only directly, but presently, by modifying the resistant attitude of Mr. Snowden to loans while the present high interest rates have to be paid.

THE NATION

AND ATHENÆUM

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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

PARLIAMENT reassembled on Tuesday, and important business is at once claiming its attention. On Thursday (too late for comment in this week's NATION), a statement is being made as to the Government's coal policy. Early next week, an account of his achievements and intentions regarding unemployment is promised by Mr. Thomas. On Monday, Mr. MacDonald is expected to be in the House, and to make some pronouncement on the fruits of his visit to America and the prospects of the Five-Powers Naval Conference. If these matters are fully debated, the week will be gone, as Wednesday and Friday are both reserved for private Members, but the question of resuming diplomatic relations with Russia is bound to come up at an early date. As to legislation, the Widows' Pensions Bill is being introduced this week, and the Government hope to get it passed into law by the end of November; and Bills dealing with Unemployment Insurance and the Coal Industry are to be pushed through, if possible, before Christmas. As though that were not enough, Mr. Snowden has expressed the hope that progress will also be made with a Factories Bill, a Bill to implement the Eight Hours Convention, and a Bill to amend the Trade Disputes Act.

The first business taken in the House of Lords after the recess was a motion by Lord Buckmaster with regard to the surplus of the private property of ex-enemy subjects still in the hands of the Government. With restrained passion, Lord Buckmaster retold the tale of a deep wrong done by the Treaty of

Versailles, and demanded that this country should do all that was now possible to bring the injustice to an end. By the Peace Treaty, we appropriated the whole of the property of ex-enemy nationals who were within our territory. This provision applied equally to small sums accumulated by the thrift of people in this country who happened to be ex-enemy nationals, and large sums possessed by bankers and those carrying on foreign trade. No one doubted, said Lord Buckmaster, that the terms of the Treaty in this respect were in flat and direct violation of well-established principles of international law. In 1922, he had carried a motion in that House that the provision should not apply to sums of £5,000 or less where the owner was either born of British parents or had been resident in this country for twenty-five years. He now asked that that resolution should be carried into effect. On behalf of the Government, Lord Passfield and Lord Parmoor (who had voted with Lord Buckmaster in 1922) expressed their complete agreement with the intention of the motion, but claimed that its terms had already been carried out by the Blanesburgh Committee of 1924, and by the recent Hague agreement. Lord Buckmaster was not satisfied, and pressed his resolution, which was agreed to without a division.

The Coast Protection Bill, which passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday, is one of those important measures which get pushed on one side because they arouse no Party feeling but are opposed by some vested interests. It is long overdue, being the retarded fruit of a Royal Commission on coast erosion, appointed in 1906 by Mr. Lloyd George,

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[Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the SPECTATOR.]

News of the Week

The New Session

ON Tuesday Parliament quietly reassembled, and Mr. Snowden, who is temporarily taking the place of the Prime Minister, presented to the House of Commons so long a programme that Mr. Baldwin remarked that the Government had the optimism of childhood. The Widows' Pensions Bill is to be passed by the end of this month, and next on the list come Bills dealing with Unemployment Insurance, the coal industry, factories, hours of labour, and amendments to the Trade Disputes Act. We cannot help hoping that, as there is so much urgent work to be done, the amendments to the Trade Disputes Act will not be pressed. We were among those who thought that some of the clauses in the Act invited trouble, but it turned out that though Trade Union audiences were ready to give the conventional cheer to any fire-breathing statement about abolishing the Act, there was really no very strong feeling on the subject. The Labour campaign against the Act astonished us all by its tameness.

In these circumstances, why waste time on a fight which very few people are spoiling for? No doubt if the fight were staged it would become heated, but why stage it at all? There is so much constructive legislation required that we grudge every minute spent on the superfluous. Of course, Mr. MacDonald's left wing may demand that he should act on his promise, but if the demand does not become imperative he will be wise to put national considerations above all others. There is, for instance, the Slum-Clearance Bill, which at present does not appear among the Government's urgent measures. Is it conceivable that men who really apprehend the dreadful truth about the slums should deliberately treat this Bill as of smaller importance than a wrangle over Trade Union methods?

* * * *

Indian Reforms

As we go to press, Lord Irwin is about to make a statement at Delhi which should put an end in India to the mysterious rumours of the past few weeks. There can, of course, be no "going behind the back" of the Simon Commission, to the constitution of which the Labour Party agreed. Adaptations of policy will be within the compass of the original plan. The principal adaptation is to be a very desirable extension of the Simon inquiry, which is described in letters between Sir John Simon and the Prime Minister. The Indian States are to be included in the field which the Commission will survey. When representatives of the States come into consultation there will be a fresh opportunity, we hope, for the representatives of British India who have hitherto held back to join in the task of construction. As for any preliminary promises that can be made to India it is obvious that they must be confined to a declaration of the simple truth that Great Britain always has in view the development of self-government in India. There can be no "immediate promise" of Dominion status.

* * * *

Coast Protection and Bureaucracy

On Tuesday Mr. Graham, President of the Board of Trade, moved the second reading of the Coast Protection Bill. The Bill attempts to put into effect the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion. As Mr. Graham pointed out, there is a good deal of misunderstanding about erosion. Where the sea bursts against cliffs the land generally fights a losing battle against the sea, and at some points on the East Coast it loses noticeably. On the other hand, there is a tendency for low-lying land to gain upon the sea. During the past thirty-five years England, on the balance, has not lost. She has actually gained about forty-two thousand acres, though these acres (being mostly in estuaries) are not of much value, whereas most of the land lost was good. The Bill transfers the principal powers from the Commissioners of Crown Lands to the Board of Trade.

* * * *

As for the administrative areas under the Bill, Mr. Graham reminded the House that the Royal Commission was unanimously of opinion that county authorities would not be appropriate and that there

The Listener

Published by the British Broadcasting Corporation

Vol. II

Wednesday, October 30, 1929

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Points of View

IV—H. G. WELLS

I have exercised my mind a lot to find out how much I could tell you of my Point of View—in half an hour. Because I suppose that means telling what I think I am, why I exist, what I think I am for, what I think of life, what I think of the world about me, and things like that. These are questions to which I have given innumerable hours, in conversation, in reading and writing, in lonely places, and particularly in that loneliest place of all, the dark stillness of the night. Is it possible to give you something like a quintessence? Anyhow I am going to try.

In the perfume factories of Grasse in Provence they show you little bottles of concentrated extract. In this little bottle, they tell you, we have condensed the scent of half-a-million roses, in this acres and acres of jasmine. In this brief talk to-night I am trying to give you the gist of many thousands of nights and days of thought. I will try to make myself as clear as possible, but you must forgive me if now and then I have to be more concentrated than explicit.

We have already had the Points of View of Mr. Lowes Dickinson, of the Dean of St. Paul's, and Mr. Bernard Shaw in this series of talks. I will not spend very much of my time discussing what they have said so well.

Mr. Lowes Dickinson talked of democracy. Democracy, I thought, was the name used rather confusingly for two different methods of government, one used in the little city states of the past and the other in the big states of the present, and I have made and written various criticisms of democracy on that assumption. But Mr. Lowes Dickinson said it meant the fullest freedom of speech and discussion and a respectful treatment of all one's fellow human beings, and I have nothing but agreement with

that sort of democracy. And the Dean of St. Paul's talked of Christianity. Christianity I have always held to be defined by its creeds, and since I cannot believe in many statements in these creeds—the Resurrection of the Body, for example—I have always refused to call myself a Christian, because that might have been sailing under false colours. But when the Dean of St. Paul's explains that these creeds do not bind him and that Christianity can learn and alter its ideas without limit, almost am I tempted to call myself a Christian and accept his teaching. Mr. Shaw talked of this and that in a manner that was highly provocative. But I have long since trained myself not to be provoked by Mr. Shaw, and I continue to admire beyond measure the beautiful prose he talks and writes and his admirable pronunciation. He said that Russia is the only country which is training its next generation to be better citizens than this one is. Well, I wonder where he found that out!

If I have a general criticism to make of my three able and distinguished predecessors, it is that they have given us *views* rather than a statement of their *point of view*. They told us what they saw, but not where they stood. Now I want to tell you where I stand. I am unable therefore to join on what I have to say to what my predecessors have said. Instead, I propose to begin at quite a fresh point, and a rather more fundamental one.

I can say best what I have to say by talking first about immortality. I will open my matter with a question. Here is a voice talking to you. Here are thoughts being presented to your mind. This kind of mental intercourse which the wireless makes possible is at once extremely detached and extremely intimate. There has never been quite this effect of impersonal nearness before. We are

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AS A NEWSPAPER.

SIXPENCE

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All MSS. and letters relating thereto should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2.

THE correspondence, published this week, between the Prime Minister and Sir John Simon as Chairman and the Indian Statutory Commission, throws new light upon the probable course of events that will follow the completion and issue of the report of the Commission. The report will be ready, it seems, early next year. After a certain period of consideration and discussion a general Conference is to be summoned consisting of representatives of all parties and interests not only in British India, but in the Native States, so that a comprehensive plan of constitutional advance for the whole of India may as far as possible be agreed upon. The next step will be for the British Government to draft definite proposals for submission to Parliament and these in turn will be examined by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. This very elaborate procedure, which will inevitably occupy a great deal of time, is made necessary by the fact that the Simon Commission has been forced to consider the position of the Native States in relation to the central government of India. It will probably create some disappointment in India, where enthusiastic Nationalists have been led to believe that "Dominion status" might be granted to India by January 1st next.

* * *

Undoubtedly, however, it is a wise plan to oblige the over-sanguine politicians of British India to face in conference the grave difficulties which arise from the existence of more or less autocratic Native States on the borders and even in the midst of their territory. Since Maharajahs who are content to recognise the authority of the British Crown and its representatives are very far from being willing to recognise the authority of popular Calcutta lawyers, the proposed Conference is

likely to be prolonged. It is foolish of Mrs. Besant to have stated definitely in India that the present Secretary of State is in favour of giving India Dominion status. We are all of course in favour, if and when it ever becomes possible. But at present there would appear to be no such possibility within sight. The unwillingness of Indian politicians to consent to the withdrawal of the British Army and the existence of great Native States which will not recognise the authority of their partially democratised neighbours makes the very phrase "Dominion status" an absurdity at present. Perhaps the new Conference will serve to drive this fact home even in Delhi and Calcutta and Bombay.

* * *

It looks, at the time of writing, as if the French political crisis will be resolved by the formation of a ministry under M. Clementel. M. Daladier's efforts have failed—mainly owing to the Socialists' refusal to co-operate with him, but partly, according to his own statement, because M. Briand played him false. M. Clementel is a Senator who filled the office of Minister of Finance under M. Herriot in 1924, and whose feeble policy was generally regarded as one of the chief causes of M. Herriot's downfall. His government will not be a strong one, though it will presumably include M. Briand as Foreign Minister, and probably M. Tardieu and M. Loucheur. This Cabinet of "Republican Concentration" (which means, in fact, an assortment of the Centre groups) may be expected to jog along for a time, pass the Budget, and then break up—possibly with a dissolution of the Chamber. From a foreign point of view, there is a good deal to be said for the elevation of a second-rater like M. Clementel, since his government will be dominated by M. Briand, in a way that a Tardieu government, for instance, could not be. In France the crisis has produced a great deal of bad blood; the Socialist Party has been split over the question of

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