Harold Nicolson, *Ulysses*, Reithianism: Censorship on BBC Radio, 1931

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Abstract

In late 1931, Harold Nicolson's plan to discuss James Joyce's *Ulysses* on BBC radio was quashed at the last minute. Some weeks later, this edict was lifted and Nicolson was permitted to speak, subject to certain restrictions. This very public controversy has received scant critical attention, and is usually understood simply as an example of censorship: a conflict between progressive broadcaster and conservative bureaucracy. This essay contends that the reality was far more nuanced. Tracing the development of these talks through the diaries of Nicolson and John Reith, I suggest that Nicolson and the management of the BBC sought to negotiate a permissible way to discuss modernism on state radio. When the talks aired in late 1931, Nicolson insisted on the importance of modernist literature in broadcasts that remained fundamentally in line with the corporation's educational, Reithian programme. Recent work in modernist studies has paid much attention to public media technologies such as radio, and to the public censorship of modernism; in this case, the two are intertwined. Drawing on these developments, I argue that broadcaster and censor should not simply be placed in opposition, but that it was possible to both discuss modernism and accommodate the censorial demands of the BBC. Nicolson's critical independence may have been compromised, but the same is true of the Reithian BBC, an organization that on 8 December 1931 played host to a subtly radical discussion of James Joyce.

Harold Nicolson, *Ulysses*, Reithianism: Censorship on BBC Radio, 1931

At 8.30pm on 24 November 1931, writer, diplomat and broadcaster Harold Nicolson came to the microphone in a BBC studio to deliver a thirty minute talk, ninth in a series of twelve titled 'The New Spirit in Literature'. Nicolson had promised his listeners in the closing minutes of his previous broadcast in the series (17 November) that the talk would be a discussion of James Joyce and his work.[1] Word of this had made its way to Paris, as Joyce prepared to listen in with a group of friends, at the house of Adrienne Monnier.[2]

Instead of speaking on Joyce, however, Nicolson delivered an apology, as described by Joyce in a letter written three days later to Harriet Shaw Weaver.

> Nicolson announced at once that pressure had been brought to bear on him etc etc and that the expected talk on James Joyce could not take place. The company expressed itself volubly in French about the BBC directors etc after which we all went in to table and had a merry meal.[3]

This letter reveals two things. The first is seemingly unambiguous evidence of censorship at the BBC, whereby 'pressure had been brought to bear' on Nicolson, and a broadcast on modernist authors had been prevented. The second is that such censorship was immediately understood as unremarkable by the 'company' surrounding Joyce at dinner. Indeed, censorship of Joyce's work itself (if not, perhaps, discussion of it) was an accepted fact. Considering merely the British context, as Alistair McCleery relates, *Ulysses* was banned from entering the country soon after it was published in 1922.[4] Just a few years before this broadcast, F. R. Leavis had attracted attention from the police and the Home Office when he attempted to get hold of a copy in order to teach a class at Cambridge.[5] The government position softened in the thirties – an individual was permitted to import a copy for teaching purposes in 1933 – but domestic publication was not permitted until 1936.[6]

Even if censorship itself was nothing new, it is difficult not to detect a particular attitude to the BBC in this slightly weary relation of 'pressure … etc' being brought on Nicolson by the 'BBC directors etc'. For Joyce, one suspects, this censorship was not just unsurprising given the nature of his work, but precisely what was expected from the BBC. He thus finds himself in a tradition of commentators who saw the corporation operating always in

fear of controversy. In 1935, Raymond Postgate gave a memorable set of guidelines to potential broadcasters.

> Your talks must be censored beforehand. You must submit a draft. You must not include anything in your remarks that will hurt anybody. You are expected to assume that the whole of your audience consists of backward clergymen and prudish old ladies. Don't mention wine! Don't mention sex! Don't mention Marxism! Don't mention the world revolution! Somebody's feelings will be hurt if you do. Be correct at all costs. Never wear a smoking jacket when you ought to have tails and a boiled shirt. Never say anything new or unexpected. Let your mind be as narrow as Sir John Reith's.[7]

While Postgate's remarks are somewhat whimsical – and reflect his own experiences with the corporation – further examples abound.[8] Todd Avery describes an extraordinary document that was pasted to the walls of BBC studios in the twenties, a 'Notice to Entertainers' that included the rules 'no vulgar or doubtful matter' and 'no Clerical Impersonations'.[9] One imagines a dispute between the enlightened Bloomsbury intellectual and the narrow-minded Director-General John Reith, resolved quickly by Reith's power to control the airwaves. Discussion of *Ulysses* could not be permitted to reach an audience that, by 1931, certainly numbered in the millions.[10] Two weeks later, however, that is precisely what happened. On 8 December, Nicolson spoke on Joyce's work, read from *Ulysses* and played one side of a recording of Joyce reading from *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, a passage that runs from the invocation 'Subdue your noise, you hamble creature!' to the end of the text.[11] Joyce, Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier wrote to congratulate him – Joyce offered a signed copy of the French translation of *Ulysses* as a gift – and a version of the talk titled 'The Significance of James Joyce' was published in the *Listener*, the BBC's weekly magazine, on 16 December.[12]

This unusual sequence of events demands critical attention. In particular, I suggest a pressing need to move beyond depictions of these events as a pitched battle between modernist critic and broadcasting censor, a marked characteristic of most accounts of this controversy. Kate Whitehead suggests that Nicolson 'had enraged Sir John Reith by his attempt to introduce *Ulysses* to the radio listener in a broadcast talk of 1931.'[13] James Lees-Milne's biography of Nicolson suggests that Nicolson's series of talks was cut short after the tenth because Reith 'forbade him to mention James Joyce's *Ulysses*' and Nicolson thus

'refused to make the attempt.'[14] Victoria Glendinning mentions 'Reith's refusal to let Harold praise *Ulysses* on the BBC'.[15]

This is not to suggest that the fact of the bowdlerized broadcast has escaped critical notice. Michael Carney gives a good account of the events in his biography of the Director of Talks, Hilda Matheson.[16] But there remains a tendency to oppose Nicolson and Reith, and understand the broadcast purely in terms of conflict. Gordon Bowker's account, in his recent biography of Joyce, concludes that it 'was a small victory for the censors, but also a clever piece of manoeuvring by Nicolson'.[17] While Todd Avery makes the vital argument for the importance of Reithianism to twentieth century culture, he again suggests that Nicolson's talk on Joyce is a matter of submission to Reithian power: 'Reith allowed Nicolson to broadcast an altered version of his text from which all explicit praise of the novels by Joyce and Lawrence had been excised. Nicolson, having no choice, submitted to the censor and delivered his altered talk.'[18] Alistair McCleery's work on the publication of *Ulysses* discusses the eventual broadcast and quotes usefully from a letter Nicolson wrote to Paul Léon shortly after the broadcast. McCleery suggests that affair was 'a pyrrhic victory': 'free discussion' was not prevented, but 'such liberty survived only within a charged and hostile atmosphere'.[19]

This imagery is so prevalent because there is no small truth to it. Nicolson broadcast a series of talks that were permissible up to a point; after that point, however, they infuriated individuals at the BBC who could not see modernist literature as anything other than as obscene, socially threatening, and aesthetically valueless. Nicolson pushed back against this censorship, but his freedom was ultimately curtailed. Indeed, the truth of this depiction is reflected in existing scholarship on the Nicolson broadcasts. However, this depiction obscures the fine detail of a complex negotiation between Nicolson and the BBC that eventually produced these talks. Only once the dominant imagery of conflict between broadcaster and broadcasting corporation is set aside does a more subtle understanding of this situation emerge. At stake in these events is not just whether or not Nicolson was permitted to speak

about Joyce, and what conditions were placed on that speech, but the fundamental, constitutive nature of BBC broadcasting at this crucial point in history.

Just a few years after Nicolson's broadcasts, a greater diversity of programmes was possible. Christina L. Baade has illustrated how the onset of war at the end of the thirties led to a greater focus on providing morale-boosting entertainment. Rather than giving its listeners the cultural material that the corporation deemed valuable, the BBC embraced the previously derided concept of 'tap' or background listening. As Baade puts it, 'the BBC's eventual acknowledgement of background listening in its wartime programming – in the Forces Programme and with *Music While You Work* – represented a distinct policy shift from the 1930s'.[20] Alongside this, Daniel Ryan Morse's work on E. M. Forster's broadcasts to India in the 1940s argues that 'the Eastern Service allowed more freedom for broadcasters from both censorship and the requirement to provide "light" entertainment instead of more robust, intellectual material. … While the Home Service was turning to light music, the Eastern Service allowed and encouraged Forster to dedicate broadcasts to the likes of Proust and Joyce.'[21] Morse notes that this programming, rather than domestic broadcasts, provided the model for the Third Programme, established in 1946 and serving as a dedicated space for this type of cultural discussion.[22]

Nicolson's broadcasts could be seen as a (hesitant) step towards this later diversity. Instead, however, I wish to focus on the more profound ways in which this incident troubles the nature of Reith's BBC. The corporation's broadcast voice was a central element of the experience of modernity in interwar Britain, and was far more complex than has been previously imagined. In later years, the corporation would move towards defined spaces for light entertainment and heavyweight cultural discussion. But in 1931 the BBC's national programme purported to be autocratic and monologic, providing all with a common culture. It was precisely that common culture that Nicolson's broadcasts challenged. The BBC's singular national voice was sensitive to the demands of multiple authors, produced in uncomfortable negotiations between different perspectives. Speaking at the BBC did not

simply offer the chance to accept and endorse or push back and rebel against a fixed, stable, and unchanging model of Reithianism; rather, it offered the potential to revise what Reithianism was. Sometimes, in a few extraordinary cases, BBC radio could be both educational and deeply subversive.

This argument builds on a proliferation of recent work investigating modernism and radio, and modernism and censorship – although the two rarely overlap, as here. Todd Avery's superb study of BBC radio, ethics and modernist writers, *Radio Modernism* (2006) is vital to this essay, as will be made clear. More widely, essay collections such as *Broadcasting Modernism* (2009) and *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era* (2014) emphasise the underappreciated role played by radio in disseminating, discussing, and informing modernist texts and ideas; the latter collection, edited by Matthew Feldman, Erik Tonning, and Henry Mead is especially relevant given its close focus on archival records of early radio broadcasts.[23]

Just as this work recognizes radio as more than just a technology that happened to become widespread at this time, but as something integral in many ways to the development of modernism, scholarly work on censorship has pushed beyond simply charting histories of the different ways in which modernism was repressed and controlled by state and institutional censors. Celia Marshik's *British Modernism and Censorship* (2006) argues convincingly that censorship did not only limit the dissemination of modernist texts, but can be placed in a dialectical relationship with modernism, influencing how texts developed.[24] While not focusing specifically on modernism, the collection edited by David Bradshaw and Rachel Potter, *Prudes on the Prowl* (2013), has a broad remit and offers illuminating work on the legal structures and lawmakers that influenced literary obscenity in the early twentieth century.[25] Rachel Potter's *Obscene Modernism* (2013) considers the concept of 'censorship networks': how censorship might have 'functioned as a bureaucratized, dispersed, and self-regulated phenomenon', a nuanced argument that contributes much to the understanding of BBC censorship proposed in this essay.[26]

It should first be emphasized that the decision to prevent, then permit Nicolson from broadcasting on Joyce was unusual because it was so public: dramatic, even farcical. The BBC was set up to avoid last minute changes. Speakers were required to submit the text of their talks one week in advance. Programmes were decided months in advance. Richard Lambert writes of the atmosphere of the BBC as inimical to the kind of chaos Nicolson was involved in:

> a kind of negative 'impartiality' … which squeezes out of existence, *by neglect*, all extremes of thought, and *per contra* favours makes play with mediocrity. There is here no censorship, only a gentle insistence upon 'good taste', a gentle repulsion of anything which may 'offend'.[27]

All these structures were in place for Nicolson's talks. They were proposed by the BBC; specifically, Charles Siepmann approached Nicolson on 30 May 1931. At the time, Siepmann was Director of Adult Education Talks, and these talks were conceived as part of a wider programme under that aegis. It was titled 'The Changing World', a 'vast educational programme for autumn and winter' that considered 'recent changes in our national outlook upon religion, politics, science and economics.'[28] Even at this point, the series was troublesome: Siepmann had permission from John Reith, the Director-General, who remained particularly concerned that Nicolson was a potentially 'subversive influence'.[29] Reith noted in his own diary that he was '[redacted]'.[30]

Nicolson and Reith's diaries for the year trace Nicolson's progress developing the talks while consulting with the BBC. The two were never comfortable bedfellows: Nicolson worked on a synopsis in June, and then discussed it with Reith at a lunch at the Carlton Club on 29 June. Impressions of this meeting were interpreted in startlingly divergent ways. Nicolson:

> Lunch with Sir John Reith. The man's head is made entirely of bone and it is impossible to talk to him as to an intelligent being. He believes firmly in the ethical mission of the BBC and tries to induce me to modify my talks in such a way as to induce the illiterate members of the population to read Milton instead of going on bicycle excursions. I tell him that as my talk series centres upon literature of the last ten years, it would be a little difficult to say much about Milton. He misses this argument and remains wistfully hopeful that I will be able to introduce a Miltonic flavour into my reference to D. H. Lawrence.[31]

And Reith:

 [32]

Nicolson's account is wittier and more vivid; not for nothing is he the literary critic, and Reith the corporate executive. The disagreement between the two clearly concerns the social value of the talks: the BBC's 'ethical mission', as Nicolson puts it. In particular, these diary entries document Reith's demand that Nicolson must take part in this ethical mission: there must be a 'good effect'. Reith's idea for the end result – more Milton, fewer bicycle excursions – is perhaps understandably derided by Nicolson. Reith's personal intervention in this series was unusual but symbolic of his role in developing this 'ethical mission'. In these early years under John Reith, the BBC developed an ethos of 'public service broadcasting' that became (even by 1931) so central to the corporation's identity that alternatives seemed unthinkable. David Cardiff and Paddy Scannell describe this ethos as follows:

> there was an overriding concern for the maintenance of high standards and a unified policy towards the whole of the programme service supplied. The service must not be used for entertainment purposes alone. Broadcasting had a responsibility to bring into the greatest possible number of homes in the fullest degree all that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement. The preservation of a high moral tone, the avoidance of the vulgar and the harmful, was of paramount importance. Broadcasting should give a lead to public taste rather than pander to it.[33]

Avery's work on Reithianism – as this ethos has become known – emphasizes that Reithian thought influenced not just the BBC but British literary culture more generally. He sees this as an ethical programme that writers and critics on the radio – and they were many – were forced to negotiate, as they encountered an institution devoted to 'elevating the nation's standard of conduct through a quasi-Arnoldian dissemination of culture to the listening masses.'[34]

Like any large organization, there was room for dissent, internal rivalries, and petty office politics. But the shared enthusiasm for Reith's mission was, at times, extraordinary. Lionel Fielden, a key early programme producer (and no fan of Reith) argued that the broadcasters 'may have been silly, but we were never complacent. And, God save us, we really believed that broadcasting could revolutionise human opinion'.[35] Richard Lambert – again, despite his comments about censorship above – wrote that

> I remember being thrilled by a remark made to me by Sir John 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! It was in this ambitious spirit that the BBC grew; and so long as it lasted, there was no limit to the devotion of the employees of the BBC, many of whom gave their whole time and thought, in leisure as well as at the office, to the furtherance of the service.[36]

On the other hand, Avery emphasizes that not all contributors were necessarily paid up advocates of Reithianism: most members of Bloomsbury and H. G. Wells (for instance) opposed the corporation's 'voice of moral reason', while others such as T. S. Eliot found that 'the BBC's stated moral and cultural agenda dovetailed more smoothly with their own.'[37]

Placing Nicolson on this spectrum is complex. To be sure, he poured scorn on Reith's emphasis on the BBC's ethical mission when recording the June meeting. The following month, however, he would write of

> how profoundly I loathe the working classes and how deeply I desire their improvement. I am prepared to devote all my energies to securing that these people become a little less suspicious, ignorant, stupid, resentful, unenlightened, and unhappy.[38]

It is difficult not to see echoes of the Reithian drive to improve a mass audience that it has no great liking for or understanding of; indeed, as Finn Fordham has suggested, Nicolson's hatred of the working classes as articulated here is more violent and implacable than anything Reith wrote.[39] Sympathies for BBC aims and conduct – together with shades of opposition – are clearer in a *Spectator* article Nicolson wrote during the December dispute over Joyce.

> How could I mention, still less recommend, books which in the eyes of Lord Brentford deserved to be suppressed by the police? How, on the other hand, could I talk about modernist literature without laying some stress upon its two most remarkable exponents? The problem illustrates the dilemma which a National Institution has to face when it tries to be progressive. I make no complaints: The BBC in this matter behaved with intelligence, forbearance, and good sense. They saw, although with spiritual agony, my point of view. I was allowed to mention Lawrence and even—o tempora, o mores!—Joyce. But they did not pretend to like the whole business. And I also see their point of view.[40]

In later life, Nicolson went further, and 'had to admit that Reith had been right because it was forbidden to name on "the wireless" any book prohibited by the Home Office.'[41] One wonders if this perspective is related to the fact that Nicolson later became a BBC governor.[42]

These various pronouncements complicate the tempting possibility of placing Nicolson on the Reithian spectrum. More subtly, thinking in this way obscures the extent to

which Reithianism itself was not a stable doctrine. It is certainly possible to gain an understanding of Reith's personal ideology – his 1924 tract, *Broadcast Over Britain*, is a key text.[43] This can then be measured against individual broadcasters. At the level of the broadcast, however, the value of this measure is not always clear, and it is vitally important to distinguish Reith's autocratic desire to decide exactly how the BBC should speak from an understanding of how the BBC actually spoke. Pamela Caughie's important work on radio 'passing' raises the idea that broadcast voices – audible but not visible – could destabilize questions of identity: on the radio, 'subjectivity becomes *envoiced*' and the question of distinguishing between Nicolson as a dissenting broadcaster and some archetypal idea of the Reithian voice is not necessarily clear.[44] Put another way, when Nicolson came to the microphone, for thirty minutes he *was* the voice of the BBC, and a nearly monologic one at that, as the corporation only ran one national programme at this time. Reith's concern with the 'good effect' of Nicolson's talks is not merely an attempt to hammer his own ideology into Nicolson's head – though it was undoubtedly also that – but a very real awareness that once he came to speak, Nicolson's voice would pass for Reithianism. The process by which Nicolson wrote these talks and the BBC insisted on changes is not merely that of censorship, but of an uncomfortable negotiation from which the Reithian voice emerged.

Returning to that lunch between Nicolson and Reith on 29 June, it is clear that despite disagreement, both parties had to take the other's perspective into account. Nicolson may have disagreed with Reith, but left a few days later for a week's holiday and began writing a pamphlet, to be published in September as an introduction to the talks; it is difficult not to see this process as informed, even if reluctantly, by Reith's firm belief in the ethical mission of the BBC.[45] Nicolson was well aware – as would later be made clear – that Reith's opinion was not one he could afford to wholly ignore.

At the same time, Reith takes note of Nicolson's intent. His personal involvement is substantial: he writes of reading Nicolson's pamphlet on 11 July.[46] He comments on the need for a '[redacted]' to supervise '[redacted]', and then to order the books on

Nicolson's reading list '[redacted].'[47] He continued to interfere with the talks through July, reading Nicolson's recommended books, meeting Desmond MacCarthy '[redacted]', and complaining that he has been spending '[redacted] time on the 'Changing World' series.[48]

This is not quite collaboration: Nicolson and Reith were not so much working together as working concurrently. But underpinning the work done by both was the understanding that the talks were to be written and directed by Nicolson in a way that was acceptable to Reith: despite his constant attempts to interfere and influence, Reith could not write and deliver the talks himself. When it came to the microphone, the autocratic desires of Reithian thought could only ever go so far: Nicolson would write the words, and Nicolson would speak them. This freedom is not insignificant.

More substantive controversy emerged on 12 August, when Nicolson met with Roger Eckersley, the Director of Programmes, to discuss concerns raised by J. H. Whitley, the BBC Chairman.

> Dash off again to Savoy Hill to interview Roger Eckersley about my talks on changes in modern literature. He says that the chairman of the Council, Mr W[h]itley the ex-speaker [of the Commons], is horrified at my list of recommended books and wishes me to cut out 'South Wind' 'Decline and Fall' and all reference whatsoever to Lawrence and Joyce. I say that either my list stands as it is or it is cut out altogether. That this point about Joyce and Lawrence must be made clear before we go any further. My terms are to explain what changes have taken place in English literature since 1910. I cannot discuss that subject without putting in the forefront the two most important innovators – Joyce and Lawrence. If I am not allowed to mention these people I shall refuse to deliver the course. They must get someone else.[49]

Somewhat to Nicolson's surprise, as he noted in a letter written to Sylvia Beach in December, the BBC relented, and allowed Nicolson to remove the list entirely, rather than forcing him to bowdlerize it. They also required that some changes be made to accommodate school groups who might be listening in (Siepmann's role as Director of Adult Education, not Talks as such, was key).[50]

This was very clearly an abrupt point of conflict, but it should be noted that it all took place behind closed doors: clear instructions on permissible material given before the talks

were finalized, written and broadcast. Nicolson suggested that the eventual reason for the late, public censorship – precisely the thing that this meeting was designed to prevent – was a minor transcription error: at some point in these hurried changes, made at Whitley's bequest, Joyce's name slipped out of the summary.[51] Thus when Nicolson submitted his talk on Joyce for approval in late November, the BBC claimed to have been taken unawares.

Whitley's comments remind one of Raymond Postgate's list of requirements: never say anything new or unexpected. Nicolson is perceived to have crossed some sort of line, although the nature of that line is never made clear. This incident does feature the stock motifs of censorship-as-battle: the shocked board member, the edict, the principled stand. To an extent, as Nicolson's surprise indicates, this expectation is not fulfilled: Nicolson was allowed to remove his list, rather than pruning it. And it should also be noted that Whitley's comments – for which we only have Nicolson's version – strongly imply that Nicolson must 'cut out … all reference whatsoever to Lawrence and Joyce.'[52] That is, not only the recommended books but the talk and accompanying pamphlet too. Neither of these came to pass. Nicolson did, of course, broadcast on Lawrence and Joyce, and they did feature in his pamphlet.[53]

Whether this was subterfuge or misunderstanding, the talks themselves reflect more the awkward negotiations between Nicolson and Reith than the more abrupt demands made by Whitley on Nicolson. He intended to discuss 'how we should approach the difficult task of reading modernist books'.[54] That first person plural – locating broadcaster and listener as facing a task together – is carefully deployed. Here is Nicolson opening his first talk:

> In this series of talks I shall try and explain to you in, I hope, amiable language what is the attitude towards life adopted by those writers who, in my opinion, reflect the spirit of the age. These writers themselves, as is the way with writers, have been at no pains to explain to the great public either their methods or their intentions. They have written for themselves. As a result they are apt to be regarded as patronising, self-centred, aloof and incomprehensible. People call them 'highbrows'. Whereas in fact they are alert and human creatures whose sole fault, perhaps, is that they are oversensitive to change.[55]

That hope of 'amiable language' is crucial. While always keen to emphasise the importance of modernist literature, his approach on the air is to recognise confusion and hostility; to take the case of the sceptical reader of modernism seriously, as a legitimate and understandable

critical opinion. James Lees-Milne, briefly discussing Nicolson's work on this series, suggests that he 'was attempting to act as interpreter between the modern writers and the public who often find them difficult'.[56] Later in this first talk, Nicolson anticipates the potentially controversial nature of his talks, noting that if he mentions Joyce and Lawrence 'many of his readers' – clearly, a change made for the *Listener* version – 'will be profoundly shocked.' His response to this is not to pour scorn on or ignore the audience, but to recognise the concern: 'I beg them to bear with me and not imagine that it is my desire to pervert the mind of England.'[57] The reach of the BBC into millions of homes is obliquely referenced, and Nicolson presents himself as a broadcaster able to be trusted with that responsibility: 'bear with me'.

It is difficult not to see this as a thoroughly Reithian form of literary criticism: patrician, condescending, but concerned and engaged with the genuine possibility of providing a cultural education for millions of listeners. The *ethical* dimension seems clear. But even if difficulties are acknowledged, this Reithianism encourages the reading of modernist books. Writing on Eliot and Huxley, Nicolson suggests that 'Many people, as is natural, expect to be soothed by their favourite authors. … They like to read pleasant books about nice people. They do not like to read unpleasant books about nasty people. I fully sympathise with this point of view'.[58] On the attack made by Samuel Butler on the Victorian era in *The Way of All Flesh*, 'Admittedly his attack was biased and sometimes unfair. Admittedly there is still much to be said upon the other side'.[59] In the fifth talk, Nicolson responds to criticism made of his talks by Hugh Walpole:

> He [Walpole] heaps coals of burning fire upon my head. I have a great respect for Mr Hugh Walpole, who in more than one way has rendered valuable services to literature. I admire his character and I have often admired his books. His is a genial, healthy, generous influence in a world which tends to become neurotic and mean. Yet, in spite of all this, I do not feel that Mr Walpole has fully understood the purport of my argument or has fully grasped the suggestions at which I am aiming.[60]

Even in disagreement, Nicolson's tone is careful and appreciative, emphasising his admiration for Walpole before moving to respond to his criticisms. But he does respond: this remains a full throated argument for modernism.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this conciliatory approach to literary criticism was hardly seen positively by many of Nicolson's contemporaries. Indeed, Hugh Walpole's aforementioned article in *John O'London's Weekly* was cautiously appreciative, describing Nicolson's broadcasts as 'wise and temperate' and 'of very real importance', while expressing concerns about the influence of Joyce and Lawrence in particular, suggesting that this 'school of violence and obscenity is beginning to pass all bounds'.[61] Virginia Woolf did not hear 'dear old Harold' speak, but worried (in a letter to Walpole) that 'if as you say, he sweeps us all into separate schools, then he's utterly and damnably wrong … how tired I am of being caged with Aldous [Huxley], Joyce and Lawrence'.[62] More trenchant criticisms were to come from F. R. Leavis, who in 1932 noted that the 'notorious' Nicolson talks were notable largely for 'their extravagant absurdity, their vulgarity and their sciolism' and that Nicolson 'has obviously not the first qualification for the undertaking upon which he had embarked with such assurance.'[63] Leavis's problem with Nicolson's criticism is closely associated to the conciliatory, Reithian tone he takes: Leavis demands, instead, that criticism should focus on damning Walpole and Priestley before it even begins to offer praise.[64] Criticism of this type was, of course, published by Leavis in *Scrutiny*. But he misunderstands entirely what Nicolson was able to produce, an ephemeral but extraordinary series of moments – six hours over twelve weeks in 1931 – where the BBC became a place for millions of people to hear about Eliot and Woolf, Lawrence and Joyce. The significance of Reithian radio arguing for modernism should not and cannot be denied.

Nicolson's ability to reconcile arguments for modernism with the demands of the BBC only went so far. Whitley was again the figure to intervene following Nicolson's talk on Lawrence on 3 November.

> It seems that Whitley the chairman was horrified at my recommending D. H. Lawrence and has refused to let my name figure on the programme again. Also all mention of novels on the wireless is to be suppressed and the political view of speakers are to be examined so as to exclude all 'left wing thoughts'. This is sheer reaction and suppression of speech.[65]

One wonders if Whitley was directly following up on his instructions in August that all reference to Lawrence and Joyce must be removed. In any case, nothing material seems to

come of this threat that Nicolson cannot further 'feature'; he broadcasts the following week on Woolf (10 November), and then a further programme on 17 November.[66] This broadcast was in fact made in violation of changes made by the BBC censor: as Nicolson explained in a letter to Roger Eckersley the following day, he received unapproved changes to his script five minutes before he began to broadcast, which he proceeded to ignore.[67] At the end of this programme, he announced that the next broadcast – 24 November – would discuss Joyce. He spent 21 November 'busy all day doing a careful talk on Joyce for the wireless', aware that he was at the limit of the BBC's ability to accommodate his wishes.[68] The day before Nicolson's talk on Joyce, Charles Siepmann visited him to relay that the talk would not '[redacted]', and the full import of Nicolson's accidental dropping of Joyce's name became clear: the corporation felt that the announcement (on 17 November) had been sprung upon them, and Nicolson was forced to 'improvise' a talk for 24 November. As he wrote in his diary, 'The worst of it is that I did not put Ulysses in my synopsis and thus they have a certain technical right on their side.'[69]

Negotiations over precisely what Nicolson could say about Joyce took place in two stages. First, on the morning of 24 November, Nicolson saw Eckersley and Siepmann:

> We discuss the Joyce question with calm friendliness. I say that it is damaging to my reputation to discuss modern literature without mentioning Joyce, or to discuss Joyce without mentioning Ulysses. We agree on a compromise whereby I shall speak of Ulysses only to say it is banned, and thereafter discuss Joyce's technique. And finally we shall get hold of the gramophone record of Haveth Childers and let Joyce speak for himself. Roger [Eckersley] will put this up to the D. G. They both confess that my talks have led to very few protests and much appreciation. It seems that the Athenaeum members grouse to Reith.[70]

Even if the meeting was friendly, it was recorded formally. A memorandum of seven numbered points was written by Siepmann and sent to Eckersley, with a copy to Nicolson, stating that he was not permitted to make '[redacted]', that the discussion of Joyce must be '[redacted]' of a discussion on fiction and censorship, but that Nicolson is permitted

[redacted].[71]

This last, in particular, is extraordinary, as Sylvia Beach suggested when she wrote to Nicolson following the talks.[72] Nicolson has limits on how he can discuss Joyce, certainly. But he is permitted to state, on the air, that the limits are there. Thus the nature of the discussion of Joyce on 8 December is presented openly as a negotiated product, with the spectre of some alternate talk on Joyce – freer, unconstrained – hovering almost in the background.

Crucially, these limits – presented so rigidly in the seven-point memo – in fact proved to be flexible. Roger Eckersley wrote to Nicolson on 2 December, mentioning the memo and wishing to make the corporation's position '[redacted]'. While acknowledging Nicolson's argument that 'no survey of modern literature would be complete without reference to his [Joyce's] contribution to literary technique', the line taken is slightly harder. Eckersley writes that '[redacted]', and that '[redacted]'. He requested an assurance that the '[redacted]' will have '[redacted]'.'[73]

In reply, Nicolson argued that 'it would be dishonourable on my part to set out to discuss changes in English literature since 1900 and to make but an "incidental" reference to the author who is universally recognised as the most important innovator that we have produced in this century.' He made a carefully worded promise not to mention *Ulysses* and threatened to request to be released from his contract 'irrespect of the two talks which still remain to be delivered', if he were further restricted from discussing Joyce. This worked: Eckersley wrote a short note the following day to confirm that '[redacted]'.'[74] Nicolson spoke; he received congratulations from Joyce, Monnier and Beach; he gave the last lecture on 15 December, noting that it was perhaps his last talk ever for the BBC, and that this was 'Rather sad.'[75] His last diary entry for the year noted that he had earned 'the enmity of the BBC'.[76]

These intense negotiations over Joyce and *Ulysses* had a confusing and bad-tempered public backlash. At around the same time, Hilda Matheson resigned from her position as

Head of Talks, and reports issued from the BBC that the censorship of talks was to be tightened. Matheson had been instrumental in setting up the Talks department; Scannell and Cardiff describe her as 'a woman of courage, originality and culture', well liked by her subordinates who made the department a 'live, energetic and humane place to work.'[77] Her resignation is frequently connected directly to Reith's censorship of Nicolson, but as Reith's diary notes her resignation was handed in on 13 November, prior to these events.[78] A draft letter of resignation suggests that she was concerned about a 'reversal' of the Talks policy she had built up, based on 'the expression of all the most important currents of thought on both sides of the line, preserving of course a carefully balanced diversity.' This was being undermined by the 'elimination of reviews of new novels' and 'a severer censorship on speakers'.[79] As Michael Carney concurs, Matheson found the changing atmosphere of the Talks Department intolerable.[80]

The exact reasons for Matheson's resignation matter because they demonstrate how the 'New Spirit in Literature' talks were dragged in to a wider debate about the BBC and the place of modernism in public life. When Nicolson broadcast on Joyce on 8 December, he wrote that 'There is a great fuss about Hilda resigning and all the intellectuals are up in arms.'[81] In fact, press reaction to this was significant but confused. The *New Statesman and Nation* grasped the point by writing generally of attempts by BBC management to exercise greater control over talks.[82] But *The Times* printed a series of letters that configured the debate in now familiar terms: whether or not modern literature should be on the BBC.[83] The poet Alfred Noyes's long letter was largely an argument against modernism, noted by Joyce: 'Mr Alfred Noyes has started a polemic about me in *The Times*'.[84] The debate ended with a letter condemning the actions of the BBC, signed by forty prominent writers and publishers, including T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, Hugh Walpole, Jonathan Cape, Walter De La Mare, J. B. Priestley, George Bernard Shaw, Rebecca West, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf.[85]

While the debate over the place of modern literature in public life was a legitimate one, in this instance the press reaction oversimplified and obscured the true nature of what

had happened when Nicolson came to discuss Joyce on the BBC. From the very first days after the broadcast, the image of progressive critic stifled by regressive broadcasting corporation was firmly established; the only decision open to critics was whether they should situate themselves behind the BBC and Alfred Noyes, or the larger group of writers and publishers concerned with freedom of speech. As the documentary evidence demonstrates, the BBC had problems with Nicolson, but had agreed that when discussing modern literature, modernism (including Joyce) had to be discussed; 'The New Spirit in Modern Literature' had, after all, been commissioned by the BBC as part of its autumn educational programme on 'The Changing World'.

This confusion obscures precisely what Nicolson managed to achieve at the BBC. As I have emphasised throughout, Nicolson was able to make his case for Joyce and modernism to Reith and Eckersley, and discuss Joyce on BBC radio. He was able to play a recording: for four minutes of BBC air on 8 December 1931, Joyce read from *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. And despite making the claim to Eckersley that he would not mention *Ulysses*, Nicolson did precisely that. In his letter to Eckersley, Nicolson proposes the following conditions:

> I quite see the point that 'Ulysses' being banned by the Home Office cannot be specifically mentioned in a talk upon the wireless. I have not mentioned it. There is not a single passage in my work which is quoted from any book which has not been published in this country.[86]

The implication is that he hasn't quoted from or discussed *Ulysses*. But consider the following passage from the end of the *Listener* version of his talk.

> Joyce wants to describe a man walking along the beach. On the inferential system the experience of this man would be recorded more or less as follows:
>
> > When Stephen reached the beach the tide was already nearing high water mark. The sea stretched before him in a line of blue and silver melting into a diaphanous distance. The incoming tide deposited on the shingle a fringe of jetsam—an old green kettle there, there a bundle of wet straw, and here an old rusty boot. 'How strange', he said to himself, 'are the tricks one's vision plays! I *feel* colour, but I know about, and therefore *deduce* solids. I feel the blue and silver beauty of this June morning. Yet I recognise that old boot as a boot because I remember having seen boots before! It is the same with sound. One's perceptions are an interchange between cognition and memory.' Thus musing, the man walked on along the beach. His shoes crunched on the dry shingle...
>
> and so on. Here you have the direct, continuous, conscious narrative of the old-fashioned technique. Now here is how Joyce treats the same experience:

> Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, sea-spawn and sea-wrack, the nearing tide, the rusty boot. Snotgreen, blue-silver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his science against them, sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, maestro di color che canno. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it it is a gate. If not, a door. Shut your eyes and see.
>
> Obviously the former method is more informative than the latter. But it is far less interesting. And far less suggestive.[87]

As readers of *Ulysses* will recognise, the second indented passage is the first paragraph of 'Proteus', quoted somewhat inaccurately.[88] It is also certain that Nicolson read this on air: as Joyce wrote in a letter immediately following the talk, Nicolson 'quoted passages from *U*[*lysses*] and put on the A. L. P. disc.'[89] Crucially, Nicolson's claims to Eckersley remain technically correct: he does not mention *Ulysses* at any point (he does not acknowledge the source of his quotation), and the quotation *is* taken from a book published in the United Kingdom. This particular section of 'Proteus' was published in March 1919 in the *Egoist*.[90] It seems most likely – although extraordinary – that Nicolson slipped a quotation from *Ulysses* into his talk, guessing (correctly) that those assessing his script would not recognise it as such, and carefully phrasing his letter to Eckersley to leave himself free to read the quotation on air.

As well as his analysis of Joyce's work, Nicolson was thus able to present two primary texts on 8 December. First, he negotiated permission to play a recording of Joyce reading from a recent publication. Second, he slipped in a long quotation from Joyce's most infamous work, achieving via subterfuge what he was not able to negotiate. The radical nature of these two achievements – but especially the second – should not be denied. On 8 December 1931, millions of listeners heard from *Ulysses*. In many ways, then, the opposition of Reith and BBC censors remains a valuable way to understand this relationship: Nicolson wrote in his diary that he had earned 'the enmity of the BBC'. Perhaps he should hardly have been surprised.

However, the radical nature of Nicolson's broadcast, and the presence of subterfuge, should not obscure the fact that this broadcast remains a thoroughly Reithian act, if not one that Reith (or Whitley) would have approved of. After all, if the intention of Reithianism is to

provide radio broadcasts that would educate as wide a public as possible – to identify 'all that was best' and give a public access to it – how does one discuss a novel such as *Ulysses*? Nicolson was not the only broadcaster to mention Joyce, and his approach based around long quotation was not the only one available. In 1932, Desmond MacCarthy focused on translating Joyce's language.

> he [Joyce] will speak of the 'rugaby-moon', which is 'rugby' plus 'lullaby'. The suggestion that the moon is seen rolling between clouds like a ball between the muddy feet of scrum, and at the same time gazed upon in a sentimental mood. This is very far-fetched. A great deal of this new prose is unintelligible.[91]

The issue here is not simply that MacCarthy evaluates Joyce negatively. Instead, the problem is the suggestion that Joyce's language is 'unintelligible', and only has meaning once MacCarthy as critic is able to decode it. MacCarthy's sentence pulls 'rugaby' apart and considers what he considers to be the two components of the word in two succeeding clauses, looking at 'the muddy feet of scrum' and then a 'sentimental mood'. Drawing in particular on Leonard Diepeveen's work on modernist difficulty, this is difficulty rendered as unnecessary obscurity, a barrier to readerly understanding without inherent value.[92]

Nicolson's approach is very different. He is, once more, oriented entirely towards the sceptical reader, but he attempts not to explain or translate, but to justify Joyce's difficulty. Crucially, he inverts MacCarthy's attempt at translation by presenting his own rewritten version of *Ulysses* first and Joyce's text second: his words are thus not Joyce decoded, but Joyce reduced to something inferior. As he puts it, 'far less interesting. And far less suggestive.' He suggests that Joycean prose must not be translated into something more readily understandable, and the reader is asked to accept Joyce's prose on its own terms, offering a unique and irreplaceable literary experience. The instruction given is thus fundamentally subversive: even though *Ulysses* is not named, the reader is encouraged to go away and read a banned book.

The power of Nicolson's analysis is that it is at once subversive and Reithian. It is still oriented towards a sceptical public; it still identifies a piece of culture as part of 'all that is best', and attempts to disseminate it; it is still, in certain ways, condescending: Nicolson's

authority as reader-of-Joyce is unmistakeable and unshakeable. By holding up Joycean prose as untranslatable, Nicolson attempts to give to his listeners not a decoded interpretation, but the reading practices necessary to appreciate modernist texts: an understanding, in other words, that *Ulysses* might be complex and hard to read for legitimate aesthetic reasons. Moreover, the ideal form of education imagined here is liberating rather than didactic: by attempting to communicate reading practices, rather than specific interpretations, Nicolson is theoretically encouraging his listeners to go away and read by themselves, on their own terms; 'all that is best' has become not simply instruction in the nature and meaning of canonically great literature, but the canonisation of the informed and empowered reader of difficult literature. Reithianism itself has been revised.

This is of course hardly a typical moment in the history of Reithian radio, and the education suggested here is highly idealized: Nicolson's broadcast on Joyce is best understood, perhaps, as a limit case. But it remains deeply significant that this form of cultural education – so different from what Reith envisaged – could be propagated under a Reithian banner. These broadcasts, then, are not only significant moments in the early history of modernist criticism – though they are also that. Nicolson's work with the BBC throughout 1931 posits intriguing questions about the nature of state broadcasting, and the extent to which it could ever be controlled by institutional censors. More fundamentally, it troubles an understanding of the ways in which public intellectuals related to institutional, censorious power. Nicolson's achievements with these talks were significant; some of his critical acts took place despite Reithian interference, but more arguably occurred because of or alongside the corporation's devotion to public service broadcasting.

Nicolson's radical criticism was borne of its closeness, not distance or opposition, to institutional power, and to censorial power at that. As Celia Marshik has suggested, the act of censorship could be an energizing prospect for modernist writers; for Nicolson, the prospect of having to work alongside the censor – to appease the Whitleys of the corporation –

produced a subversive, Reithian criticism that did, in the end, 'approach the difficult task of reading modernist books.'[93]

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[1] Letter, Harold Nicolson to Roger Eckersley, 18 November 1931. Oxford, Balliol College Archives and Manuscripts, Harold Nicolson Papers, Diary 1931. Nicolson's diary consists of typewritten diary pages with interleaved material. Hereafter, all references to the Nicolson papers refer to the 1931 volume of the diary; diary entries are cited by date, and interleaved material by any identifying markers. I was first introduced to Nicolson's unpublished diary, and specifically to many of the extracts quoted in this essay, in a paper given by Finn Fordham at the British Association of Modernist Studies 'Modernism Now!' conference in June 2014.

[2] Gordon Bowker, *James Joyce: A New Biography* (New York, 2012), 426.

[3] Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 27 November 1931. *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. S. Gilbert and R. Ellmann, 3 vols (London, 1957-1966), 3.234.

[4] Alistair McCleery, 'A Hero's Homecoming: "Ulysses" in Britain, 1922-37', *Publishing History,* 46 (1999), 67-93 (69-72).

[5] Rachel Potter, *Obscene Modernism: Literary Censorship and Experiment, 1900-1940* (Oxford, 2013), 95. McCleery notes that the pressure on Leavis was uneven. While the Home Office was keen to pursue the case, the police investigation was at best 'fairly perfunctory'. See McCleery, 'Hero's Homecoming', 74.

[6] McCleery, 'Hero's Homecoming', 75, 81-4.

[7] Raymond Postgate, broadcast from Moscow, 1935, quoted in John Postgate and Mary Postgate, *A Stomach for Dissent: The Life of Raymond Postgate: 1896-1971* (Keele, 1994), 174. Ironically, given his comments on censorship, Postgate is broadcasting on Soviet state radio.

[8] Postgate was sacked from his position as radio critic at the *Listener* after he criticized (mildly) comments made on-air by the prominent economist Sir Josiah Stamp; see Debra Rae Cohen, 'Intermediality and the Problem of the *Listener*', *Modernism/modernity,* 19 (2012), 569-92 (584-5).

[9] Todd Avery, *Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922-1938* (Aldershot, 2006), 21.

[10] Andrew Crisell makes the startling claim that 'After 1928 no programmes were heard by fewer than a million listeners and some attracted 15 million'. See Andrew Crisell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting*, 2nd edn (London, 2002), 22.

[11] See James Joyce, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (New York, 1928), 57-8. Joyce's recording from *Anna Livia Plurabelle* – made by C. K. Ogden in Paris – has two sides. Nicolson discussed with the BBC which side to play, and decided on the shorter excerpt, which is the second side of the recording. See letters, Roger Eckersley to Harold Nicolson, 2 December 1931, and Harold Nicolson to Roger Eckersley, 3 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[12] Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature: The Significance of James Joyce', *The Listener*, 16 December 1931, 1062. See telegram from Adrienne Monnier, 9 December 1931, letter from James Joyce, 9 December 1931, and letter from Sylvia Beach, 10 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[13] Kate Whitehead, 'Broadcasting Bloomsbury', *Yearbook of English Studies,* 20 (1990), 121-31 (122).

[14] James Lees-Milne, *Harold Nicolson: A Biography*, vol. 2 (London, 1988), 22.

[15] Victoria Glendinning, *Vita: the Life of V. Sackville-West* (London, 1998), 246.

[16] Michael Carney, *Stoker: The Life of Hilda Matheson* (Llangynog, 1999), 71-4.

[17] Bowker, *James Joyce*, 426.

[18] Avery, *Radio Modernism*, 47. Avery has conflated two controversial talks: on Lawrence, on 3 November, which was criticized by the BBC (and by J. H. Whitley, the chairman, not John Reith) only after the broadcast, and the aforementioned broadcast on Joyce. See Nicolson's diary, 3, 8, 23 November. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[19] McCleery, 'Hero's Homecoming', 78-9.

[20] Christina L. Baade, *Victory Through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York, 2012), 21.

[21] Daniel Ryan Morse, 'Only Connecting? E. M. Forster, Empire Broadcasting and the Ethics of Distance', *Journal of Modern Literature,* 34 (2011), 87-105 (97).

[22] Ibid. On the Third Programme, see Kate Whitehead, *The Third Programme: A Literary History* (Oxford, 1989).

[23] D. R. Cohen, M. Coyle, and J. Lewty (eds), *Broadcasting Modernism* (Gainesville, 2009); M. Feldman, E. Tonning, and H. Mead (eds), *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era* (London, 2014).

[24] Celia Marshik, *British Modernism and Censorship* (Cambridge, 2006).

[25] D. Bradshaw and R. Potter (eds), *Prudes on the Prowl: Fiction and Obscenity in England, 1850 to the Present Day* (Oxford, 2013).

[26] Potter, *Obscene Modernism*, 4-5.

[27] Richard S. Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality: an Impression of the BBC from Within* (London, 1940), 144.

[28] Diary, 30 May 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[29] According to Siepmann, in Nicolson's diary. Diary, 30 May 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[30] John Reith, Diary May 1931, 63. Caversham, BBC Written Archives Centre, S60/5. Reith's unpublished diary is recorded by month, not day; further references are cited by month and page number.

[31] Diary, 29 June 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[32] Diary, May 1931, 63. BBC WAC S60/5.

[33] David Cardiff and Paddy Scannell, *A Social History of British Broadcasting: Volume One 1922-1939, Serving the Nation* (Oxford, 1991), 7.

[34] Avery, *Radio Modernism*, 12.

[35] Lionel Fielden, *The Natural Bent* (London, 1960), 100.

[36] Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality*, 44.

[37] Avery, *Radio Modernism*, 31.

[38] Diary, 15 September 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[39] Private conversation with the author.

[40] Harold Nicolson, 'Are the BBC Too Cautious?', *The Spectator*, 21 November 1931, 670.

[41] Bowker, *James Joyce*, 426.

[42] Ibid. 569 n.48.

[43] John Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London, 1924).

[44] Pamela Caughie, 'Audible Identities: Passing and Sound Technologies', *Humanities Research,* 16 (2010), 91-109 (94). Original italics.

[45] Diary, 4-13 July 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers. For the published pamphlet, see Harold Nicolson, *The New Spirit in Literature* (London, 1931).

[46] Diary, July 1931, 101. BBC WAC S60/5.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Diary, July 1931, 101, 105. BBC WAC S60/5.

[49] Diary, 12 August. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[50] Letter, Harold Nicolson to Sylvia Beach, 2 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Diary, 12 August. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[53] See Nicolson, *The New Spirit in Literature*, 34-6.

[54] Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature - I: The Approach to the Intellectuals', *The Listener*, 30 September 1931, 545. Only one of Nicolson's talk scripts has survived in the BBC archives: see Caversham, BBC WAC, T375. Therefore, when discussing Nicolson's talks, I quote from the version published in the *Listener*, the BBC's weekly magazine that published edited versions of talk scripts. Scripts were cut for length and tweaked to capture a more journalistic tone, thus the problematic nature of referring to these articles as representing Nicolson's talks must be acknowledged. Mary Lago, Linda K. Hughes, and Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, when discussing their edition of E. M. Forster's radio talks, discuss the need to differentiate between script for broadcast, broadcast performance (which might deviate from the text) and the transformation into *Listener* article. See *The BBC Talks of E. M. Forster, 1929-1960: a Selected Edition*, ed. M. Lago, L. K. Hughes, and E. M. Walls (Columbia, 2008), 13-14. For a further discussion of the important and critically neglected role of the *Listener*, see Cohen, 'Intermediality'.

[55] Nicolson, 'The Approach', 545.

[56] Lees-Milne, *Harold Nicolson*, 22.

[57] Nicolson, 'The Approach', 546.

[58] Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature - III: Are Modern Writers Selfish?', *The Listener*, 21 October 1931, 684.

[59] Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature - IV: From Romanticism to Realism', *The Listener*, 28 October 1931, 738.

[60] Harold Nicolson, 'The New Spirit in Literature - V: In Defence of the "Moderns"', *The Listener*, 4 November 1931, 780.

[61] Hugh Walpole, 'The New Spirit in English Literature', *John O'London's Weekly*, 24 October 1931, 100-10.

[62] Virginia Woolf to Hugh Walpole, 8 November 1931. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. N. Nicolson and J. Trautmann, 6 vols (London, 1975-1980), 4.402.

[63] F. R. Leavis, 'What's Wrong With Criticism?', *Scrutiny*, September 1932, 143.

[64] Ibid. 144.

[65] Diary, 8 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[66] Diary, 10 November, 17 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[67] Letter, Harold Nicolson to Roger Eckersley, 18 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[68] Diary, 21 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[69] Diary, 23 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[70] Diary, 24 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers. The recording played was *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, not *Haveth Childers Everywhere*.

[71] Memorandum, Charles Siepmann to Roger Eckersley, 25 November 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[72] Letter, Sylvia Beach to Harold Nicolson, 10 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[73] Letter, Roger Eckersley to Harold Nicolson, 2 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[74] Letter, Roger Eckersley to Harold Nicolson, 4 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[75] Diary, 15 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[76] Diary, 31 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers. This entry is partially reproduced in Nigel Nicolson's selection of Harold Nicolson's diary; see Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1930-39*, ed. N. Nicolson (London, 1966), 99.

[77] Cardiff and Scannell, *A Social History*, 153.

[78] Diary, November 1931, 129. BBC WAC S60/5.

[79] Reading, University of Reading Special Collections, Nancy Astor Collection, MS1416/1/1/962, 'Draft Letter'.

[80] Carney, *Stoker*, 75-83.

[81] Diary, 8 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[82] 'The Battle of Savoy Hill', *The New Statesman and Nation*, 12 December 1931, 736-7.

[83] Edith Lyttelton, 'BBC Talks', *The Times*, 11 December 1931, 15; Alfred Noyes, 'Talks About Books', *The Times*, 14 December 1931, 8; Lucy Masterman, 'BBC Talks', *The Times*, 15 December 1931, 8; Douglas Jerrold, 'BBC Talks', *The Times*, 16 December 1931, 8.

[84] James Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 18 December 1931. *Letters*, 235. For a further discussion of Noyes's role in this debate, see Alistair McCleery and David Finkelstein, 'Alfred, Lord Noyes, and "Ulysses"', *James Joyce Quarterly,* 39 (2002), 558-62.

[85] 'BBC Talks on Fiction: The Change of Policy', *The Times*, 22 December 1931, 6.

[86] Letter, Harold Nicolson to Roger Eckersley, 3 December 1931. Balliol, Harold Nicolson Papers.

[87] Nicolson, 'James Joyce', 1062.

[88] The most glaring mistake is that 'sconce' has been replaced with 'science'.

[89] James Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, [7] December 1931. Joyce, *Letters*, 1.308. Gilbert's date of 7 December for this letter is not possible: Nicolson's talk was not broadcast until the following day. Roger Norburn dates this letter instead to 10 December. See Roger Norburn, *A James Joyce Chronology* (Basingstoke, 2004), 152.

[90] James Joyce, 'Ulysses. Episode III.', *The Egoist*, March-April 1919, 26.

[91] Desmond MacCarthy, 'Masters of Nonsense', *The Listener*, 10 February 1932, 205.

[92] Leonard Diepeveen, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (New York, 2003).

[93] Marshik, *British Modernism and Censorship*; Nicolson, 'The Approach', 546.