**LISTENING**

Hello, this is James Naughty and here is the program of the book Club archived first broadcast in 2004. Hello and welcome to the Book Club of Birmingham, home perhaps who knows to the Rummidge university provides so much of the humour and David Lodge and his novel “Nice Work”, which is a book of the month. It’s a rope satiric featured Britain and a some of the ways in a sunshine to knows universities, a book does makes you love a lot. You’ve got this month group of readers here at BBC public studio with David Lodge, to talk over the story and Hans that unlikely the comity gathered in 1986 industry year shadow scheme of Vic Wilcox’s factory manger director about to enjoy his midlife crisis and Robyn Penrose, doctor Robyn Penrose universities lecturer in English, who is prey to many of the vanities and prejudices that Lodge often finds so comically so she hated with the university’s future provides him so much inspiration for humour and so to reflection in his fiction. He was of course a professor of English, here at Birmingham university for many years. Having among other things celebrated his friendships in 1960s with Malcom Bradly, whose novels today are both join amusement all seem to be getting medulla together in some readers minds. Its plot is comical meeting of a two unlikely people, who of course drift a part of the end when a strange magnitude evaporated and they go back to live put seem rather like the one of continue to lead and field never met of the Robyn does pass on part of inheritance from Australia to Vic, so a nonsense at least, he has better off. A wearing carrying to think that has a strange of fear may well have open the hope a new feature for both of them in some ways. David Lodge welcome to the Book Club. Rummidge university let’s be honest here listener? No, it’s not. It’s a virtual university and a virtual world. The city of Rummidge is loosely bad stone Birmingham and it’s university is a soul of medley several universities actually, but it’s not so identical with Birmingham it’s heartily written in the book and in being so. It’s a familiar sort of strategy I think for novelists, they want to give work a kind of a plausibly and realistic and recognising was setting. But if you specific both the time and place then you are running to the fight this place was inhabited that time by real people, so you have a con of fictional version of the reality and that’s was Rummidge and Rummidge university is particularly since those real people work with you true. It’s a book written and conceived in a mid ‘80s, but time is quite distant. Would you trying to say what would the things were picking your mind that time bad us push featured Britain. Yes I was very concuss of living in a city [...] feeling a fool brunt of featured economic soul in locally industry for instance lost ball of third companies of a period of few years of a very [...] employment, but at the same time university was being subjected like all the universities in the country to swinging in cuts. There was a sense of [...] young people about have and getting a job and students really expecting a job when they graduated and the lecturers like Robyn Penrose, who didn’t have tenant jobs were answered in the future so I was really meditating on the paradox, people who worrying work about time would probably working hard than ever in the life, probably doing well but there’s a large group of people who could next start life and so there was a division between those who worked and those who didn’t those who had working prospects and those who hadn't. I really started the novel with the idea of just a man he was to be the central figure, he has to be a business man, who suddenly leave to his life job and suddenly he was deprived of it, a walk with what he did do, he might meet a woman completely different area from the world education of arts and it was only when I thought: “Well I need to know what kind of work this man done” that the novel really changed direction, because I started to do the research to find out what kind of work he done, that was more interesting really then his life after work. One of the aspects of the novel I found so realistic and wonderful was the way you painted the picture of this city, the driver that Robyn takes pretty junction up toward … whether the factories are, and you said you didn’t know nothing or not a lot about metal bashing when you started to write so you had to go into factories and talk to people. Were the people you spoke to in any way suspicious of your motives? Did they feel that you could fasten them to your characters? Reader own idea the novel really came when I started to do the research I shadow the friend in industry managing director of an engineering foundry. Only one person recognize me, then we met in the week following about. Everybody else took the story straight [...] shadowing is quite common institution in industrial world [...] was industry yeah. I was [...] rather impressed with the manages [...]intentionally, I thought that they dedicated people, who work train to keep the first goring in condition of extreme competitiveness, great difficulty. The this one opposite not capitalist, so I mean wore salary manages who could loses around jobs if the company well past to know. So I suppose it was an education for me and I made up point to Robyn really who does have to knowledge in university grown tree in the wealth funds the most [...] somewhere. And us ready [...] how the academic world you describe almost twenty years ago in many ways still seem quite fresh and relevant some of the kind of please could debate it’s been gone [...] how pay for and who pays for it. I want this pass in your real reading for this kind of program if you use how residents [...] still on. Pass see surely I think the debate which cultural adding [...] parliamentary vert on founding a re-education shows yes the issues term Vic and Robyn discuss something [...] how do you fund universities has to relevant. At that the universities would be in a feasibly made to reform themselves and I feel that it fade reform themselves early around terms, they would [...] a lot of the pain actually [...] did reform. But as it work out they were pushed into often in a properly kind of a reform. The stunning economic and mark it [...] really don’t imply to education tonight tried to be [...] part book. In some ways dark idea that you describe causes the point of make about the book is terribly funny. And not for a reader ear I can see by the reaction feel lighted. How do you as readers manage it comedy and the darkness behind. I really [kni...] in the smelly still tales. I think I have a very great fun [...] novel for the passage where he’s talking about seem the fox in the garden. I knew just [...] like nature [...] you know. It’s a very funny line absolutely some[...]. The feeling you those [...] time [...] came back with the failed somehow as so say people inexpert to work and they’ve in the foxes [...] Robyn [...], not both two chasing properly. I think now because it’s an historical novel the comedies can different in a way and I remember what David [...] to the sense for people expecting not crated job. And goes reading here now 20 years on the reasonless feeling people feel part of it [...] some kind of job one again to make their own features some why and I’ve can’t forgotten how [...] being. So the common [...] different because it’s not quite so [...] so worried about the personal[...] happens today [...] terms [...] realize. But the contrast between the academic world and the industrial world is absolutely mournfulness. I find myself first[...] wisdom but then pretty soon just [...] both of them, all of them [...]. But do you find more ridiculous industrial world as it put trade of the academic world? The industrial world became more proper it might the academic world it started [...] anyway and became more more ridiculous. As the book perceived on and how’s gone to [...] asked David whether he’d felt a [...] tea with one of the [...] strong with [...] start if [...] changes [..] and come through [...] to write the book. Because I [..] Vic was quite dickers the start but by the end he seemed strange heroic figure having survived all of this who’s been given a second chance and Robyn [undefined] change so much and she was still stuck in. Well I think I started with the [...] ironic satirical distance, so both of these characters this is a sort of mind [...] for real kind of comic to the [...] in the early chapters. And in a way as I began develop the story and began to set the main interact in, they became more rounded, they became more human to me in a way and out of my own authorial voice and I let them carry the ball really and take the novel on and I think I tried to be fully even handed in my sympathies really and this is because many of my novels, which often turn on some kind of oppositional contrast and I find people read them in very different ways usually according to their own predisposition or predilections. Well, let's set these characters in contact. Give some reading from the novel David and set the scene. This is on the day that Robyn Penrose, young Lecturer, feminist, theorists, in English Literature, comes to the factory for the first time and it is given a tour by the managing director, Vic Wilcox, and she seems appalled by the conditions in which sees people working with that of the film and the noise and this is a bit of a conversation they have in the workers' canteen at lunchtime and Vic really should have and accent but I'm not very good at that but I'll do the best:

V: “You don't want to get more sentimental about the operatives, you know. They're a pretty crude lot. They seeme to like dirt. We put new toilets in the fettling shop last November. In two weeks they were all vandalised. Disgusting it was, what they did to those toilets.”

R: “Perhaps it was a form of revenge.”

V: “Revenge? Revenge against who? Me, for giving them new toilets?”

R: “Revenge against the system.”

V: “What system?”

R: “The factory system. It must generate enormous resentement.”

V: “Nobody forces them to work here.”

R: “That's what I mean, it's the return of the repressed. It's unconcious.”

V: “Oh, who says?”

R: “Freud, for one. Sigmund Freud, the inventor of psychoanalysis.”

V: “I know who you mean. I'm not completely solid between the ears, you know, even if I do work in a factory.”

R: “I wasn't impying that you were. Have you read Freud then?”

V: “I don't get much time for reading, but I've a rough idea what he was about. Said everything came down to sex, didn't he?”

R: “That's a rather over-simplified way of putting out it.”

V: “But basically right?”

R: “Well, not entirely wrong. The early Freud certainly thought libido was the prime mover of human behaviour. Later he came to think the death instinct was more important.”

V: “The death instinct? What is that?”
R: “It's hard to explain. Essentially it's the idea that unconsciously we all long for death, for non-being, because being is so painful.”

V: “I often feel like that at five o'clock in the morning, but I snap out of it when I get up.”

I think this illustrates the initial collision of mind, the completely different mindsets, vocabularies and ways of thinking.

I think it is very interesting you're talking about the opposite so we basically have a book that is written half from a woman's point of view and it is a still quite dangerous thing to do. I think it was a good thing to do in 80s because of the state of feminists, and I think I recall sitting down to read it thinking “okay, let's see if you can do it then!” and feeling completely in safe hands when she had got Robyn dressed because I think at first, the way she chooses her clothes in the morning would [...] and Susannah would be very proud of you! That's a compliment! That's absolutely a compliment! Right! Just checking! Absolutely you know... in a woman's mind. And I really like to ask you a little bit about that and maybe I'm insisting that all novelists have to attempt to do, is that observation, is that finding what's human in all of us because it is half the book coming over taking on something really big that.

I think it was a right question you should began with a description of what she decides to wear. It is not more interesting what she decides to wear that very first morning but what she decides to wear to go to the factory: she doesn't know, remember that she has to think about that but very carefully, she doesn't want to be too sexy or to provocatively dress, does not to want to put on her Interview suit. On the other hand, you know, she doesn't want to dress (...) so, you mean, that seemed to me to be the kind of occasional which woman would really be. I play on a lot of brain part on what she would wear. You're quiete right that there was an element of risk not rising from a woman's point of view. I haven't done that before, it was a thing that I've never done before the one of using a third person technique. In my last novel I had a chance to write in the first person and that is much more difficult I think true [...]. I supposed that to be a novelist you have to draw on the "feminine" inside of your own personality as a woman novelist must drawn on her own inside personality in order to come in to it. I'll be up in sex my react, you depend on (...) journals or on magazines. And so, you know, I read a lots of trivial stuff about fashion and so on because that is valuable when you have to do this sort of work. I think she's absolutely deep to push me on an academic person. There is nothing that I know about her and especially at that time she's absolutely spot on. I have no hope for her. Do you have hope for […]? Well I didn't introduce her through my last novel, actually. She become a ruler, a bit of a slave driving academic, the head of the department of "her own" but she was still to convince the literally theorists and post-structuralise but she become a little bit more hard knocks. His career is in the way to learn something I think from Vic Wilcox's management skills. So there is still some hope? Ahah yes! I fell that that she has a person potential for change Mrs. Wilcox, but you didn't explore it. Do you have any feelings just on what might've happened to her. Let's talk about Marjorie a little. Well, Marjorie is a "poor" defeated character really through the larger of the book. She is a simple minded woman who Vic met when they were both young and she was in the (…) age and she's just settle down to life as an housewife finding her out "let in shopping” and she is an image of the repressed woman by Robyn's feminist standards. Enjoy your menopause. Yes she's a minor character's kind of "foils" of Robyn. Robyn thinks that Vic patronizing her and doesn’t do enough to try to liberate her from Vic's inside feels really very little action anymore for her. But the kind of moral responsibility for her which is shaking when he has infatuations with Robyn, but again at the end when his life is in a real crisis and he loses his job, he returns to Marjorie not to Robyn and recognize the real value of loyalty. Did you listen to book club on radio 4 when David lodge discussing his novel "nice work"? Talking about the appearance that was Robyn looked and looks, many people may exchange the book for the television adaptation or had their enjoinment of the book and I didn’t know if you were involved in the television adaptation, what you did yourself, […] I wanted to ask you one more question about what is lost in your book, apart from kissing and other kind of things, when it is adapted. It’s a topic I could talk about for several hours, because I was involved: I did write the script and I actually was involved in the production and I was even all down on location around here, a little bit on my embarrassment actually, because I used Birmingham university as a location round here and made the model a little bit too near to life, but it was a very happy experience actually. I think “Nice Work” lends itself to adaptation and as much as it’s a story which develops through the dramatic interaction of two characters that are constantly debating and discussing and talking. What’s difficult to adapt is fiction is psychological fiction, novels which happen mainly in the minds of the characters, because that’s not something you can film and if you turn it into voice-over it’s rather artificial. So it wasn’t easy, it’s never easy and you do have to sacrifice some things. One of the favourite passages of readers in this book is Roby’s analysis of the Silk Cut advertisement and I couldn’t get that in because, I mean, it would take about a fit of an entire episode to represent it, so things like that and it isn’t actually essential to the story; so things like that have to go out. It’s one of my favourite passages in the book. It’s very funny the way that Vic’s bullish attitude towards Robyn and also at the same time where he is arouse by Robyn. Remind us what happens. Well, Robyn is discussing metaphor and metonymy with Vic, trying to essentially explain what those terms mean, so what she does is she uses a cigarette billboard. What else with the cigarette? Man: the Silk Cut. (The famous purple add) Vic is very upset by this sexual reading of the advert and I think this is one of the funniest parts in the book. What it was lead to me onto was to ask you: the book itself contains some quite detailed literary discussions, I’m interested into how you feel about pointing that into what is essentially a marx-market novel, a popular novel, in many ways. Are you worried that the average reader would skip those parts? I mean, as far as I’m concerned “Nice Work” is a literary novel and I never really anticipated when I wrote it that it would have the success it had, actually. So, I mean, most of my novels, practically all of them, have quite a lot of literary references and a lot of ideas in them, because Robyn is a specialist on the Victorian industrial novel although she has never been inside a factory, which comically ironies the situation. But because Victorian novel did set out and the Industrial novel particularly to try and make life better, to reconcile different classes and different interests. And so with the slight tongue in the cheek I was able to moralise a little bit more in that novel perhaps [...] Novels should, I think, give people information they didn’t have when they started , but it has to be made accessible and amusing and entertaining in the way it’s fed out, so that […] I was tried to do that. So there’s some amusement to be got by, for instance, having Vic who signs on to be a student at the university, he starts to shadow Robyn and he takes part in the tutorial. And, you know, it’s fun for the writer, I think, to see how a tutorial might work with such an incongruous character sitting in among the students. I wanted, as you know so much about literary and critical fairy, and you have written a lot about that, whether it was a help or a hindrance when you came to write your own fiction. To me criticism was always something complementary to writing fiction, it didn’t interfere with it. There were things about being a professor which occasionally seemed incompatible with being a novelist, but the art of critically analysing fiction I found gave me choose, gave me methods for solving technical problems in my own fiction, so I’m a very self-conscious writer, but when I was in Birmingham I kept the two lives completely separate. Where your colleagues generous about some of the characters? I think that, I mean, I was very careful not to portrait anybody in any way that could be recognised to give a fence, but I think they were pretty coloured about the generally satirical view of their profession, though I was implicated in the satire myself of course. I mean, one reason why “Nice Work” is, you know, a slightly more serious book than its immediate predecessors was partly the result of, I think, a certain amount of unfavourable both feedback from academics in particular to my previous novel “Small World”, which was a kind of an [...] on academic life, of conference going and the academic freebees and so on. Pretty close to it all. Yes, but it was set in 1979, you know, just the year that Mrs Thatcher came to the power in fact, when there was a sort of party atmosphere still in universities. And by the time it came out, 1984, the whole situation had changed and I think some of my colleagues thought it was a rather inopportune book to be published at that time, when the universities were fending off the cuts. So I think that maybe it was a rather serious book about academic life at this time. Although it’s funny and I’m glad you find it funny, I don’t think that it’s essentially a comic novel really, it’s a serious novel with comedy writing right through it. I wanted to ask David if he kept of the industry to be reading more fiction, a more crazy […] to be better employees or more rounded individuals […] messy today. Well, first of all I think that people in common industry actually read quite a lot, I mean, I found that the reason “Nice Work” was rather successful was that there was a huge audience of people whose lives are of this kind; they work in these kind of situational environments and they write a take my writing very seriously, I wrote about their lives; so they were very interested, they were very sympathetic and it had a very good reception in those areas. But I think it’s a general, yes, hopelessly culture is a need, social value is something that everybody should have access to and again this is a theme of the Victorian recourses of “Nice Work”, but if you just round society according to strictly, financially, economic, materialist criteria you will create alienation and division. When you quote “Sybil” or “North and South” or “Hard Times” or other novels of that genre from the Victorian era, do you share sometimes the optimism that often shown through and even the sentimentality especially in Dickens that was such a part of that vision, because, you know, sentiment pebbles up quite strongly in this book. I’m rather incline that and sometimes criticize for it, I mean mind a little bit to reassuring. Be cue of Dickens in adding is not written. [...] as a student literature fascinated by romance and Shakespearean romance and they [...] late place, where everything good comes to evil in a kind of tension and conflict as a result. I find a very [...] inspiring literary dream if you like. I like trying to find way round mote 20°-21° century pessimism. I’m not naturally a tragic writer and [...] and I’ve not a tragic dealing experience. I’ve a comic view [...] be satirical choric became comic in a sense. You know the Divine Comedy in a mean of an happy ending resolution. So this was, it’s difficult how to end the story, because [...] seal of the meaning of the story and in the common implies on the writer actually thinks like is like and the Nice Work I support of view the model of 19° century’s novel to get round my problem. What other people’s funnies moments [...] we end. I just love the movement when Philip Swallow have to phone call and caught go in [...] and the new of going to happen and then [...] the ways [...]. the such take on typical university so add in a class professor is trying desperate be of well [...]. And for me comedy came through in world of university characters that up [...] in industry context. I like much the previous part before play by Charles’ foreplay [...] how renew [...] academic that she went sleep and welcome again will still laughed it. [...] love [...]. [...] for radio 4. I think more properly [...] to clothes. David Lodge, thank you very much indeed for being this month’s guest in book club and you all of reader join in this [...]. Remember if you like come to book club recording you delete on the website BBC. [...] or you can write to broadcast in [...] London. Next month, on the first Sunday of June you can hear [...] discussing her dark [...] rather the school’s bridle. Next week at this time on radio 4 it will be of course [...] with open book and till next month next book for all of them here [...] goodbye