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Spring 2020

LAST POST A LITERARY JOURNAL FROM THE FORD MADDOX FORD SOCIETY

VOL. 1. NO. 4

LAST POST



**A Literary Journal from the
Ford Madox Ford Society**

LONDON • NEW YORK

LAST POST

A literary journal from the
Ford Madox Ford Society

Four: Spring 2020

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Printed in the UK by Joshua Horgan Print & Design
Witney, Oxon
01865 246762
www.joshuahorgan.co.uk

ISSN 2631-9772

© Published by the Ford Madox Ford Society, 2021

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Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the members of the *Last Post* editorial board, particularly Society Chair, Sara Haslam; to Jan Serr & John Shannon for their foundational support; to Meghan Hammond and Max Schleusener; and to the global members of the Ford Society.

My continuing thanks to our anonymous peer reviewers.

Paul Skinner
Editor

A few editorial notes

The issue of dates

A prefatory note in *Last Post 3* mentioned the disparity between the date on the cover and that on which Ford Society subscribers held a copy in their hands. This issue has also been subject to delays and we've not yet caught up with our original schedule, so I must repeat that note here since we still want to maintain the sequence of issue dates. I apologise in advance to any headstrong bibliographer. At some point in the future, we will align printed and actual dates of publication!

Catering for local tastes

Here's an early poem by Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer), 'The Pedlar leaves the Bar Parlour at Dymchurch':

Good night, we'd best be jogging on,
The moon's been up a while,
We've got to get to Bonnington,
Nigh seven mile.

But the marsh ain'd so lone
if you've heered a good song,
And you hum it aloud as you cater along.
Nor the stiles half so high,
nor the pack so like lead.
If you've heered a good tale an' it runs in your-
head.

So, come, we'd best be jogging on,
The moon will give us light,
We've got to get to Bonnington,
To sleep to-night.

Ford's indefatigable bibliographer David Dow Harvey scrupulously noted of this item (D20): *Outlook* (London), V 627 (16 June 1900), adding: 'Previously published in *Poems for Pictures*; only one minor change here ("cater" becomes "canter"). Subsequently published in *Collected Poems* (1914 and 1936).'

It was, in fact, less a change than a misprint. In the 'Letters' section of *The Outlook's* subsequent issue (23 June 1900), 651, is this:

"CATER"

To the Editor of THE OUTLOOK

You honoured me last week by commandeering a little verse from my small volume called "Poems for Pictures," but whoever transcribed it for you turned the good Kentish word "cater" into "canter." "Cater" = across. . . . "To cater a field" = to go across it from corner to corner; anyone would cater the Romney Marsh in crossing from Dymchurch to Bonnington. I wouldn't protest if "stiles" did not occur in the next line. I don't think you could canter over a stile; at least I feel convinced that I couldn't.

FORD M HUEFFER, Hythe

The previous year, Ford had published ‘Aldington Knoll’ in *The Speaker*. The first (repeated as last) verse ends: ‘Cater the marsh and crost the sea.’

‘Auctioneer’s Song’ (originally ‘The Ballad of an Auction’, also in *The Speaker*, June 1899), as printed in the 1914 *Collected Poems* has as its third verse:

Come up from the marsh,
Come down from the hops,
Come down thro’ the ventways.
Come cater the copse.

All three instances occur in six pages of the *Collected Poems*. In *The Cinque Ports* (1900), Ford wrote of Winchelsea: ‘Go out from the place, down the sea hill, and looking back from the marsh you will see the Antient Town from its most striking side. A steep road that once led up from the quays ascends to the Strand Gate. This road cuts diagonally (*cater* is the local word) the green girdle of hill on which the town stands.’

Oddly, just after noting this, I came across the term in the American Lore Segal’s *Other People’s Houses: A Novel* (London: Sort Of Books, 2018), writing of a village in Austria, where she was born (as Lore Groszmann): ‘I used to think the village was called Fischamend after the great bronze “fish on the end” of the medieval tower that stood on the central square, catercorner from my grandfather’s shop’.

Floyd (very briefly) on Ford

Catching sight on the BBC iPlayer of *Floyd on France*, the 1987 series by the late lamented Keith Floyd, once a cub reporter on the *Bristol Evening Post* before becoming a restaurateur, first in Bristol and later in the South of France, I saw that the opening episode was on Provence. A couple of minutes in and Floyd observed: “To quote the great—actually, Hemingway never liked him—Ford Madox Ford, “below Lyons on the Rhone, the sun is shining, and south of Valence, *Provincia Romana*, the Roman Province lies beneath the sun. There there is no more any evil, for there the apple will not flourish and the brussels sprout will not grow at all.” The quotation is from *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine* and Floyd had it almost exactly right, a stray ‘there’ missed but entirely forgivable.

Fordian Letters

Probably the main news for Fordians recently has been the announcement of the Oxford University Press edition of Ford’s *Collected Letters*, planned in six volumes. I suppose I should declare an interest but it’s probably fair to deduce that anyone reading this has already, to some extent, declared an interest. The General Editors of the project are Max Saunders and Sara Haslam and the individual volumes and their editors are:

Volume 1 to 1904: Dr Helen Chambers and Prof Sara Haslam

Volume 2 1904 – Aug. 1914: Dr Lucinda Bor-

kett-Jones and Prof Max Saunders

Volume 3 Aug. 1914–Nov. 1922: Dr Paul Skinner

Volume 4 Nov. 1922–1930: Prof Laurence Davies

Volume 5 early 1930s: Dr Barbara Cooke and
Prof Martin Stannard

Volume 6 later 1930s: Dr Barbara Cooke and
Prof Martin Stannard

Needless to say, should anyone reading this possess—or have knowledge of the whereabouts of—any letters from Ford, in attics, tombs, outhouses, framed on walls, even tucked into old volumes as bookmarks (for which purpose Ford once denied using rashers of bacon), the general editors would be extremely grateful to hear from them.

This issue

In addition to our three regular columnists and reviews of two recent titles, we have the second part of Elizabeth Hibbert's wide-ranging survey of critical responses to Ford's great tetralogy, *Parade's End*. Garrett Bruen writes about the International Ford Madox Ford series of annual volumes (2002-2016), while Roman Briggs has apparently unearthed a curious letter to John Dowell, narrator—victim? witness?—of *The Good Soldier*. And we are reprinting an early Ford story, 'On the Edge', which is also the title of the piece on Walter de la Mare, though its author denies any direct link between the two beyond the purely nominal.

Next issue

Last Post 5 will be a special issue on Ford and Food, guest-edited by Helen Chambers and including some very appetising items.

Paul Skinner

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<http://www.fordmadoxfordsociety.org/>

'Modern and Modernist': The Critical Reception of Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* since 1975

Elizabeth Hibbert

In the first part of this article, I divided the critical reception of *Parade's End* (1924-28) into six distinct 'waves' and discussed the first three, comprising the first fifty years of responses to Ford's tetralogy.¹ First, I noted the emphasis critics placed during Ford's lifetime upon *Parade's End's* narrative complexity and the evident technical skill of its author.² I then described how a preponderance of critics in the 1940s and 50s read *Parade's End*, as Robie Macauley's introduction to the 1950 Knopf edition described it, as 'a symbol of our own, destructive, inchoate time', as critical interest shifted, in the wake of the Second World War, towards Ford's engagement with the First.³ The third 'wave' comprised works published between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s, which Sara Haslam has described as the period during which 'Ford studies began.'⁴ In the final section of Part One, I showed the influence on this inaugural period in the discipline of a concurrent shift in Anglo-American criticism away from historical and biographical concerns and towards a formalist sensibility, which resulted in readings of *Parade's End* focusing upon its 'internal, not external' and 'psychological, not historical' concerns.⁵

This second part picks up where the first left off, in the mid-1970s, when a newly historicist culture sparked critical interest in what Ambrose Gordon

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called the ‘connection’ in *Parade’s End* ‘between word and act, between the prevailing style of a period and its moral insights’.⁶ As a result of the move away from Formalism and the establishment of First World War writing as a field of study, responses to *Parade’s End* in the last decades of the twentieth century tended to frame it as first and foremost an example of war writing. As I will argue, this changed in the late 1990s when Max Saunders made Ford’s case as a major modernist writer in his two-part *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (1996), and again around the time of the centenary of the Armistice, when history and politics again emerged as key points of emphasis.

1975-1991: ‘Literary Tradition and Real Life’

If, as I argued in Part One, scholarship on Ford had by the 1960s come to be marked by a retreat from historical concerns, at some point in the 1970s the pendulum swung the other way. The next wave of readings of *Parade’s End* was heavily influenced by Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), and overwhelmingly historical in approach. Although Fussell makes only scant textual reference to Ford, *The Great War and Modern Memory* laid out a blueprint for the study of First World War writing which exerted a profound and continuing influence upon its critical reception.⁷ By reading literary texts in conjunction with sources such as letters, diaries and photographs, and by paying minute attention to the conditions of their production, Fussell’s method of analysis refuted the ahistoricity of Formalism and anticipated the New Historicism of the 1980s and 90s. While, in 1964,

Ambrose Gordon Jr had accused critics of *Parade's End* of being 'preoccupied with the peacetime, or civilian, sections of the book', barely a decade later, the war had come to overshadow almost every other aspect of Ford's life and writing.⁸

The Great War and Modern Memory's occasional reductionism, which has been noted by critics including Frank Kermode and Lynne Hanley, was perhaps inevitable given the ambition of its scope, which Fussell sets out in his preface:⁹

I have focused on places and situations where literary tradition and real life notably transect, and in doing so I have tried to understand something of the simultaneous and reciprocal process by which life feeds materials to literature while literature returns the favour by conferring forms upon life.¹⁰

Fussell advocates an approach to literary analysis which, we might imagine, would be equally applicable to texts beyond the purview of *The Great War and Modern Memory*: the mapping of aesthetic, ideological and historical movements directly onto one another. But the problem with this approach, as Hanley points out in *Writing War* (1991), is that it reduces texts to historical documents. In Fussell's formulation, Hanley writes, 'the literary process of "conferring forms upon life"' is 'genial, agentless, and benign' (24). Any notion that a text such as *Parade's End* (which Ford famously stated that he wrote to achieve 'the obviating of all future wars') might have any agenda beyond neutral reportage is absent from Fussell's thesis.¹¹

The Great War and Modern Memory had a marked effect on criticism of *Parade's End*, as critics adopted Fussell's model of analysis to consider with renewed interest the complexities of the tetralogy's relationship to its historical context. The first such critic was Sondra Stang, whose monograph *Ford Madox Ford* (1977) centres explicitly upon the 'collision' Fussell identifies between 'events' and 'the public language used [to] celebrate the idea of progress.'¹² In *Parade's End*, she argues, 'Ford was marking the break not only in public events but in language.' According to this reading, 'No More Parades' means 'no more hollow rhetoric, no more heroic abstractions like hope and glory and honour—an end of traditional moral language' (97). By integrating her readings of *Parade's End* into Fussell's framework, Stang demonstrates the ways in which it might be indicative of broad trends in war writing. But in *Ford Madox Ford* this approach also tends to turn *Parade's End* into a documentary rather than narrative text, such as when Stang sums up Ford's 'time shifts' (of which he also makes abundant use in earlier narrative works) as a device necessary to represent the 'tension' between 'the actual chronology' of war and 'the activity of the perceiving mind' (104). As in Fussell, 'the War' overshadows everything else: when Stang states that Ford's being the only 'great modernist writer' to have served at the front makes *Parade's End* 'the most important English novel to come out of World War I,' she conspicuously omits the adjective 'modernist' from *Parade's End* itself, as though the categories of First World War writing and modernist fiction were mutually exclusive (97).

The following year, Malcolm Bradbury's 'The Denuded Place' (1978) compared Ford's handling of the First World War in *Parade's End* to that of John Dos Passos in his *U. S. A.* trilogy (1930-1936). Explicitly distancing himself from historicists such as Stang, Bradbury writes that while 'many critics' in the wake of Fussell 'have seen the war as the great turning-point into modern form' which 'leads the way into Modernism,' the truth 'is not that simple,' since 'many of the features of style and form we associate with post-war fiction had emerged much earlier,' in the 1890s.¹³ Bradbury accepts that the war 'changed style' and helped to 'ratify modernism,' but makes the distinction that, while pre-war modernism 'tended to modernise form as such,' post-war modernism 'tended to see the new disjunction in history too' (193-194). Crucially, Bradbury re-endows Ford and his contemporaries with authorial agency in their aesthetic responses to war. Ford 'saw the war as a movement away from historical realism,' he writes: 'a desubstantiation of life which would be mimed in a modern style' (208).

Bradbury's complication of the conventional narrative around the impact of war on culture bears the hallmarks of a burgeoning critical tendency which would later emerge as New Historicism. In the realm of First World War criticism, New Historicism meant a shift away from the question of what literary texts might teach us about the war, and towards the more complicated task of unpicking the ways in which critics' understandings of the First World War, the canon of 'First World War writing', and their own cultural contexts have shaped one another (Lynne Hanley's criticisms of Fussell's

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method, cited above, fall squarely into this school of thought).

Robert Green's *Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Politics* (1981) attempts in this way to account for the relationships of Ford's texts to their contexts. Green frames *Parade's End* as especially suited to the methodology of New Historicism, due to its deconstruction of the 'division between "historical" and "private"' and its portrayal of a 'congruence between history and the inner life'. Throughout *Prose and Politics*, Green uses the many parallels and exchanges between life's public and private spheres in *Parade's End* to sketch an analogy between Ford's portrayals of 'history' and the 'inner life'.¹⁴ Sylvia, for instance, he describes as 'both a remarkable fictional character and a personification of major forces in English post-war history' (133). Green's almost allegorical mode of reading invites the common criticism of New Historicism that it denies the autonomy of the literary text. Text is secondary to context in *Prose and Politics*, which reads Ford's works through the lens of his professed (and presumed) political beliefs, cherry-picking them for evidence of what it already knows about the flesh-and-blood Ford. When it comes, therefore, to the politics of *Parade's End*, rather than of its author, *Prose and Politics* finds little of substance. '*Last Post*,' Green writes, is a failure, because it fails 'to express the nihilistic [...] insights that were the legacy of the war' (165). Rather than considering what other perspective(s) *Last Post* might express, Green can only conclude that it fails to express a 'nihilistic' sentiment which he attributes to Ford based upon evidence external to the novel.

In contrast, Ann Barr Snitow's *Ford Madox Ford and the Voice of Uncertainty* (1984) re-endows *Parade's End* with a voice distinct from Ford's: one which was capable of 'rendering [a] feeling which he was unable to explain' elsewhere.¹⁵ Positioning her book squarely in the New Historicist mode, Snitow writes that '[t]o study Ford is to study the history of consciousness' during the 'thirty years that encompass the growth of early modernism' between 1898 and 1928 (1). This period, she argues, was marked by a 'condition of not knowing,' which is embodied in Ford's 'double, ambivalent,' and 'self-questioning' narrative 'voice' (2). The 'central [...] process' of *Parade's End*, she continues, is 'the posing of thoughts and meanings only to have them instantly modified, undetermined' (214). Whereas earlier historicist (and, as we have seen, *new* historicist) critics had sought to show how *Parade's End* conformed to the general character of its historical context, Snitow's book considers how the text might be in dialogue with its context.

Around this time, as early proponents of the field set about compiling a modernist canon, *Parade's End's* modernist credentials in terms of style, form and subject-matter came to increasing critical attention. Michael H. Levenson's *A Genealogy of Modernism* (1984), for instance, traces a 'lineage' of modernism beginning with Arnold, Huxley and Pater, which Conrad and Ford develop and theorise, and which is then 'consolidated' by Eliot and Pound. Yet, although Levenson states clearly that he believes that critics 'should situate Ford firmly within the subjectivist tradition' he seeks to trace, his positioning of Ford midway along a trajecto-

ry which would culminate with Pound and Eliot tacitly frames his works as precursors to theirs.¹⁶ This model takes the stylistic and historical transitions portrayed in *Parade's End* as evidence of Ford's transitional role in history, casting Ford in a supporting role in the "men of 1914" script of modernism Paul K. Saint-Amour has attributed to modernist critics in the 1970s and 80s.¹⁷ Against the 'genius' of Pound and Eliot, Ford emerges as '[s]elf-dramatising and self-parodying, [...] not systematic, precise or rigorous' (Levenson 48). In this schema, while an understanding of Ford's position in literary history deepens our understanding of later, truer modernist writers, his works are of little value in and of themselves.

1992-2011: 'Inbetweenness'

Everyman's 1992 edition of *Parade's End*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury, included *Last Post* for the first time since Graham Greene omitted it from the 1963 Bodley Head edition.¹⁸ Bradbury's introduction calls the (newly "complete") tetralogy 'a central modernist novel of the 1920s' and affirms its position as a fulcrum between Victorianism and modernism, stating that by 'moving away from realism and toward a harder irony,' Ford 'opened the way for many of his successors'.¹⁹ Around this time, the disciplinary and temporal boundaries around modernist studies were beginning to dissolve, as exemplified in the pluralised title of Peter Nicholls's *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (1995), which insists that modernism was 'not one thing but many.'²⁰ In this context, *Parade's End's* transitional status had a new resonance. Ford continued

to sit in the liminal space between modernism and not-modernism but, in the newly-expanded field of modernisms, this ceased to be a disqualifying factor. Instead, *Parade's End* began increasingly to look like the prime example of the new 'indeterminate' modernism, which was more a 'matter of traces' than a fixed genre or period (Nicholls 1).

Trudi Tate states in the introduction to *Modernism, History and the First World War* (1998) that one of her main aims is 'to rethink the ways we read modernism' by 'dissolving' the categorical barrier between 'modernism' and 'war writing.'²¹ *Parade's End*, whose genre, writes Tate, 'moves between a soldier's memoir and modernist fiction,' emerges as a text which straddles the barrier between 'modernism' and 'war writing' while actively working to erase it (62). The generic or stylistic hybridity of *Parade's End* is extrapolated to a general 'ambivalent position' of indeterminacy, which, argues Tate, 'gives the work much of its power' (61). *Parade's End* is therefore not merely an object of study, but a tool for study, in that it encourages a mode of reading characterised by 'dissolution' which Tate then applies to readings of other texts.

Sharing Tate's aspiration to 'dissolve' established barriers in the study of early-twentieth century culture, Max Saunders' *Ford Madox: A Dual Life* (1996) had two years earlier provocatively suggested that 'the period of literary modernism is "the Ford era" as much as it is Pound's, or T. S. Eliot's, or Joyce's.'²² Saunders' two-volume 'critical biography' of Ford's life and works has had a profound influence on virtually everything published on Ford

in the years since. In addition to its great volume of new textual analysis and archival research, *A Dual Life* integrates previously disparate approaches to Ford's work by examining texts independently from, but alongside, Ford's life. This method of framing events in Ford's life as the context to his works but not their cause is faithful to Saunders' governing principle of 'duality', which he explains in *A Dual Life's* introduction:

This critical biography is based on Ford's perception that a writer's life is [...] 'a dual affair'. The life enshrined in the writing, the quality of mind manifested in the art, both are and are not the same as the life lived by the man, the mind prized by his friends. (I, 12)

The ensuing two volumes examine Ford's life and his works in minute detail, considering every event, relationship and statement as 'a dual affair.' Saunders applies this principle of duality equally to his readings of Ford's texts as to his biography, and each emerges as 'dual' in nature as Ford: coherent yet ambivalent entities, elucidated but not resolved.

A Dual Life concurs with William Carlos Williams that the four volumes of *Parade's End* 'constitute the English prose masterpiece of their time' (II, 280). It approaches the tetralogy from many angles, as a whole and as its constituent novels: *Parade's End* is 'a masterly imagining of the inwardness of political life'; it is 'one of the great fictional studies of fear'; it 'traces how "values" [...] were affected by the war' (II, 211-212, 228, 222). Above all, *A Dual Life* presents *Parade's End* as the apex of

the 'duality' paradigm it advances throughout, calling it 'Ford's fullest, most searching treatment of mental division; of what he later called "duplicate cerebration"' (II, 201). Saunders frames *Parade's End* as a novel of baffling complexity, about which it would be naïve to draw straightforward conclusions. 'Like E. M. Forster,' writes Saunders, 'Ford is a great novelist of "muddle"', and *Parade's End* is about muddling through 'the world's moral confusion' (II, 219). By mapping out the contours of the internal contradictions and ambivalences of *Parade's End's* form, style and content, *A Dual Life's* chapter on *Parade's End* refuses to advance one overarching reading. It is therefore as much a blueprint for future criticism as an analysis in its own right, implicitly inviting further scrutiny through its characterisation of *Parade's End* as a work of great 'uncertainty', 'doubt' and 'ambivalence.'

Saunders' biography marked and accelerated a resurgence of critical interest in Ford. The Ford Madox Ford Society was founded in 1997 and in 2002 it began to publish the International Ford Madox Ford Studies series annually under Saunders' general editorship. A chronological list of the series' titles demonstrates the canon-building effort it took as its remit in the early years. Most pointedly, Volume One, *Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal* (2002), aspires to 'a critical engagement with some of Ford's neglected works, a demonstration of the variety of his writings, and some considerations of Ford's relationship to his predecessors and contemporaries.'²³ Subsequent volumes continued this discipline-founding, gap-filling exercise, taking broad, foundational themes as their remits, such

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as *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity* (2003) and *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts* (2007).

In this context, critical work on Ford began to take on more ambitious theoretical remits. Sara Haslam's *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the Novel and the Great War* (2002) attributes to Ford's narrative works a form of modernism marked by stylistic fragmentation, which necessitates an expansion of the category of modernism. Haslam finds a sense of linguistic and moral equivocation at the core of Ford's writing, and especially in *Parade's End*, in which, she writes, 'Ford is often unsatisfied with the capacity of language to express the totality of thought or experience'.²⁴ Throughout the tetralogy, she argues, Ford 'pushes Tietjens into battle after battle with his own language,' in order to 'test its limitations and extend its boundaries,' while 'indicating the continuing existence of things he cannot say' (86-87). To extrapolate one coherent strand of meaning from this continuous 'battle' would therefore be a fatal distortion of the overall effect.

Vincent Sherry's discussion of *Parade's End in The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (2003) also hinges upon the notion of ambivalence, despite the great difference between his conclusions and Haslam's. By arguing that the war was a symptom of, and modernism a response to, a collapse of nineteenth-century liberal ideology, Sherry complicates the path from war to modernism. Calling Ford 'a figure fixed ambivalently, but indicatively between the moderns and the modernists', Sherry reads *Parade's End* as a firmly conservative

text which opposes the main current of literary modernism.²⁵ Whereas many critics had framed *Parade's End* as an 'Edwardian' or 'proto-modernist' work, Sherry calls *Parade's End* an 'artefact of modernism declined', and in doing so implicitly advocates an expansion of the definition of modernism to include not-modernism (281).

Haslam and Sherrys' efforts to expand the conceptual bounds of modernism is characteristic of the critical movement that would come to be known as the New Modernist Studies. Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz's 'The New Modernist Studies' (2008) suggests 'expansion' as a 'single word to sum up transformations in modernist literary scholarship over the past decade or two.'²⁶ Eric Hayot proceeds from this analysis in 'Against Periodization; or, Institutional Time' (2011) to advocate against the continued use of periods and movements such as 'modernism' to divide cultural history into discrete units. In the case of modernism, Hayot notes that the modernist canon has been radically expanded along the lines sketched out by Mao and Walkowitz, but that 'the central concept or inner essence governing the period remains firmly in place.' The 'expansion' of the modernist canon is useless, argues Hayot, as long as 'a core version of modernism' remains 'relentlessly unmodified by the arrival of previously noncanonical authors' (744).

If, as Trudi Tate argues, *Parade's End* sits on the 'brink' between modernism and not-modernism, or, as Vincent Sherry argues, it is an example of both, then according to Hayot's logic our reading of *Parade's End* should disrupt our understanding

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of modernism. In *Ford Madox Ford and the Misfit Moderns: Edwardian Fiction and the First World War* (2012), Rob Hawkes employs *Parade's End* among Ford's other works to demonstrate the limits of 'modernism's utility as a category. Criticising the persistent view that early twentieth-century novelists were either 'experimental innovators' or 'conventional writers,' Hawkes suggests that 'Ford's novels problematise the ease with which such distinctions can be made.'²⁷ Ford's works, he argues, 'undermine the distinctions' upon which our understanding of early twentieth-century culture generally rests through their 'form of inbetweenness' and 'destabilising narrative strategies'(4-5).

What is striking about *Ford Madox Ford and the Misfit Moderns* when viewed against work from the beginning of this critical 'wave' by, say, Tate or Saunders is the relatively scant time it spends discussing the substance and subjects of Ford's texts. Instead, Hawkes tends to paint Ford's narrative works as above all books about books, written about writing, such as when he concludes that *Parade's End* 'thematizes the desire and need for narrative shape and embodies that desire at a structural level' (143). Hawkes's book is a prime example of the paradox of Ford's critical status a decade ago. By this point, modernist studies had embraced Ford as one of their own, which had expanded and reinvigorated critical discussion of his works. But Ford's canonisation also dragged his works into the fray of metacritical discussions about the state of the field, which eventually came to dominate discussions of *Parade's End*.

2012-2021: 'Modern and Modernist'

By the end of the 2000s, the efforts of Ford scholars over the past two decades had cemented *Parade's End's* place in the canons of First World War writing and of modernist fiction. In 2010-2011, new scholarly editions of all four novels were published: *Some Do Not...* was edited by Max Saunders, *No More Parades* by Joseph Wiesenfarth, *A Man Could Stand Up*— by Sara Haslam, and *Last Post* by Paul Skinner.²⁸ These new, fully annotated editions represent the first 'authoritative, corrected' texts, based upon first editions of the novels and Ford's manuscripts. They also included lengthy critical introductions by the editors, accounts of the novels' compositions, extensive annotations and full textual apparatuses detailing Ford's deletions and revisions.

The same year as the publication of the new Carcanet editions, the BBC commissioned Mammoth Productions and Tom Stoppard to produce a television adaptation of *Parade's End*. The production received input from Ford biographers Alan Judd and Max Saunders—who accepted an invitation to serve as literary consultant. The five-episode adaptation, which attracted average viewing figures in the UK of around 2.5 million, restored *Parade's End* to the public consciousness for the first time since its publication. Sara Haslam notes that while the 2010 Wordsworth Classics edition of *Parade's End* had sold 4,200 copies in its first year, that figure had risen to 12,001 in October 2012, following the adaptation's airing (Companion 19).

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The day the first episode aired, the *Guardian* published a 'tribute' to *Parade's End* by Julian Barnes, who went on to pen the introduction for Penguin's new 'modern classics' edition of the text the following year. In defiance of Graham Greene's 'Napoleonic veteran' obituary of Ford, Barnes calls *Parade's End* 'as modern and modernist as they come'.²⁹ Now that 'the years have shaken down,' he writes, 'it is Ford who makes Greene look old-fashioned, rather than the other way round.'³⁰ Barnes considers the interwar period to be a fitting analogy for the post-financial crisis era, and even goes as far as suggesting that in matters of sexual politics, psychology, and the question of how to live in the face of uncertainty, Ford's tetralogy can be seen actively to anticipate the future. The tonal ambivalence of the end of *Last Post*, he writes, is central to this future-orientation: the means by which 'Ford allows us to imagine that, just as the anxious will always find new anxieties to replace the old,' a 'tormented saint [...] might yet bring upon himself a new tormentor'.

Parade's End's orientation towards the future is also the subject of Paul K. Saint-Amour's *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (2015). Using Cold War cultural theory, Saint-Amour traces an intimate connection between 'war and futurity' in interwar literary culture and argues that during these years 'the memory of one world war was already joined to the specter of a second, future one,' resulting in a 'framing' of the period 'in real time as an *interwar* era whose terminus [seemed] foreordained.'³¹ According to this reading, Tietjens is no throwback to the eighteenth cen-

tury, but rather an ‘untimely protagonist’ through whom Ford attempts ‘to warn his own contemporaries away from war’ and thus ‘undoom the future of the world’ (271). That Ford failed in this endeavour is the pessimistic undercurrent of Saint-Amour’s chapter on Ford: viewed retrospectively through the prism of Hiroshima, Dresden and the London Blitz, *Parade’s End* flickers as a last trace of hope before a global descent into darkness.

Debates surrounding the status of the First World War in the present day took on a profound relevance in 2018 with the centenary of the Armistice. In *The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity* (2018), editors Santanu Das and Kate McLoughlin write that, with the deaths of the last people to have witnessed the First World War, ‘we have moved from the realm of private experience and memory to that of public history and commemoration, from “milieux de memoire” to “lieux de memoire”’. Yet, as they note, commemorative efforts, such as Jeremy Deller’s ‘we’re here because we’re here’ (2016), which placed thousands of actors in First World War uniforms in public spaces around the country on the hundredth anniversary of the Somme, meant that the war had ‘never been so much around us and yet so firmly in the distance’.³²

The impact of the centenary can be felt in the burgeoning focus upon time and history in scholarship on Ford’s tetralogy.³³ Ford critics have always been interested in his ‘time-shift’ technique, but it is only very recently that they have begun to integrate analysis of *Parade’s End*’s narrative treatment of time with considerations of its treatment of time as

a concept.³⁴ The most ambitious attempt to do this is Max Saunders and Peter Clasen's chapter on *Parade's End* in the *Routledge Research Companion* (2019), which includes an extensive and intricate table of every narrative event in the plot, organised into chronological order according to 'timing evidence'. Clasen and Saunders' aim, they write, is 'not to replace Ford's presentation with a more linear account of the story', but to 'offer a diagram which we hope will enable readers to see Ford's artistry more clearly, and which will suggest new lines of research to future scholars' (297). While past critical considerations of time in *Parade's End* tended to treat time as an aspect of the psychological experience of war and the mimesis thereof, Clasen and Saunders' analysis of Ford's 'extraordinarily innovative and complex handling of time' (275) frees his expiration of that 'department of thought' from standard assumptions about war writing.

When Clasen and Saunders make the case for considering Ford alongside 'Proust, Joyce, Mann, Woolf, and Eliot' as 'one of the great European modernist writers about time and memory', they are implicitly invoking a recent 'temporal turn' in modernist studies (275). A number of significant works have been published recently considering modernist fiction's engagements with time and temporality, including *Modernist Time Ecology* (2019) by Jesse Matz, *Modernism and Time Machines* (2019) by Charles M. Tung, and Trish Ferguson's edited collection *Literature and Modern Time: Technological Modernity; Glimpses of Eternity; Experiments With Time* (2020). The latter includes a chapter by Andrew Frayn on 'Wartime in

Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* Tetralogy', which analyses 'the function and representation of time in *Parade's End*' to argue that 'seeing the war in terms of both its continuities and ruptures enables us to understand the ways in which the conditions of war are created, and the enduring impact of armed conflict.'³⁵ Rachel Kyne draws on similar ideas in her recent *ELH* article, 'The Sound of Ford Madox Ford: War-Time, Impressionism, and Narrative Form', which argues that it was through sound that Ford 'discovered a narrative tool with which to articulate the sudden interruptions of shock, the corporeal hum of "the eternal waiting that is war," and the psychic echoes of trauma.'³⁶

The world has changed a great deal since I began this article in the Spring of 2019. While he was working on *No More Parades* in 1924, Ford wrote that in a novel 'you can do anything: you can inquire into every department of life, you can explore every department of thought.'³⁷ This belief in fiction's infinite capacity to foster new, complex, and ambivalent ideas is at the core of a tetralogy which continues to generate a diverse range of critical responses even after almost a century of study. In an age plagued by existential political, moral and ecological crisis, the novel which asks "'How are we to live? How are we ever to live?'" remains, to my mind at least, unflinchingly relevant.

Notes

1 Elizabeth Hibbert, "'Waves of Resurgent Interest": The Critical Reception of Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, 1924-1974', *Last Post*, 1, 3 (Autumn

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2019), 21-44.

2 A reviewer of *A Man Could Stand Up—* (1926) in the *Times Literary Supplement*, for instance, called the novel a ‘wonderfully blended mosaic of incidents, speeches, reflections, retrospects, fears and confidences’: Frank MacShane, editor, *Ford Madox Ford: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 103; hereafter *Critical Heritage*. The *TLS* reviewer of *Some Do Not...*, for instance, saw in it ‘a Richardson’s completeness’; in the New York *Bookman* Louis Bromfield called it the *Vanity Fair* of ‘our day’ (*Critical Heritage* 93); Granville Hicks noted in the New York *Bookman* in 1930 that in *Parade’s End* Ford ‘has demonstrated the vitality of the Jamesian novel in our day’ (*Critical Heritage*, 203).

3 Ford Madox Ford, *Parade’s End*, with an introduction by Robie Macauley (New York: Knopf, 1961), xx.

4 Sarah Haslam, ‘Introduction: Ford studies in the twenty-first century: bibliography, criticism, and the gaps on the map’, *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Sara Haslam, Laura Colombino and Seamus O’Malley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 2.

5 Richard A. Cassell, *Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 212-213.

6 Ambrose Gordon Jr, *The Invisible Tent: The War Novels of Ford Madox Ford* (Austin: University of

Texas Press, 1964), 96.

7 References are only ever as asides; he writes, for example, that Waugh's *Sword of Honour* trilogy combines the 'farce' of *Good-bye to All That* with the 'moral predicament' of *Parade's End*: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 220.

8 Gordon, *Invisible Tent*, 6.

9 In his review for the *New York Times Magazine*, Kermode wrote that Fussell sometimes 'pushes too hard and includes some unconvincing evidence, like a man determined to make his point, and empty his card file, come what may.' Frank Kermode, 'An Innocence Died,' *New York Times Magazine* (31 August 1975). In *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (1991), Hanley critiques Fussell's assumption that a single 'universal collective consciousness' of the twentieth century ever existed. Lynne Hanley *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 23.

10 Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, ix.

11 Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (1933; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007), 225.

12 Sondra J. Stang, *Ford Madox Ford* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1977), 97; Fussell, 169.

13 Malcolm Bradbury, 'The Denuded Place: War

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and Form in *Parade's End* and *U. S. A.*, *The First World War in Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Holger Klein (London: Macmillan, 1978), 193-209 (193).

14 Robert Green, *Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 134.

15 Ann Barr Snitow, *Ford Madox Ford and the Voice of Uncertainty* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 6.

16 Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A study of English literary doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 61.

17 Paul K. Saint-Amour, 'Weak Theory, Weak Modernism', *Modernism/modernity*, 25, 3 (2018), 437-459, 440.

18 See part one of this article, *Last Post* 3, 38.

19 Malcolm Bradbury, 'Introduction', Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), xii, xxvii.

20 Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), viii.

21 Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 2-3.

22 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, v.

23 Tony Davenport and Robert Hampson, *Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 3.

24 Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the novel and the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 86.

25 Vincent Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 226.

26 Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, 'The New Modernist Studies', *PMLA*, 123, 3 (2008) 737–748 (737).

27 Rob Hawkes, *Ford Madox Ford and the Misfit Moderns: Edwardian Fiction and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

28 Ford Madox Ford, *Some Do Not...*, edited by Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet, 2010). Ford Madox Ford, *No More Parades*, edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011). Ford Madox Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up—*, edited by Sara Haslam (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011). Ford Madox Ford, *Last Post*, edited by Paul Skinner (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011).

29 See Part One of this article, *Last Post* 3, 29-30.

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30 'Julian Barnes: a tribute to *Parade's End* by Ford Madox Ford.' *The Guardian*, 24 August 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/24/julian-barnes-parades-end-ford-madox-ford>. Accessed 15 February 2019.

31 Paul K. Saint-Amour, *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7-8.

32 Santanu Das and Kate McLoughlin, editors, *The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

33 My own doctoral project, which was funded by the AHRC in 2018, concerns time in English fiction in the wake of the First World War, with a chapter on *Parade's End* and memory.

34 I am drawing here on Paul Ricœur's *Temps et récit* (1984), which proposes a 'threefold' model of temporal mimesis to distinguish between the treatment of time as theme, as temporal arrangement of narrated events, and as models of time conveyed through the experience of reading.

35 Andrew Frayn, "It was in that way that we used to talk, in July, 1914, of Armageddon": Wartime in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End Tetralogy*, *Literature and Modern Time: Technological Modernity; Glimpses of Eternity; Experiments With Time*, edited by Trish Ferguson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 26.

36 Rachel Kyne, 'The Sound of Ford Madox Ford:

War-Time, Impressionism, and Narrative Form',
ELH, 87:1 (Spring 2020), 211-244 (211-212).

37 Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), 208.

Meghan Hammond

Letter from America: Thoughts on a Job

Meghan Hammond

People would be able to travel now. It was incredible! Incredible! Incredible! But you *could*. Next week you would be able to! You could call a taxi! And go to Charing Cross! And have a porter! A whole porter! . . . The wings, the wings of a dove: then would I flee away, flee away and eat pomegranates beside an infinite wash tub of Reckitt's blue. Incredible, but you *could*! — Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up*—

May 2021

Two weeks ago I received my second Covid-19 vaccination. The pandemic that started a year and a half ago is not over by far. Yet sometime in the near future, I will be able to board an airplane and visit another country just because I feel like it.

The mood here in America could not be described as one of stable joy and optimism. But still. This summer you *could* call a taxi, or a rideshare if we're being realistic, go to O'Hare, and board an airplane to an entirely different country. You could even take the El to the airport without fearing that you are spreading a deadly disease to your fellow riders. You *could* visit a friend in Portugal, if not your cousin in New Zealand.

In the last few weeks my mind has settled more than once on Ford's *A Man Could Stand Up*—.

I know no better representation of a world that is both utterly changed and utterly the same as ever, a dreamscape haunted by the inescapable anxieties of years of trauma.

In my country, not only are we still drunk on pandemic, but we are also hungover from a presidency that will haunt us in perpetuity. It's been six months now since the American people, by a narrower margin than I would like, voted to evict Donald Trump from the White House and install somebody who is, if not inspirational to many of us, at least a non-sociopath who is not actively undermining our flawed but historically stable democracy.

It was no surprise to me when, on January 6, a group of violent conspiracy theorists bum rushed the seat of my government and killed five people. It was no surprise to me when some of the Capitol Police did nothing to stop them. It was no surprise to me when some of our senators and congresspeople continued, even after witnessing a violent and insane coup d'état attempt, to push the unfounded claim that Joe Biden won the 2020 election only by means of widespread voter fraud.

I was, however, surprised when I was moved to tears by the sight of pop star Jennifer Lopez, dressed in a truly sublime outfit that only she or the late Prince could have pulled off, singing 'This Land is Your Land,' a stupid song I do not like. What are those tears? I wondered at the time and I continue to wonder. Were they simply a sign of my relief that Donald Trump no longer controlled an arsenal of nuclear weapons? Was I finally having an emotion-

Meghan Hammond

al breakdown after being stuck inside my house for nearly a year? Or was I just allowing myself a moment of catharsis because I knew we were not going 'back to normal'?

I was never the kind of person who thought that 'normal,' in the American Republic, is good. How could it be, when my nation, like any other nation that has risen to dominate the world's goings-on, functions by way of structural inequalities and violence cultivated by both the apparatus of the state and by our culture? Still, I'm talking about something else. The sense of constant fear and anxiety that settled on me in November 2016 is lighter, but present nevertheless.

I do have moments of great joy and optimism, though. If not, I would not have brought a second child into the world during the Trump administration. Nor would I be bringing a third child into the world now, when the global death toll from Covid-19 is an estimated 3.3 million and rising.

Knowing that this third child is on the way, I've had occasion to ponder Ford's state of mind when his daughter Julia was born in 1920. He had just lived through the Great War and the Spanish Flu. How tired both he and Stella Bowen must have been in 1920. How very sick of an insane world they must have been. Yet Julia came into the world in 1920 and lived until 1985.

Unlike Stella Bowen in 1920, I am not a fertile woman in her twenties. I am thirty-nine. I had to go out of my way to have a third child. And I chose to do so

in the midst of global, national, and local madness. It will be up to my children to judge whether or not that decision itself was madness.

As for Ford, he published *Some Do Not . . .* in 1924 and followed shortly with the rest of *Parade's End*. In other words, the best of his artistic life was still ahead of him. I expect no works of genius in my life. I'm not a genius. As a writer, I strive for competence and little more. Yet I love my craft. It brings me peace to know that while this year I'm stepping into round middle age by turning forty and welcoming my third child into an insane world that daily makes me want to scream, I still have reason to believe my best is ahead of me.

Or, at the very least, there is a Portuguese beach ahead of me.

Garrett Bruen

Looking Back at the International Ford Madox Ford Studies Series: Impressions of a Relatively New Reader

Garrett Bruen

I never meant to become a Fordian scholar. I sometimes joke my decision was an act of defiance, though to be clear it was anything but. Midway through a typically exacting dissertation process, a patient mentor made the offhand suggestion that I might simplify matters by removing Ford Madox Ford from my dissertation. What began as a broad study of literary categories examining the odd marriage of literary and popular fiction in the works of five twentieth-century Anglophone authors—Ford, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, W. Somerset Maugham, and Graham Greene—narrowed to a more focused study of the filial and dialogic relationship between Impressionist and detective fiction in Ford's literary method and oeuvre. The suggestion of Ford's removal made me realize just how central he was to the story I wanted to tell, a story of how early-twentieth-century writers engaged with popular genres to confront certain narrative problems that arose during their writing careers as a result of cultural and historical events, a story of the formation of popular modernism. Of the five original authors, Ford most forcefully and suggestively articulates the affinities between his literary project and popular genres like detective fiction and historical romance. The change in dissertation topic, from five-author to single-author study, necessitated an expeditious immersion into Ford studies.

Like so many other scholars who have been charmed by Ford post-2002, my initiation into the field came via the fifteen annual thematic volumes of the International Ford Madox Ford Studies series (IFMFS 2002-2017), the largest existing archive of Ford criticism, containing over 250 contributions written by or about Ford, a series that Paul Skinner describes as ‘an indispensable scholarly resource for continuing research into Ford’s work.’¹ In my case the IFMFS series certainly proved to be so. And with the launch of *Last Post: A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society* in 2018, the time is ripe for a retrospection, which, in Fordian manner, will be simultaneously forward-looking.

Looking back through these volumes gives the scholar, as it gave me, a bird’s-eye-view of the last two decades of Ford studies, chronicling its players, contexts, concerns, aspirations, and accomplishments. As such, the IFMFS series documents the changes in critical approaches to Ford as well as changes to Ford’s status within modernist studies. The series begins with a reappraisal of some of Ford’s lesser-known works (*IFMFS* 1) and fittingly draws to a close by reconsidering his two modernist masterpieces (*IFMFS* 13 and *IFMFS* 14). Fittingly because, as Max Saunders suggests, ‘When IFMFS was established at the start of the new millennium, Ford appeared at risk of being remembered as a one-book author.’² *Last Post* is a testament to the success of the series. In an era of scholarship that is turning away from the study of monadic figures of genius, Ford is now one of around fifteen modernist Anglophone authors with a dedicated journal. Along the way, the series dedicates volumes

to reassessing Ford's relationships to modernity (*IFMFS* 2) and history (*IFMFS* 3), to his literary contacts and networks (*IFMFS* 6, *IFMFS* 7, *IFMFS* 9) as well as his artistic ones (*IFMFS* 8), and his relationships to England and Englishness (*IFMFS* 5), France (*IFMFS* 10 and *IFMFS* 15) and America (*IFMFS* 11). The latter two themes—France and America—reflect not only Ford's transnationalism, but also coincide with the expansion in new modernist studies to world or planetary scales.

While the thematic organization of the series provides some guidance for the student, emerging scholar, or errant Conradian researcher, the themes cannot capture the wonderful variety of approaches and subjects of the contributing essays in each volume. The absence of an index, either central or for individual volumes, can make locating relevant essays somewhat cumbersome for nondigital readers. The introductions, which vary in length from four to twenty-eight pages,³ as well as in scope, orient the reader and are a highlight of the series, offering thematic and historical context for the volumes and providing incisive descriptions of the contributing essays.⁴ To help navigate, I created an index, albeit a rudimentary one, with Ford's books running chronologically along the y-axis and incidences of each of the following running along the x-axis: the titles of essays from the series which discuss the relevant book, the individual authors and works to which Ford's book is compared, and the genres assigned to it by the contributing essays. I then thumbed through the volumes page by page, looking for italicizations and references to genre. Insert your own digital humanities joke here.⁵

The results were both expected and surprising. Predictably, *The Good Soldier* (1915) and *Parade's End* (1924-28) are the most written about of Ford's books, but they are unexpectedly followed by *England and the English* (1905-07), *It Was the Nightingale* (1933), and then, by my count, a near three-way tie between *A Call* (1910), *Provence* (1935), and *The Fifth Queen* (1906-08). At the other end of the scale await other surprises. *No Enemy* (1929) appears about as often as personal favorite, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911). *When the Wicked Man* (1931) and *The Simple Life Limited* (1911) are both more discussed than are *Romance* (1903), *The Young Lovell* (1913), and *Mr. Apollo* (1908). Ford's wonderful final novel, *Vive le Roy* (1936), is largely absent from the series.⁶

While Ford may not have a reputation as a writer of genre fiction in the same way that H. G. Wells, Georges Simenon, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle do, from its inception the IFMFS series offers a sustained examination of his engagement with genre: 'The note of the volume [IFMFS 1] is a celebration of Ford's diversity. As the editors argue, his versatility comes to the fore as he moves between satire, fantasy, psychological fiction, poetry, and criticism.'⁷ Ford's first works of fiction were fairy tales but, beginning with his collaboration with Conrad, contributors to the series observe how Ford's use of genre becomes more nuanced, dialectic, and hybrid. For example, Saunders notes the generic heterogeneity in Ford's initial styling of *The Inheritors* (1901) as an 'allegorico-realist romance,' a 'hybrid term' suggesting 'Ford's interest in generic fusion.'⁸ Ford's Edwardian fiction is particularly steeped in

popular fiction, making *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford* a rich source for discussions of genre.

In her examination of Edwardian publishers, trends, and markets from the volume, Sara Haslam argues that, 'In common with other writers of the period, the Edwardian Ford was generically promiscuous.'⁹ At the same time, the volume as a whole examines how the inherent tension between Ford's literary Impressionism and his use of popular fiction differentiates his experiments from other more conventional examples of genre fiction. Saunders suggests that Ford's experiments with genre transcend or transgress the boundaries of popular fiction due to their Impressionism: 'Ford's historical novels are always more than the generic romances so popular in the period. Their almost-modernist concerns with perception, psychology, politics, and representation makes them at once more idiosyncratic and more searching.'¹⁰ Saunders' comments invite us to think of Ford as more of a genre-bender than a genre-breaker, a writer whose 'almost-modernis[m]' modifies and complements his engagement with popular genres. In agreement with Saunders, Laurence Davies finds the distinction between Ford's literary and genre fiction to be a dubious one, arguing that while novels such as *Mr. Apollo* and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* might appear to be 'generic potboilers', they are, in fact:

creations of an evolving literary agenda, experiments in narrative rendering engaged with issues of the day and inspired by Ford's tireless interest in the nature of perception. [...] Thus their narrative practices overlap with those of

Ford's more 'serious' or 'ambitious' realist, or rather 'impressionist' fiction.¹¹

Crucial to Fordian Impressionism then, according to these contributors, is this foregrounding and countering of literary mode against the background of popular genre. Ford's well-known passage from the revised edition of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1935) offers an instructive metaphor for this method: 'Yes, they co-existed. It was perhaps only the human perception that could not appreciate co-existing scenes. Though you can of course. You can look at thin mist and see the mist or you can equally look through the mist and see the sun.'¹² Whether Ford was interested in the commercial or aesthetic potential of genre or both, whether he was a genre-hybridizer, genre-breaker, or genre-bender, whether he was an almost-modernist or a modernist-modernist, the IFMFS series paints the picture of a writer whose literary work informs and is informed by popular fiction.

Just as the IFMFS series invites readers to reappraise Ford's oeuvre and his place in literary history, to rethink genres as unalloyed classifications, and to reconsider hoary distinctions between literary and popular fiction,¹³ essays by Max Saunders, Sam Trainor, and Sara Haslam all underscore the parallel between Ford's career and the discontinuous formation of literary modernism.¹⁴ With regard to form, if Ford's early trilogies, *The Fifth Queen* and *England and the English*, 'bear vestigial traces of the Victorian "three-decker" novels, they gave way to the shorter, more novella-like and less expansive forms such as *A Call* (1910) or *The Good*

Soldier.¹⁵ For Trainor, Ford exemplifies and illuminates the transitional quality of literary modernism: '[Ford] is not merely a writer in transition, but a writer of, about, and via transition' ('Topologies' 86). The four volumes concentrating on Ford's literary contacts and networks (*IFMFS* 6, *IFMFS* 7, *IFMFS* 8, *IFMFS* 9) explore many of these transitions, contextualizing Ford's career within, against, and between the various literary schools, coteries, and institutions that constitute modernism. While discussions of Ford's Pre-Raphaelism, literary Impressionism, and modernism are expected, new readers of the series might be surprised to find discussions of Ford's postmodernism.¹⁶ Thus, by presenting various genealogies of literary modernism's formation, constitution, and legacy, the *IFMFS* series challenges linear and teleological models of literary history and rigid periodizations, illuminating modernism's messy and uneven unfolding. As Dominique Lemarchal paraphrases, Ford is a figure 'the study of whom makes it easier to understand the march of literature.'¹⁷ In fact, the *IFMFS* series reveals how, in many instances, Ford was leading the parade.

My own scholarly interest in Ford sprung not out of his straight detective fiction, but rather from his various 'inverted' and affined takes on the genre,¹⁸ as well as from his works of nonfiction such as 'Autocriticism' (1933), *It Was the Nightingale*, and *The March of Literature* (1938), in which he insistently declares that his literary technique is identical to the detective novelist's.¹⁹ To my good fortune, contributors discover the genre's influence in other unlikely places in Ford's oeuvre. Sita A. Schutt

compares the memorable scene of the carpet-beating couple from *The Soul of London* to contemporary depictions of London by Conan Doyle and contends that ‘The crime that might be, in the story of the carpet-beating couple, is precisely what Sherlock Holmes would track down and resolve, although it wouldn’t necessarily be the obvious one of murder’.²⁰ Building on Schutt’s observation, my dissertation allocates chapters to the scene of the carpet-beating couple and its double from Ford’s detective story, ‘The Case of James Lurgan’ (1911), in which he parodically actualizes Schutt’s conjecture by rendering two cousins, Edward Raven Holmes and James Bastard Craven Holmes, tracking down and resolving the mystery of a murder they witness out the window of a moving train.

Readers unfamiliar with the critical history of *The Good Soldier* will find the novel’s reception in the IFMFS series a case study in the power of generic framing. Sally Bachner situates Dowell as a Watson-figure, highlighting the pair’s epistemological failures as well as their shared fantasy of an ‘unchecked empirical power just beyond their grasp.’²¹ This essay can be helpfully juxtaposed with Roger Poole’s essay in which he contends that the long debated chronological and hermeneutic inconsistencies, gaps, and palimpsests in *The Good Soldier* begin to resolve if and when we accept ‘that Ford is introducing a completely novel departure in the technique of the “narrator”: the criminal narrator.’²² Where Bachner finds a Watson, Poole finds a Dr. James Sheppard, covering up his crimes with a deliberately deceptive narrative, turning *The Good Soldier* into *The Murder of Maisie Maidan*.

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In many ways Bachner and Poole's arguments echo those made by Mark Schorer and Samuel Hynes over half a century ago, making the choice of the novel's meaning a choice of its genre or subgenre.

Contributors have led my research into new terrain by detecting the tropes of crime fiction bleeding into Ford's forays into other popular genres such as the historical romance. As John Attridge argues, *The Fifth Queen's* 'generic make-up draws not only on historical romance but also on the popular Edwardian genre of spy fiction, and the espionage framework allows Ford to foreground the process of imagining the king's mental state.'²³ Attridge, joining other contributors, discovers a generic multiplicity in Ford's popular fiction. Of all the popular genres Ford experimented with, none elicited as much discussion in the series as the historical romance, provoking notable essays by Rob Hawkes, Jason Harding, Davies, Paul Skinner, Saunders, Seamus O'Malley, and Isabelle Brasme, to name just a few. While all of these essays pay careful attention to the Impressionist mode in Ford's popular fiction, one essay stands out by offering something of a weak-unifying theory of Ford's engagement with genre.

Davies' essay was a breakthrough in my understanding of Ford's experiments with genre, connecting Ford's writing in historical romance, science fiction, and fantasy, with his work in detective fiction. For Davies, Ford's 'novels, perhaps even his entire oeuvre, exemplify the literature of cognitive estrangement' ('Early Fiction' 185). Examining three novels that on the surface appear to have

little in common—*The Inheritors*, *Mr. Apollo*, and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*—Davies contends that all three display Ford's trademark Impressionism, 'the contingency of the senses, especially vision, the instability of consciousness, and the world's endless capacity to surprise – in brief, epistemological uncertainty' ('Early Fiction' 199). To suggest this is not to argue that Ford is a one-trick pony. Rather, essays by Davies, Saunders, O'Malley, and Skinner demonstrate how varied Ford's Impressionist experiments are from one novel to the next, making the epistemology of *The Fifth Queen* quite different from *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*. Davies' essay is a model in its treatment of Ford's genre fiction and literary fiction, not simply as equals, but as complementary and filial—two sides of a dialogic process:

In literary scholarship and theory, there is a time to lump and a time to split. After one has acknowledged the differences, there is a case for recognizing that Ford's Edwardian fiction, whether likely to be classified as 'fantasy', 'historical romance', or 'realism', has a great deal in common. ('Early Fiction' 197)

Davies' essay is a critical call to arms challenging the 'Whig interpretation' of literary history which privileges modernism while casting popular genres aside. Despite the expansion of new modernist studies into middlebrow and even lowbrow literatures, Davies argues that 'the need remains to explore the connections between works from either side of the literary Pale' ('Early Fiction' 197). By leaving the direction of influence open, Davies advocates for a critical approach to Ford that goes

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beyond simply recognizing the unidirectional value of genre fiction for literary fiction in order to investigate the ways in which fictions from either side of the literary Pale inform one another.

Now that the IFMFS series has come to an end, we look forward to a new Ford studies with *Last Post* at the helm. Or perhaps whether or not we are in the era of a new Ford studies remains an open question. What is without doubt, however, is that changes to the institutional publication of Ford studies will shape our future critical practices. Some of these changes are foreseeable, while others are not. Questions that remain: What voices will be added to the conversation in *Last Post* and whose, if any, will be lost? How will the new forms in *Last Post*—columns, short essays, longer essays, and reviews—refashion the subjects and practices of Ford studies? Will the Fordian news items foster an increased sense of community among members of The Ford Madox Ford Society dispersed across the continents?

We can hazard answers to a few of these questions. First off, *Last Post* will allow for a greater diversity of contributors since future publications will no longer be tied to the IFMFS conference, opening the way for non-Europe-based scholars, early career researchers, and other potential contributors who may not be able to travel long distances. Secondly, while *Last Post* will not be exclusively organized according to theme, the editors do plan on putting out themed issues in the future, including the upcoming *Last Post* 5, guest edited by Helen Chambers, which will tackle the toothsome subject

of Ford and food. This editorial decision broadens and diversifies the scope of issues without specified themes, while at the same time allowing the IFMFS to tackle a number of worthy subjects that have been hitherto left on the table such as Ford and women, Ford and popular fiction, Ford's short fiction, Ford and ecology, and Ford as literary critic/ theorist/ historian.

Of these possible themes, Ford and women seems to me to be one of the most pressing, not only because of the present moment, and not only because Ford's associations with women had such an outsized impact on his life and writing, but because, in a life steeped in complicated relationships, Ford's relationship to and representation of women is, to my mind, incomprehensibly contradictory. What might a thematic volume examining Ford and women look like? How might this recast Ford studies? Perhaps we will discover the answers to these questions in the future. As it stands the IFMFS series functions as a yearbook of Ford studies pointing neophytes in the direction of relevant scholars and monographs. The IFMFS series serves as a chronicle of the past twenty years of Ford studies, indicating the changing status of Ford within modernist studies, illuminating the various critical flashpoints in the field, and illustrating the emergence of new trends in critical approaches to Ford. If the legacy of the IFMFS series is any indication, *Last Post* will march on as an indispensable scholarly resource in the continuing research into Ford, literary Impressionism, and the dialogic relationship of those literatures on either side of the literary Pale: popular fiction and literary modernism.

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Notes

1 Paul Skinner, 'Editorial', *Last Post*, I, 1 (Autumn, 2018), iv.

2 Saunders, 'Introduction', *Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier: Centenary Essays*, IFMFS 14, edited by Max Saunders and Sara Haslam (Leiden: Brill/Rodopi, 2015), 12.

3 See Joseph Wiesenfarth, 'Introduction', *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, IFMFS 3, edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth (New York: Rodopi, 2004), 1-5; Sara Haslam 'Introduction: "Dreaming Territory"', *Ford Madox Ford and America*, IFMFS 11, edited by Sara Haslam and Seamus O'Malley (New York: Rodopi, 2012), 17-45.

4 The first three volumes were published without abstracts but beginning with the fourth volume abstracts are included in the end matter before ultimately moving to head the individual essays in volumes fourteen and fifteen.

5 My count is rough and almost certainly inaccurate. Thinking in the context of Gillian Gustar's column from the first issue of *Last Post*, it would be fascinating to see what results a quantitative analysis of keywords, works, authors, etc., in the IFMFS series would reveal.

6 I may have missed other appearances but the only in depth discussion of *Vive le Roy* that I found was Laura Colombino's 'The Ghostly Surfaces of the Past', *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts*,

IFMFS 6, edited by Paul Skinner (New York: Rodopi, 2007).

7. In the spirit of fairness I should confess that I wrote a rather long dissertation on the subject of Ford and detective fiction and managed to barely touch upon *Vive le Roy*, Ford's Fathead series, or his extraordinary story, 'The Romantic Detective' (1928).

8 'Preface' *Ford Madox Ford A Reappraisal*, IFMFS 1, edited by Robert Hampson and Tony Davenport (New York: Rodopi, 2002), n.p.

9 Max Saunders, 'Empire of the Future: *The Inheritors*, Ford, Liberalism, and Imperialism', *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, IFMFS 12, edited by Max Saunders and Laura Colombino (New York: Rodopi, 2013), 126.

10 Sara Haslam, 'Ford as Edwardian Author: Publishers, Trends, Markets', *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*—henceforth 'Ford as Edwardian'; 41.

11 Saunders, 'Introduction', *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, 14.

12 Davies, 'Ford's Early Fiction and "Those Queer Effects of Real Life"', *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*—henceforth 'Early Fiction'; 185.

13 Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1988), 258.

14 See Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore, 'Intro-

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duction: Transition, Continuities, Networks, Nuclei', *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations*, IFMFS 7, edited by Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore (New York: Rodopi, 2008), 13-28.

15 See Saunders, 'Ford and Impressionism', *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations*, 151-166, Trainor, 'Third Republic French Philosophy and Ford's Evolving Moral Topologies', *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence*, IFMFS 10, edited by Dominique Lemarchal and Claire Davison-Pégon, (New York: Rodopi, 2011)—henceforth 'Topologies'; 85-106, and Haslam 'Ford as Edwardian' 35-48.

16 Saunders, 'Introduction', *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, 15.

17 See Catherine Belsey, 'The Good Soldier: Ford's Postmodern Novel,' *Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier: Centenary Essays*, 31-45.

18 Lemarchal, 'Introduction', *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence*, 22.

19 For Ford's conventional detective fiction see 'The Case of James Lurgan', *The Bystander*, XXXII (6 December 1911), 535-545; 'Fathead and The Great Gadsby Fraud' *The Tramp* (March 1910), 107-115; 'Fathead II: The Brides Tragedy', *The Tramp* (May 1910), 216-233; 'Fathead III: Fathead and The Waistcoat at the Wash', *The Tramp* (June-July, 1910), 315-324; 'The Romantic Detective', *The Yale Review*, XVII (April, 1928), 517-537. Ford's final

detective story is his best. I was thrilled to read Venetia Abdalla's fascinating essay in the first issue of *Last Post* ("What's the Silly Story?": Fathead, Ford's Forgotten Detective', 59-74).

20 See Ford 'On Impressionism', *Critical Writings of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Frank MacShane (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 44-46; *The Critical Attitude* (London: Duckworth, 1911), 89-92; 'Autocriticism', *The Ford Madox Ford Reader*, edited by Sondra J. Stang (New York: Ecco, 1986), 266-268; 'As Thy Day', Stang, *Reader*, 268; *It Was The Nightingale* (1933; Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), 192-194; and *The March of Literature: From Confucius' Day to Our Own* (1938; Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 1994), 832-834, 845-846.

21 Sita A. Schutt, "Close Up From a Distance": London and Englishness in Ford, Bram Stoker and Conan Doyle' *Ford Madox Ford and The City*, IFMFS 4, edited by Sara Haslam (New York: Rodopi, 2005), 63, 55-66.

22 Bachner "The Seeing Eye": Detection, perception and Erotic Knowledge in *The Good Soldier*, *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, IFMFS 2, edited by Robert Hampson and Max Saunders, (New York: Rodopi, 2003), 103.

23 Poole, 'The Unknown Ford Madox Ford', *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, 119-120.

24 Attridge, "We Will Listen to None but Specialists": Ford, the Rise of Specialization, and the

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English Review, *Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations*, 35.

Ford's Reading IV: Books and readers in the *Fifth Queen* trilogy

Helen Chambers

There are 'great Bibles', 'small books', 'black letter type', reading pulpits, annotated books, books by Plautus, Seneca, Cicero, Lucretius, Machiavelli; readers include Thomas Cromwell, Nicholas Udall, Princess Mary, and Katharine Howard. The *Fifth Queen* trilogy is, despite its historical inaccuracies and creative distortions, a work rich in representations of early modern readers, material books and printing processes.¹ Noting Lise Jaillant's recent overview on Ford and book history, I offer here a further taste of an intriguing area of cross-disciplinary research.² A number of Ford's fictional works contain well-drawn depictions of readers, reading spaces and bibliographically identifiable material texts. Examples across a long historical timespan include not only the *Fifth Queen*, but also *The 'Half Moon'*, *The Portrait*, *The Inheritors*, *The Simple Life Limited*, and of course *Parade's End*; examination of these works uncovers clues about Ford's own reading.³ For those novels set during his own lifetime, Ford drew on his personal experience of contemporary reading practices and material texts. For his historical novels however, particularly the *Fifth Queen* trilogy, he undertook considerable archival research, acquiring astonishing detail about early modern print books and reading practices, without the benefit of today's scholarship in book history. The result is that *The Fifth Queen* also gives an insight (if sometimes obliquely) into

Ford's own reading.⁴

Ford's parallel interest in material books, including printing and binding, in a fictional era only seventy years after Gutenberg, is declared at the beginning of the trilogy. Nicholas Udall, Latin teacher to the Court, translator and playwright, enters the workshop, at Austin Friars, of a Master printer, John Badge the Younger; Badge and his men are later described as busy 'with printing of his [Cromwell's] great Bible in English' (FQ351).⁵ In a graphic reconstruction of the printer's workspace Ford writes: 'There was [. . .] a long black table littered with large sheets of printed matter in heavy black type',⁶ and the printer himself is 'square, dark, with his sleeves rolled up showing immense muscles developed at the levers of his presses' (FQ14). Later there is a dynamic description of the operation of the four presses, 'tall, black, compounded of iron and wood, the square inwards of each rose and fell rhythmically above the flutter of the printed leaves [. . .] apprentice setters stood before the black formes and with abstruse, deliberate or hesitating expressions, made swift snatches at the little leaden dice' (FQ350), images corresponding perfectly to contemporary woodcuts that Ford could have seen in Germany and/or in the British Museum.

When Udall first arrives at the printer's house he carries 'a book of Tully's [*sic*] epistles for himself and two volumes of Plautus' comedies for the Lady Mary' (FQ12), who is writing a commentary on Plautus.⁷ One of the most frequently mentioned authors in *Fifth Queen*, Plautus appears nowhere else in Ford's fiction; whether his own youthful

reading included his work we don't know for sure. There is however a thread of evidence through Ford's enthusiastic and repeated adolescent reading of John Addington Symonds' book on Shakespeare's antecedents, in which the influence of the comedies of Plautus is discussed several times.⁸ Ford would, through Symonds' book regardless of later research, have been aware of Nicholas Udall as the author of the so-called Plautine comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, which itself gets an elliptical mention in *Fifth Queen* (FQ469).

Lady Mary herself reads and writes 'in a tall room, long and dim because it faced north. It seemed an empty cavern, but there were in it many books upon a long table and at the far end [. . .] a reading pulpit' (FQ59). Her books (and her writing paraphernalia) are elsewhere described in material detail: 'books bound in wooden covers and locked with chains, books in red velvet covers, sewn with silver wire and tied with ribbons' (FQ448). Katharine is observed 'writing into a little vellum book of seven prayers to the Virgin that the Lady Elizabeth, Queen Anne Boleyn's daughter [. . .] was to turn each one into seven languages written fair in the volume as a gift, against Christmas, for the King' (FQ469). King Henry in turn gave Mary 'learned books annotated with his own hand, richly jewelled and with embroidered covers.' Annotations (marginalia) are specifically described twice elsewhere. Nicholas Udall 'pulled a small book [his annotated Cicero] out of his pocket, ferreted among the leaves then setting his eye near the page pointed out his beloved line *Pauper sum, pateor, fateor, quod Di dant fero*' (FQ66). Many books mentioned are

specified as small. By the early 16th century, with the rise of humanism in western Europe, Latin and Greek works were being reprinted in smaller format editions to facilitate circulation, and Ford had presumably seen some of these, but where? While researching his Holbein book, Ford would have noted the appearance of various books depicted in Holbein's portraits, for example those of Erasmus and of Thomas Cromwell. It is very likely though that most of his information came through direct examination of Tudor editions in the British Museum Library. Dr Richard Garnett, recently retired as Keeper of Printed Books, had long been directing Ford to items in the collections, so it is likely that he continued to arrange access to rare material, including elaborately bound and annotated books.⁹

Ford's fiction overall contains numerous references to classical authors, though these are more often allusions than actual reading. In *Fifth Queen*, however, the characters read, quote (in original and/or in translation) or report having read, at least twenty classical writers; there are also repeated mentions of reading Anglo-Saxon chronicles, and works of Church Fathers. Katharine reads the work of the 9th century monk Bishop Asser (*FQ*412), a 16th century manuscript copy of whose *Life of King Alfred* is to be seen in the British Library.¹⁰ Chivalric romances, called here 'tales of errantry', and one of Ford's adolescent passions, are presented as slightly frivolous feminine reading. For men, 'the books of the Sieur Machiavelli' are mentioned several times. Thomas Cromwell who 'had studied them word by word' (*FQ*23) later 'went swiftly into his little cabinet, and returning, had in his hand a

little book.’ “‘Read well in this, where much I have read. You shall see it in mine own annotations. This is ‘*Il Principe*’ of Machiavelli. There is none other book like it in the world” (FQ386). Nicholas Udall, who reads Lucretius at breakfast (FQ247), is caricatured as a pretentious schoolmaster whose conversations, notably with Lady Mary and Katharine, and also with his wife in Calais, are peppered with Latin quotations. Some of these, often given alongside a translation, can be traced, almost word for word, to the text or footnotes of Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621, many later editions), a work one therefore assumes Ford read, or at least browsed, in an easily accessible late Victorian edition.

Women readers, notably Lady Mary and Katharine herself, are significantly present in *Fifth Queen*. Contemporary records show Mary as well-educated in several languages, having received indirectly a humanist education (under the influence of her mother) from the Spaniard, Juan Luis Vives. Ford, however, downgrades Mary somewhat to a rather dull, goal-oriented reader and writer, interested only in commenting on Plautus’ plays, and less schooled in classics than Katharine. Presented here as an accomplished Latinist, Katharine also reads aloud to other less literate women at Court (FQ464). Ford’s intellectual and physical transformation of Katharine, as well as his moral ‘whitewashing’, is of great interest, as touched on by Seamus O’Malley.¹¹ Historical records suggest Katharine was a short, plump, pretty and rather frivolous teenager (though later briefly a dutiful compassionate young queen), but with only a basic education. Ford in-

vented a serious childhood education from Udall (FQ259) and turned her into a tall, slender, multilingual, well-read, articulate and thoughtful young woman who 'read in books all night from Aulus Gellius to Cicero' (FQ367). At court she had 'read and learned by heart passages from Plutarch, from Tacitus, from Diodorus Siculus, from Seneca and from Tully' (FQ278). She said she was 'brought up in the Latin tongue' and she 'had some Greek, more than a little French' and 'could turn a verse in Latin or the vulgar tongue' (FQ57-58). Was Ford then, as his marriage failed, creating a valedictory portrait of his own clever, well-read, multilingual wife Elsie, as remembered from their courtship and early marriage? This is hinted when Ford has Katharine speaking German to Anne of Cleves, explaining that she had learnt to read German as a child (FQ366), echoing Elsie's own education. This fictional Katharine also prefigures Ford's other attractive, clever, well-read, young women, most notably Valentine Wannop.

Notes

1 In text references are to Ford Madox Ford, *The Fifth Queen* (1906, 1907, 1908; with 1984 introduction by A. S. Byatt, London: Penguin Books, 1999), hereafter *FQ*. The Bodley Head (1962) and Oxford 20th Century Classics (1984) editions have the same pagination.

2 See Lise Jaillant, 'Ford, book history, and the canon', in *The Routledge Research Companion to*

Ford Madox Ford, edited by Sara Haslam, Laura Colombino and Seamus O'Malley (London: Routledge, 2019), 61-75.

3 For emerging interest in Ford's fictional readers, see Max Saunders, 'Impressions of War: Ford Madox Ford, Reading, and *Parade's End*', in *Reading and the First World War: Readers, Texts, Archives*, edited by Shafquat Towheed and Edmund King (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 63-77; and Helen Chambers, *Conrad's Reading: Space, Time, Networks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 164-173.

4 For a sense of Ford's own research reading on Henry VIII, see Ford Madox Ford, 'Creative History and the Historic Sense' (1903-04), in *Critical Essays*, edited by Max Saunders and Richard Stang (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2002), 4-14, and *The Letters of Ford Madox Ford* edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 19-20.

5 The 1540 Coverdale bible. Henry VIII's copy is in the British Library. While there is no trace of a master printer called Badge at Austin Friars (the home of Thomas Cromwell) or elsewhere in London, the Great Bible's printers (Grafton and Whitchurch) were actually based at Grey Friars nearby.

6 Mentions of 'black letter' i.e. Gothic style type, recur throughout.

7 Here Ford repeatedly refers to [Marcus Tullius] Cicero as 'Tully'.

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8 Invaluable for insight into Ford's more obscure reading practices is *The March of Literature* (1938; Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1994), 473.

9 See Ford's memory of Dr Garnett in *Bookman*, XXX (June 1906), 89-91.

10 <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/assers-life-of-king-alfred>

11 Seamus O'Malley, 'The Fifth Queen, Revisionary History and the Staging of Nostalgia', in *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Laura Colombino and Max Saunders, *International Ford Madox Ford Studies 12* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 225-235.

On the Edge

Ford Madox Hueffer

Author of *'The Fifth Queen'*, *'The Soul of London'*,
'The Benefactor', etc.

'And Waring?' one of the men asked. 'What became of Waring? Did he go off with Mrs Statham? You know there were bets about it before I went. One remembers that sort of thing out there.'

'Oh, Waring,' the other answered. 'No, it was rather funny. He went off by himself.'

The man from 'out there' whistled softly.

'Dapper Waring,' he said, 'discreet Waring. Got the . . . the giddy mitten; moustache and all?'

The other had the air of shuddering a little at the slang. It was a matter of going back to old times, and they were at the club, the old place—in the old armchairs. The man who had come back 'wanted to know' furiously. His face and hands were tanned, and he wore new home clothes as if they were the Antipodean tweeds he had put off the day before. The other knew; he was the sort of man who did; who knew his way about too, having stayed for all his life in a town where, for the man who knows, there are more gold and more fruit than in all the other hemispheres. He had put on more flesh than the other, and was the older man and the quieter. His beard was trimmed square and was thick, like

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a quick-set hedge. At home, he had a collection of very choice water-colours, and underneath his broad, bare forehead another of modern instances. All these things gave him an air of balance and assuredness. He spoke with the little hesitation of a man who doubted, not the validity of his opinions, but the power to express shades of a language that had been evolved by unbalanced people. The opinions he did express he savoured like the smoke of his cigar.

‘Oh, it was the other way round,’ he said. ‘You see, Waring had got as far as packing his bag. Further. You didn’t know Mrs Statham, or Statham?’

The other pointed the stem of his pipe at the inglenook of the club fireplace.

‘Wasn’t it Statham who used to sit over there sometimes—sit huddled up in a hooded chair and wear some guy’s hygienic clothing?’ he asked.

The other nodded.

‘Yes, that was Statham,’ he answered. ‘Mrs S. was another sort. I knew her a bit—very well before she was married. She used to be one of your bright and beautiful English ones; the sort you fellows talk about. Tall, golden hair in coils. A lot—burnished. And blue eyes. Drooping eyelids though, and a nose with a tendency to quiver in the nostrils like a blood-horse’s. Looked splendid, sometimes. Splendid!’

‘I don’t know what she married Statham for. Bored

at home, I suppose. I don't know. Anyhow, she married him. And then he began to get on her nerves after a year or, maybe, two. You see, he discovered his monstrous importance in the scale of things—*his* scale. Something reminded him that there were such things as death and health.

'As long as he limited himself to pills she didn't mind, I suppose, but when it came to red flannel liver-pads she aged a little. Grew up, you might say. It was a sort of foretaste, and opened up prospects.

'Well, Statham grew worse and worse; became the Statham you were speaking of; went to all the doctors in town, and took to wearing hygienic clothes. And then Mrs Statham became the Mrs Statham that Waring knew—a woman. And a real woman's the devil.

'It was a tragedy, really, for her. And I began to realise that I, too, was—well, growing up when I saw her. I began to think my hair must be getting thin on the top; round the crown. Bit of a tragedy for me, too, eh? You see, I had been away on business for the firm, to New York and Louisiana, and then I came plump into the middle of the whole thing again. We had rather intimate business with Statham's house, and I used to see him a good deal and talk things over at night.

'I got the whole position in a minute—in two, if you like. You remember Waring—a little fellow, well set up, close curly golden hair, blue eyes, with a twinkle, and that moustache of his you spoke of—a yellow one that looked as if it carried him about. You

fellows didn't know the man here—not as I knew him and saw him in that *ménage*. His eyes had a different quality; they didn't flicker, but went soft, when he talked to a woman. So did his voice, and his moustache drooped. Dangerous beggar!

'I hated him, until one day it came into my head that, but for the grace of God, there might have gone—me. Anyhow, I pitied her. There we used to sit at that dinner table of theirs; Statham with his head buried between his shoulders and a gigantic screen behind his back; hygienic clothes and a blue flannel shirt that swathed round his neck like that sort of patent legging you see advertised. Well, he had his tragedy, too, poor beast; he looked like an old bald crow on a railing in a dripping fog.

'As for her, she'd sit opposite, with Waring near her. She'd look at her husband, and practically age as she looked at him. There'd be lines on her face.

'She had grown up, as I said. Some women never do; but she had, and hardened in type. It was pretty sad to see, because she used to be, oh, a glorious girl. She was a glorious woman, too, when she didn't happen to have her eyes on her husband. But the face was intensely proud. You've knocked about a good deal, and can appreciate the type of pride—"upper middle class." You don't find it anywhere else in the world, except for about four miles around here. God knows what she'd got to be proud of, poor girl. Of having nothing to be proud of, I suppose; of having absolutely nothing to distinguish her from her neighbours on each side, and from their neighbours and theirs and theirs and

from all the street, and from the inhabitants of all the streets. She'd never done anything all her life and never would do anything until her time came to help the excellent turf in one of the cemeteries up there—Finchley or Highgate. And her mother had never done anything but that, and her mother's mother's mother's mother, right back. That was what she was proud of, I suppose; and it's about as good a thing to be proud of as anything else when you come to analyse it.

'It was a tradition, and what she clung to most desperately was the tradition of indistinguishability, of being like everybody else. Anything else amounted to—what do you call it: "albinism"? when you're a white chaffinch in a flock all alike. It's a race instinct, accentuated by a moral code, when you come to think of it, and this was like a blow from a clear sky, something unheard of and quite hateful. She was horribly afraid she was "noticeable" as far as Waring went. I could see it in the way she looked at me, as if she were trying to catch me "noticing." It frightened her, and fascinated her; and Statham was no kind of moral support.

'She would look at him, and I could see a sort of light in her eyes; flashes of rebellion against, not Statham, but the Infinite that had tied her to him. Then Waring would say something in a voice as if he were gargling *eau sucrée*, a voice you never heard here. She would take a sip of wine, and brighten up; flush all over; become like a Bacchante. It was as if she were listening to something, not to Waring, but something at a great distance, some incredible prompting, some thought.

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‘What does a woman think of every now and then? I have always wondered, and I think it is why I have never married.

‘As for Waring, he was well set up; beautifully for such a *little* toad. He carried evening dress well, and had an air of softness and discreetness, and a curly head and languishing eyes. To see her bending her long neck above her white shoulders, stooping her golden head over him! There was a sort of fitness of things in it. That sort of man will do the trick for that sort of woman; and any one would have looked well opposite Statham, even I.’

He paused, and began dropping lumps of sugar into his coffee; gazed at the little clusters of bubbles that resulted, and separated them with the extreme point of his tea-spoon. His friend looked at him with the suspicion of a grin, wrinkling the tight skin of a face with the colour and texture of a russet apple.

‘You were pretty hard hit, old chap,’ he said.

‘Oh, I don’t say,’ the other answered. ‘Anyway, I saw the tragedy of her position. Waring either did or didn’t see, I don’t know; Statham certainly did not. I don’t believe he ever spoke to his wife, except to tell her what Dr Ferguson had said in the morning, and Dr Thwaite at lunch time, and both in consultation with Sir Saul Samuelson on the morning of the day when he had felt such palpitations.

‘I don’t know what put the screw on—in Waring’s affair, I mean. Things reached a head in one way

or another, and they decided to knock the head off in the approved way. You know how these things come about; or perhaps you don't. It probably upset little Waring when it came; he, too, had a sort of fear of the noticeable.

'Anyhow, he got his bags packed and deposited at Charing Cross, and the tickets taken (told me that himself), and put on a bowler hat and a long coat for travelling in. Then he trotted to their house to take her for a trip . . . outside the radius. You know the street they lived in; a long vista of houses all exactly alike, three stone steps and some spikey railings, a round fanlight over the door, stucco facings painted white up to the first-floor balcony, and then grimy brick for several storeys—a turning off a fashionable square, S. W.; about two hundred stone stair-steps inside, and an echo like a well every time you stepped on one. Fancy that poor girl brought up there for several years, nothing to do all day, and then at night—Statham.

'Waring trots up the doorsteps and then up the hall-steps, and then pops his moustache ends round the drawing-room door. I seem to see him and the place; I wish I didn't.

'She was standing there gloved and veiled and frozen, ready for travelling to—the Isles of the Blest? Waring saw she had a letter in her hand. It struck him that she had been writing to Statham; the sort of letter one leaves on a dressing-table, I believe.

“Ready?” he asked, a little throaty, but determined to avoid a scene or anything like it, as if it were a

matter of a trip to Putney.

“Oh, I’m ready,” she answered. “But . . . look here.” She held the letter out to him.

‘I knew what was in it; I’d written it. I had had to go round from us to Statham’s—it was something about bonded business. I had found him, with a couple of doctors called in by his head clerk. And there was a basin full of something red—and a sponge. Poor beggar, we had never taken his maladies seriously, and he knew it. He was anxious to see his wife, as far as we could tell, because he was speechless. I think he wanted to get some sort of acknowledgement from her. It was a triumph for him; if he had been able to speak, he might have said, “I told you so!” I had sent the office-boy in advance with the letter I wrote, and then I followed with Statham in a cab.

‘That was the real tragedy of her life, poor thing, that scene in the drawing-room. I don’t know *just* what passed. I imagine that she must have tried to—not to persuade exactly—but to point out that the letter did not make any difference; that it was probably only one of Statham’s “little ways.” But Waring had a lively sense of the *convenances*, you know.

‘I expect, too, she didn’t look quite up to the mark that morning. She used to get washed out pretty easily then. Probably she had had a bad time the night before, thinking of the momentous step, and there remained in her face nothing but—oh, the pride and something else, a little alarming for a

man like Waring. He had a sort of vision of the future, of what she would be for ever and ever, in that pale woman. That and the idea of running away with—with the wife of a corpse were a little too noticeable even for Waring.

‘Anyhow, as we were carrying Statham up the steps—all that remained of him—Waring was coming down. He never saw her again; took a trip round the world; bolted, in fact. He would have faced the scandal the other way; he would have stuck to her, too; he’d even have faced out the being tied to her as he saw her then; I suppose because he would have had the run for his money—the glow and the glamour. That’s what it amounts to.’

He came to a stop, and re-lit his cigar.

‘And Mrs Statham?’ the Colonist asked.

‘She’s still Mrs Statham.’

‘And you?’

‘I’m still I—not more of a fool than Waring, and a little less than Statham. And I began to get bald soon after.’

The man from ‘out there’ hummed involuntarily the tune that goes with –

*Combien je regrette
Mon bras si dodu.*

Ford Madox Hueffer

The other was scratching a minute speck of mud off his coat sleeve.

‘Oh, it hardly amounts to that,’ he said.

Notes

Ford’s story was first published in *The Bystander*, XI (11 July, 1906), 81-84. The only textual change here is ‘theirs’ for ‘their’s’ and the removal of the full stop after ‘Mrs’.

The name of Ford’s character seems to point to Robert Browning’s poem, ‘Waring’, which begins: ‘What’s become of Waring / since he gave us all the slip’. This Waring is an artist who vanishes and is glimpsed in Trieste harbour by an acquaintance whose testimony ends the poem. In *It Was the Nightingale*, though, Ford recalls a conversation with Arthur Marwood which begins with Ford asking: “‘What really became of Waring?’” Marwood’s answer points to the situation of Christopher Tietjens and the history of his relationship with Sylvia (and the context is that of Ford’s preparing to write *Parade’s End*). Ford returns to ‘Waring’ a few pages later and adds that, as he stood in Harold Monro’s garden, the villa of ‘a poor fellow who had had almost Waring’s fate’ was immediately below him. His wife had left him; he felt precluded from seeking a divorce; conceived ‘an overwhelming passion for another woman’ but his wife returned – and the man committed suicide. See *It Was the Nightingale* (London: Heinemann, 1934), 190, 200-201. Ford’s glimpse of the woman in Amiens station, his Sylvia—‘her golden hair was done in bandeaux,

extraordinarily brilliant in the dimness' (191)—may have one of its forebears—'Tall, golden hair in coils'—here. A footnote: in the first-published Ford/Conrad collaboration, Granger is looking, without much luck, for old acquaintances in Bloomsbury: 'And Waring? Oh, he's gone no one knows where'. See *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story* (1901; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 128.

giddy mitten: to get the mitten was to be jilted or, more broadly, dismissed, 'giddy' here functioning as emphasis (Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang*). Ford would use the phrase again twelve years later in the unfinished 'True Love & a GCM': see *War Prose*, edited by Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 134.

'hygienic clothes' may refer to the products of the company founded by Lewis Tomalin which drew on the theories of Gustav Jaeger, on the benefits of wearing animal fibres next to the skin. Richard Garnett, *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991), 41, mentions George Bernard Shaw's spending £15 of the inheritance from his father on a new suit produced by Dr Jaeger's Sanitary Woollen System Company Limited. 'Thereafter he looked like a toy made for a child by an inexpert knitter.'

'pops his moustache ends round the drawing-room door': in 'On Impressionism', Ford referred to a story by Guy de Maupassant, 'La Reine Hortense', in the context of his own extensive research for the book on Henry VIII that became the *Fifth Queen* trilogy. 'But all that Maupassant finds it necessary

to say is: “C’était un monsieur à favoris rouges qui entraît toujours le premier.” And that is all I know about Henry VIII—that he was a gentleman with red whiskers who always went first through a door.’ See *Critical Writings of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Frank MacShane (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 38. A decade later, Ford writes of ‘the celebrated sentence in the *Reine Hortense* which Conrad and the writer were never tired of—quite intentionally—misquoting: “C’était un monsieur à favoris rouges qui entraît toujours le premier. . . .” (*Joseph Conrad*, 179). Maupassant actually wrote of ‘un très gros personnage soufflant, qui entraît toujours le premier partout’. See W. B. Hutchings, ‘Ford and Maupassant’, in *Ford Madox Ford’s Modernity*, edited by Robert Hampson and Max Saunders, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 257-270; Helen Chambers, ‘Conrad, the Hueffers and the 1903 Maupassant translations’, in *Ford Madox Ford’s Cosmopolis: Psycho-Geography, Flânerie and the Cultures of Paris*, edited by Alexandra Becquet and Claire Davison, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 15 (Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2016), 155-173.

Combien je regrette/ Mon bras si dodu: The lyrics of the song performed by Yvette Guilbert (1865-1944), ‘Paroles de ma grand-mère’, derive from the poems of Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780-1857). Gilbert gave several successful concerts at London’s Bechstein Hall in the summer of 1911, the year in which *Collection Yvette Guilbert: chansons anciennes* was published by Auegener Ltd. In April 1912, the same publisher produced a *Selection* in English.

The translations of the ten songs (not including this one) were by Ezra Pound, who used the first song in that edition, 'Suivez beautez', with words by François Villon, in his opera, *Le Testament*, written in Paris (1920-1922): Donald Gallup, *Ezra Pound: A Bibliography*, revised edition (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 132, 133; Omar Pound and Robert Spoo, editors, *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship, 1910-1912* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), particularly 99-100 and n.

Ford Madox Hueffer



Ford Madox Ford — c. 1930s

'On the edge': a few notes on Ford Madox Ford and Walter de la Mare

Paul Skinner

'A new book of stories came out in September 1930, with a title that would suit any one of [de la Mare's] works: *On the Edge*.'¹

The 1880s is generally accepted as the decade during which most of the central figures of High Modernism emerged into the world. Exact contemporaneity can, of course, be highly suggestive or utterly irrelevant. Still, of single years, 1882 comes highly recommended. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Wyndham Lewis, Georges Braque, Igor Stravinsky, Mina Loy, Umberto Boccioni. And, of others who had a strong direct or indirect influence on modernism's course: Jacques Maritain, Dora Marsden.

Ford Madox Ford was born a decade earlier: 1873 too was shared by a good many influential figures, some that Ford was associated with, others with whom he shared little or nothing more than that birth year. Of the latter, Alfred Jarry, Colette, Charles Péguy, Ellen Glasgow, Ottoline Morrell, Leo Frobenius, Henri Barbusse; of the former, Austin Harrison, who took over as editor of Ford's *English Review*; Dorothy Richardson; Willa Cather; and Walter de la Mare.

De la Mare presents one of those examples of Ford showing little or no interest in a writer who might have been expected to engage it; or is, rather, one

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of those in whom Ford showed early or selective interest and then ceased to do so. The cases of Lawrence and Galsworthy are fairly well-documented, while another writer that comes to mind is Rudyard Kipling.

Ford wrote several times, with obvious admiration, of Kipling's early stories, by implication the Indian stories up to and including *Kim* (1901).² Thereafter, Kipling wrote increasingly of England. His fiction became more elliptical and 'modernistic': some of the stories in *Actions and Reactions* (1909), *A Diversity of Creatures* (1917), *Debts and Credits* (1926) and *Limits and Renewals* (1932) are precisely what one would assume to be of interest to a writer like Ford. They are never mentioned.³ De la Mare falls, perhaps, into the same or a similar category.

In the third issue of Ford's *English Review*, he published five of de la Mare's poems, all but one of them subsequently collected in *The Listeners and Other Poems* (1912)⁴. In December 1909, Ford's essay 'Modern Poetry' appeared in *Thrush* and was later reprinted as the eighth chapter of *The Critical Attitude*. Ford writes there: 'The verse which of late years has caused us the most exquisite of pleasures—we are not holding it up critically, *ex cathedra*, as the finest poem that has ever been written—is the following:

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady,

Light of heart and step was she ;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.

But beauty vanishes, beauty passes,
However rare, rare it be,
And when I crumble who shall remember
That lady of the West Country?'⁵

'An Epitaph' may seem a slight enough thing. Eight lines in two stanzas: a simple vocabulary, limited further by its repetitions ('beauty' or 'beautiful' four times, 'lady' three times, 'rare' twice).⁶ Thirty years later, when Arthur Quiller-Couch prepared his revised edition of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, taking it up to 1918, he chose three of de la Mare's poems: the inevitable 'The Listeners', the highly-regarded 'Fare Well' – and, placed first, 'An Epitaph' (there printed with no stanza division).⁷ W. B. Yeats apparently remarked to Henry Newbolt soon after its publication: 'There is not an original sentence in this poem, yet it will live for centuries.'⁸ In the first full-length study of de la Mare's work, Forrest Reid asked, 'is not this brief epitaph as certain of immortality as anything that has been written in our time?'⁹ Well – 'anything'?

Ford accepted one more batch of de la Mare's poetry: four poems appeared in January 1910 (all later collected in *The Listeners*)¹⁰ and between these two occasions Ford published one of de la Mare's best early stories, 'The Almond Tree'. Apparently he asked for 'Seaton's Aunt' too, perhaps even more celebrated a tale, but 'then began to sink into financial troubles and did not in the end publish it.'¹¹

In the 'Preface' to his *Collected Poems*, Ford sets out the history of his youthful reading of – or failure to read – poetry and how he had more recently come upon 'the work of Mr Yeats, of Mr De la Mare, of Mr Flint, of Mr D. H. Lawrence, and upon suggestions of power in Mr Pound's derivations from the Romance writers', claiming to find there 'a new quality, a new power of impressionism that is open to poetry, and that is not so much open to prose'. 'Reading', Ford remarks, 'is an excellent thing; it is also experience, and both Mr Yeats and Mr De la Mare have read a great deal. But it is an experience that one should go through not in order to acquire imitative faculties, but in order to find—oneself.' He goes on:

The measure of the truth has to be found. It would be an obvious hypocrisy in men whose first unashamed action of the day is to open the daily paper for the cricket scores and whose poetic bag and baggage is as small as I have related—it would be an obvious hypocrisy in us to pretend to have passed the greater part of our existences in romantic woods. But it would be a similar hypocrisy in Mr De la Mare, Mr Yeats, or Mr Hardy to attempt to render Life in the terms of the sort of Futurist picture that life is to me and my likes.

He mentions there that both Flint and de la Mare are 'rather literary'.¹² That choice of words in such a context may recall Ford's letter to Lucy Masterman in January 1913, responding to her *Lyrical Poems* (1912): 'Your poetry should be your workaday life. That is what is the matter with all the

verse of to-day; it is too much practised in temples and too little in motorbuses—LITERARY! LITERARY! Now that is the last thing that verse should ever be, for the moment a medium becomes literary it is remote from the life of the people, it is dulled, languishing, moribund and at last dead.¹³

In an unsigned review of Flint's first volume, *In the Net of the Stars*, Ford wrote that Flint 'occasionally attempts to render some of the aspects of modern life. And it is from such rendering that – if ever it will – poetry will once more regain its hold upon the attentions of the English-speaking world. We wish Mr. Flint would accept the conditions in which he lives with more composure and see in them the poetry that exists now as in every other age. But it is better to look at modern life and to hate it than never to have looked at it at all.'¹⁴

Flint later published *Cadences* (1915) and *Otherworlds* (1920), generally more highly regarded but, though Ford remained on friendly terms and entertained Flint several times in Sussex in the early 1920s, he rarely wrote about Flint's poetry. As to de la Mare, there is an odd passage in Ford's letter to Harold Monro in June 1920, when he declared himself 'sick and tired of writing immense novels and, anyhow, I don't seem to get well enough to write much.' He went on:

So I am rather thinking of going for the laurels of de la Mare or Masefield. (No respect wanting to either of them or both.) But I think that at my time of life it is time I turned my atten-

tion to becoming really Tol-Loll, enveloping myself in clouds of mystery and the like.¹⁵

‘Tol-loll’: old slang for ‘pretty good’, drawing on ‘tolerable’ (though the Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire term, Eric Partridge says, meant ‘intoxicated’ and the Irish usage points to ‘bye for now’, ‘I’ll be seeing you’). In context, Ford seems to mean something a little grand in the literary world, an established and successful writer, as Masefield and de la Mare undoubtedly were by then and as Ford, after the professional hiatus of the war years, just as undoubtedly – was not.

The dissimilarity Ford alludes to in the ‘Preface’ between the rendering of life as practised by Yeats or Hardy or de la Mare as against ‘the sort of Futurist picture’ that presented itself to Ford and his ‘likes’ does rub up against the inconvenient manner in which literary history’s groupings tend to fray and stray. Ford’s association with Imagists and Vorticists—fragile and provisional as that often was—can be set against de la Mare’s inclusion in all five volumes of Edward Marsh’s *Georgian Poetry* though de la Mare himself was doubtful about appearing in the last two, agreeing rather as a favour to Marsh.¹⁶ James Reeves remarked that of the thirty-six poets that Marsh published in those five volumes, none of them, ‘with the possible exception of D. H. Lawrence, could have been called modernist’, and he noted that ‘Marsh’s instinct in dropping the series in the year of publication of *The Waste Land* was as sound as it had been in starting it ten years earlier.’¹⁷

Lawrence is, of course, an exemplary writer in this regard, literary historians and critics having tied themselves in knots explaining why he was not a modernist or, on occasion, why he was. ‘Modernist’ as against ‘modern’ – that suffix, that ‘-ist’ does not equate to the ‘-ist’ of Imagist or Vorticist or Dadaist. ‘Modern’ as against ‘contemporary’, then? Those Georgians: there’s Edward Thomas, Ivor Gurney, Robert Graves. There might have been Robert Frost; there was almost Ezra Pound.¹⁸

W. H. Auden would later write: ‘As the work of some of the Georgian poets bears witness, the danger of the English landscape as a poetic ingredient is that its gentleness can tempt those who love it into writing genteelly. De la Mare was protected from this, firstly by his conviction that what our senses perceive of the world about us is not all there is to know, and, secondly, by his sense of the powers of evil.’ Auden regarded it as ‘a gross injustice’ that ‘a poet who continued to mature, both in technique and wisdom, till the day of his death’ was consistently represented in anthologies by his early, pre-1920 work.¹⁹ And there is a sharp irony in this, given that de la Mare himself was widely recognised as an anthologist of genius (*Come Hither, Early One Morning, in the Spring and Behold, This Dreamer!*).

Not everyone would agree with Auden’s assertion of de la Mare’s continuing maturity of technique: his – sympathetic and appreciative – biographer observed that: ‘Other Georgians, like Robert Graves and [Ralph] Hodgson, might to some extent, as they grew, follow the same graph as Yeats

from a highly wrought diction to dry, pithy modernism, shorn of ornament. But for good and ill, de la Mare went on using any word he pleased, keeping to the end his marked preference, acquired in the Nineties, for the brocaded and arcane.²⁰ Penelope Fitzgerald remarked of de la Mare's friendship with Edward Thomas that, while the two of them 'loved England's earth and sky about equally', de la Mare 'valued the past not for its weight of history but simply for its pastness. This partly accounts for his disconcerting goblin diction, "the dusk of words" – *pelf, hark, nay, shoon, e'en, saith*, and so on. Thomas couldn't be doing with this, and said so, but their friendship held.'²¹ Of de la Mare's 1945 volume, *The Burning Glass*, Randall Jarrell wrote: 'Academic critics will overestimate de la Mare's book because he writes the "right" sort of poetry—that is, romantic and traditional; modernist critics will underestimate it because he writes the "wrong" sort.' And he added: 'De la Mare's world is neither the best nor the worst but the most enchanted of all possible worlds. It assures us that if reality is not necessarily what we should like it to be, it is necessarily what we feel it to be: to be is to be *felt*.'²²

From Menton in the autumn of 1920, Katherine Mansfield (another writer whose 'modernist' credentials have sometimes been queried) wrote to John Middleton Murry that de la Mare 'haunts me here – not a persistent or substantial ghost but as one who shares my (our) joy in the silent world – joy is not the word. I only used it because it conveys a stillness – a remoteness – because there is a far-away sound in it.' A few weeks later, she wrote

of her story 'The Lady's Maid' which she had just finished: 'This one I'd like you and de la Mare to like – other people don't matter.'²³ Her next book, *The Dove's Nest and other Stories*, was dedicated to de la Mare.

Arguing for a reassessment of de la Mare's short fiction, Josephine Jacobsen wrote: 'It is extraordinary how jargon intimidates; how prone we are to dismiss as irrelevant or dated that which comes unpackaged in the cellophane of current phraseology and images, and has nevertheless to represent those of a totally different era.' She goes on to ask: 'What is De la Mare's primary—and forever relevant—premise? It is the premise of strangeness, and of its creature, the stranger.' Returning to de la Mare's success in catching that essential strangeness of the world's phenomena, she observes that he does this in his ghost stories and fairy tales, and 'more often and more characteristically by his stories of those who dwell on the edge—on that line which divides (or does not) reality and appearance, life and death, which he has taken for his precarious foothold.'²⁴

In part, at least, it was a matter of personal and publishing history. In 1921, de la Mare produced his seventh volume of poems, *The Veil*; but his first volume of short fiction, *The Riddle and other stories*, wasn't published until 1923. Other prose volumes appeared a little before that—*Memoirs of a Midget* in 1921, the revised edition of *The Return* (1910) in 1922—but even by then Ford had other things on his mind. A new baby in late 1920; the move from Sussex to France; the commencement

of his great tetralogy. Then, too, in the wake of the war, Ford was more wedded to ‘the real’—and, of course, to ‘the modern’— while his conception of both ‘ghost story’ and ‘fairy tale’ had also been significantly revised.²⁵ Nothing in de la Mare’s prose had ever caught Ford’s attention in the way that ‘An Epitaph’ clearly did. There were more than thirty volumes to come in de la Mare’s future; but he had already slipped firmly into Ford’s past.²⁶

Notes

1 Theresa Whistler, *The Life of Walter de la Mare: Imagination of the Heart* (London: Duckworth, 2003), 353.

2 See, for instance, ‘Literary Portraits – XXXIV. Miss May Sinclair and “The Judgement of Eve”’, *Outlook*, XXXIII (2 May 1914), 599: ‘Mr. Kipling was a short-story writer of great magnificence – but that was in his youth’. Kipling was born in 1865.

3 Though Harry Ricketts argues that some aspects of Kipling’s work, including ‘An Habitation Enforced’ (1905; in *Actions and Reactions*, 1909), contributed to ‘the technical aspects of *The Good Soldier*’: see his “‘Early Kipling Told by Henry James’: A Reading of *The Good Soldier*”, in *Ford Madox Ford’s The Good Soldier*, edited by Max Saunders and Sara Haslam (Amsterdam: Brill Rodopi, 2015), 213-222.

4 *English Review*, I, iii (February 1909), 388-391. These were 'Alone', 'Never-to-be', 'Nod', and 'Epitaph'. 'Mrs McQueen' was included in *Peacock Pie* (1913).

5 Later revisions of the poem are minor, semicolons and a dash replacing three commas, and the substitution of 'will' for 'shall' in the penultimate line: see Walter de la Mare, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 93.

6 Instances of such repeated phrasing occur elsewhere, such as the four appearances of 'beautiful lady' in the twenty lines of de la Mare's 'The Three Cherry Trees'. Perhaps it's worth noting the frequency with which epitaphs are thrown up in de la Mare's early stories, including 'Lichen', 'Winter', 'Benighted', 'Strangers and Pilgrims', 'De Mortuis' and 'Mr Kempe'.

7 In *Thus to Revisit* (1921), Ford again mentioned de la Mare, 'whose work, as I have said, I read constantly and with private delight' (155). He quoted de la Mare's 'Epitaph' once more in *Return to Yesterday* (1931): 'And after all these years I still remember those verses and feel the same delight of discovery in them' (225). In *Great Trade Route* (1937), he finally quotes another de la Mare poem, 'The Listeners' (259), also collected in the volume of that name in 1912.

8 Quoted by Theresa Whistler, *The Life of Walter de la Mare*, 210.

9 Forrest Reid, *Walter de la Mare: A Critical*

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Study (London: Faber and Faber, 1929), 151.

10 'Miss Loo', 'The Witch', 'The Bindweed' and 'Where', *English Review*, IV, ii (January 1910), 189-192.

11 Whistler, *Life of Walter de la Mare*, 164: she remarks that de la Mare wasn't paid for 'The Almond Tree' either. These two stories head Graham Greene's list of titles, 'one man's choice of what he could not, under any circumstances, spare': 'Walter de la Mare's Short Stories' (1948), in *Collected Essays* (London: Vintage, 1999), 113.

12 Ford Madox Ford, *Collected Poems* (London: Max Goschen, 1913 [dated 1914]), 25, 27, 28.

13 *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 54.

14 'Publications Received', *English Review*, IV, i (December 1909), 161.

15 *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, 101.

16 Robert H. Ross, *The Georgian Revolt: Rise and Fall of a Poetic Ideal, 1910-1922* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 226.

17 James Reeves, editor, *Georgian Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), xiii.

18 A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet. A Portrait of the Man and His Work. Volume I: The Young*

Genius 1885–1920 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 179; Reeves, *Georgian Poetry*, xiii.

19 W. H. Auden, 'Introduction to *A Choice of de la Mare's Verse*', in *Prose, Volume IV: 1956-1962*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 401, 404.

20 Whistler, *Life of Walter de la Mare*, 318. Diction aside, Sylvia Townsend Warner, reviewing de la Mare's *O Lovely England* (1954), commented: 'For a poet who began as a romantic, and whose admirers have admired him for romantic quality Mr de la Mare has gone a long way towards being Parnassian.' See *With the Hunted: Selected Writings*, edited by Peter Tolhurst (Norwich: Black Dog Books, 2012), 284-285.

21 Penelope Fitzgerald, 'A Questioning Child' (review of Whistler's biography), in *A House of Air: Selected Writings*, edited by Terence Dooley with Mandy Kirkby and Chris Carduff (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 188.

22 Randall Jarrell, *Poetry and the Age* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), 138, 139.

23 *Letters Between Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry*, edited by Cherry A. Hankin (London: Virago Press, 1988), 312, 328.

24 Josephine Jacobsen, 'The Masks of Walter de la Mare', *The Sewanee Review*, 86, 4 (Fall, 1978), 549, 550.

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25 See Ford Madox Ford, *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), xx-xxiii, 5.

26 The de la Mare that does occur again, in Ford's later correspondence with Stella Bowen, is Walter's son Richard, who was then at Faber and Faber. Stella was trying to interest Faber, among other publishers, in 'Towards Tomorrow', a UK edition of *It Was the Nightingale* (Lippincott, 1933). It was, of course, published under that same title by Heinemann in 1934.

Good People and Bad Faith: A(n open) Letter to John Dowell

Roman Briggs

Dear John¹,

I received your manuscript via courier the afternoon of the fourth of last month, and read through it immediately, in a sitting. I was scalded. After steeling myself for a second consideration, I reread it more carefully that Sunday. I decided, then, that I must give all that you wrote a good deal of careful thought before responding with anything other than the note of condolence that I sent off right away. (You received that, I hope.) I apologize for the delay, as much as, in my estimation, it couldn't be helped. To be completely honest, I considered leaving my answer at that, indefinitely. Having never experienced anything approximating such horrendous loss and general adversity, I initially thought I should leave these delicate matters to more capable hands. (I'm assuming you distributed the document to others.) Then, ironically, I thought of Teddy. I became ashamed of my inaction. I couldn't just allow a friend to drown simply because I'm not the most capable swimmer.

As your parcel arrived, I was so pleased to see that you'd finally kept your word about corresponding, but crushed, immediately, by – well – *all* of it. This was the first I'd heard of the death of either Florry or Teddy. And, of course, the news of both came as

a complete shock. (After returning to Turin, I lost touch with most of the Nauheim group, aside from Herr Häuser and Maike.) As I'm sure you recall, I didn't know the Asburnhams to the extent that you and Florry did. But, I was always fond of both Ted and Leonora, despite their peccant tendencies. Of course, as you know, I absolutely adored Florry. I'm so sorry, John. Words fail. I had no idea that much of this was transpiring at Hesse. (I confess, I had vague suspicions about Florry, though.) I have so many questions, if, at some point, you feel that discussing things in person might help you to process.² Perhaps I can visit later this summer. For the time being, I'll table my inquiries in the interest of saying some things that, I feel, need to be said here and now.

Towards the conclusion of your manuscript, you remark that part of what makes all that has happened so intolerably sad is that the principal desires of each of you were perpetually frustrated. Each desideratum was available, but – absurdly – fell into the lap of some party not interested in *it*, in particular. 'Leonora wanted Edward, and she has got Rodney Bayham', you inform. 'Florence wanted Branshaw, and it is [you] who have bought it from Leonora. [You] didn't really want it: what [you] wanted mostly was to cease being a nurse-attendant [. . .] Edward wanted Nancy Rufford and [you] have got her. Only she is mad [. . .] Why can't people have what they want?'³ As much as our circumstances differ, I do understand your exasperation and disaffection here, John. All too well. And, I'm responding, in part, to offer you something which, I believe, you also strongly desire. Let me explain.

Much earlier in the document, you share your approach to reconstructing all that has happened: ‘I shall just imagine myself . . . at one side of the fireplace of a country cottage, with a sympathetic soul opposite me. And I shall go on talking’ (GS 18). A few pages later, you lament: ‘You, the listener, sit opposite me. But you are so silent. You don’t tell me anything’ (GS 19). It seems to me that, now, you really just want to secure an empathetic confessor who’s willing to respond honestly. Well, I have listened, making every effort to understand it all; and, I’m responding with a mind to offer some advice that might, eventually, bring a degree of relief. Still, I’m concerned that much of what I hope to articulate will come off as patently glib. A missive probably isn’t the best conduit for the particular ideas occurring to me. But, there you are at Branshaw, and here I am in Turin – and so, here we are.

Much of what I feel the need to say has to do with your striking construal of the world, and the nature of the people – yourself, certainly – populating it. Now, you might object, perhaps justifiably, to my focusing on such abstract matters in response to your very tangible losses. While my sympathies are certainly heartfelt, I won’t have much more to say about Florry and Ted throughout the remainder of this letter. That feels wrong, I know. I remember experiencing a similar unease when I first read Seneca’s *De Consolatione ad Marciam* – a letter written to a grieving mother, Marcia, which centers on appropriate mourning according to Stoic assumptions generally, and which pays little attention to the recipient’s unique anguish.

I remember making my way through Seneca's letter, thinking that the approach is wholly inappropriate, and verging on being immoral in its callousness. In determining which course to take in responding to you, though, I think I better understand Seneca's motivations. In considering what he perceived to be the viciousness of Marcia's mourning, Seneca located the root of her lingering distress not in the immediate tragedy, but in her existing worldview. Similarly, I believe that much of your own agony stems from, of all things, a wrongheaded metaphysics. *I know, I know* – I can't believe I have the audacity to suggest this, either. But, before rejecting the assertion out of hand, please allow me to make a case for it – again, I assure you, with every intention of mitigating your suffering – by drawing attention to certain passages from your manuscript, and framing discussion of these with insights culled from the works of the continental analyst, Cade French.⁴ If after reading on you still feel that I've been awful here, I'll understand. I mean well – but, there's that old saw about good intentions.

In the interest of clarity, allow me to briefly catalog the concepts central to what I hope to express below: essentialism about identity; self-deception and French's conception of 'bad faith'; conceiving the passions as actions. While I'll introduce these in turn, there will be, as with all else in life, nonlinear interplay throughout.

One motif of your interpretation of the events is *essentialism*: the notion, for our purposes, that entities possess confirmed characteristics which make them what they *are*, as opposed to being anything

else. We can talk about the essences of things in terms of the universal, i.e., the functional design of, say, the ashtray is what makes each individual ashtray a token of that particular type. Or, we can talk about essences in terms of the singular, i.e., *this* thing, here in my hand, is my ashtray in virtue of its function and in virtue of the fact that it was given to me by Noemi, last Feast of Saint Stephen. Talking of artifacts in this way is sensible. However, as French points out, we ignore the crucial distinction between things and persons when we speak of the latter as though they were the former. In the case of persons, to borrow a phrase from one of French's lectures, 'existence precedes essence'.⁵

Assuming you haven't become somehow steeped in French's work since we last conversed, let me unpack this. Borrowing, himself, from his Prussian antecedent, Otto Graf, French notes that we are 'thrown into the world' (*Essays* 41).⁶ Like all else which furnishes reality, we simply find ourselves here.⁷ Unlike all else, though, we have the capacity, *a fortiori* the *responsibility*, to make of ourselves what we will through deliberation and choice. I feel that your description of persons fails to express this.

When you write of persons and their respective lineages, for instance, you seem to suggest that something essential is somehow in the bloodline: The Ashburnhams, you assert repeatedly, were 'quite good people'. They 'descended' after all, 'from the Ashburnham who accompanied Charles I to the scaffold [. . .] Mrs. Ashburnham was a Powys; Florence was a Hurlbird of Philadelphia' (*GS* 12), and, in

your mind, was ‘a little too well-bred, too American’ (*GS* 15). Later, you invoke Florry’s American heritage again, this time as evidence, curiously, of her moral culpability: ‘[She] need not have done what she did. She was an American, a New Englander. She had not the hot passions of these Europeans’ (*GS* 58-59). She had an inherent coolness in her favor, I guess. Elsewhere, you endorse – or perhaps this is so for Miss Rufford, whose ideas you purport to communicate – a rigid class essentialism: ‘There were, no doubt, people who misbehaved – but they were poor people – or people not like those she knew’ (*GS* 167). In this case, it is presented as being inconceivable that persons of a certain pedigree could engage in acts as unsavory as marital infidelity.⁸ And, there are the many instances of gender essentialism: Florry, you observe, ‘was a riddle; but then, all other women are riddles’ (*GS* 25).⁹

As troubling as the assertions of group-essentialism are the countless instances where you imply that individuals possess fixed essences. Consider your appraisal of a statically inconstant Florry, keeping in mind your ultimate condemnation of her: ‘Florence was vulgar; Florence was a common flirt’ (*GS* 144). She was a ‘contaminating influence’ (*GS* 143), and a ‘whore’ (*GS* 59). Contrast this with your appraisal of and absolution of Teddy. Despite his part in various affairs, you describe him as, innocently, a ‘sentimentalist’ (*GS* 49). But then, ‘all good soldiers are sentimentalists,’ you remind me (*GS* 28). The Kilsyte Incident wasn’t Teddy’s fault – ‘he was *driven* to it’—to ‘comforting’ the young woman on the train—‘by the mad passion to find an ultimately satisfying woman’ (*GS* 44-45, *empha-*

sis mine). Moreover, you lay at the feet of a posited God ‘those desires, those madnesses’ which precipitated Teddy’s unscrupulous actions (*GS* 44). Setting aside inconsistencies involving your essentialization of both, but exoneration of one, this sort of metaphysics of identity seems wholly at odds with our – or, with *my* – intuitions about responsibility. In fact, French describes the will to fix identity in this way as an attempt to flee from moral liability. If one is *essentially* a sentimentalist, then how can he deserve blame for acting as sentimentalists, by nature, act?¹⁰

French suggests that those who are essentialists about the self are falling into what he calls *bad faith* – *mauvaise foi* (*Essays* 148). This is the tendency, common to each of us, to deceive ourselves about our own makeup and agency. This is the desire to become a mere object. But, why would we want that? French’s collaborator, Noelle Alix, puts it this way:

Along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it – passive, lost, ruined – becomes henceforth the creature of another’s will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence.¹¹

Transcendence is French’s term for the innate capacity all persons have, through willing – through deliberate choice and consequent free action – to

overcome his individual facticity.¹² While thrown into existence, we, thereafter, are ‘condemned’ to the yeoman task of authoring ourselves at each moment (*Essays* 41). While obviously having no say over the circumstances into which we initially find ourselves, we, once we’ve reached the age of accountability, become responsible for all ensuing states of affairs related to us, including the complexion of our passions. Conversely, you and the others populating your record, seem to self-objectify, over and over, shrugging off responsibility in the name of given and set identity. This metaphysical bend isn’t innocuous, John. It adversely affects our conception of our place in the world, and it taints our interaction with it. In order to illustrate this, consider Miss Rufford’s telling reaction to learning that couples married by the Church sometimes divorce:

She felt a sickness—a sickness that grew as she read. Her heart beat painfully; she began to cry. She asked God how He could permit such things to be [. . .] Perhaps, then, Edward loved someone else. It was unthinkable. If he could love some one else than Leonora, her fierce, unknown heart suddenly spoke in her side, why could it not be herself? [. . .] Her blue eyes were full of horror: her brows were tight above them [. . .] In her eyes the whole of that familiar, great hall had a changed aspect. The andirons with the brass flowers at the ends appeared unreal; the burning logs were just logs that were burning and not the comfortable symbols of an indestructible mode of life [. . .] suddenly she

thought Edward might marry someone else; and she nearly screamed . . . 'I thought . . . I never imagined Aren't marriages sacraments? Aren't they indissoluble? [. . .] I thought you were married or not married as you are alive or dead. [. . .] Oh, yes . . . the [divorcing] Brands are Protestants.' She felt a sudden safeness descend upon her, and for an hour or so her mind was at rest. (GS 167-168)

This is as informative as it is powerful. Here, you've reconstructed a line of thought and tandem emotion which typifies the person living in French's bad faith. First, Miss Rufford self-identifies as *essentially* Catholic. This is taken as an incontestable aspect of who she, at core, is and will always be. Along with this comes the assumption, in self-deception, that there are certain actions which are metaphysically beyond her, qua Catholic – divorce, in this case. While this self-conception places, within Miss Rufford's mind, rigid limits on possibilities for action, in divesting her of truly free agency, it also soothes. In her unfreedom, she feels safe from herself – from her own carnal desire to become involved with Teddy. But then, *crisis*. She learns that others – others belonging to her class and who've been conferred respect within her circle – take part in extramarital affairs. If *them*, why not *her*? (At the consciousness level, this petrifies her; unconsciously, it excites.) But, doesn't her essence render wicked action impossible? Doesn't this tether her to probity? Or no? She panics at the prospect that she, like Miss Lupton and Mr. Brand, might be capable of action inconsistent with her perceived identity.

Interestingly, Miss Rufford questions God, here. *How could He allow this? Hadn't He set the identities of Miss Lupton and Mr. Brand in ethereal amber – even before He'd created a universe?* So, there's a kind of localized Argument from Evil surfacing. Miss Rufford's pronounced consternation at the thought of all of this is then immediately quelled, though – not by her having come to terms with the open-endedness of human will, but in her coming to recall that the Brands are Protestants. So, *of course*, she reasons, their actions are out of bounds with what's right and what's godly – they're *essentially* not Catholic. God had saved her from herself, after all. Later, though, it dawns on poor Miss Rufford that, like the Brands, Teddy is a Protestant. Perhaps, then, Teddy loves someone other than Leonora. Is it her? Trepidation returns as Miss Rufford contemplates Teddy's freedom and its attending vertigo; meanwhile, she clings desperately, in self-deception, to her conception of the fixed self.

With such ensconced essentialist thinking on the part of Miss Rufford, it should probably come as little surprise that Leonora ultimately objectifies her – and that Miss Rufford doesn't resist.¹³ '[Y]ou must belong to Edward,' Leonora asserts, with an air of omnipotence (*GS* 174).¹⁴ Even after learning of Teddy's myriad trysts, Miss Rufford complies: 'I can never love you now [. . .] I will belong to you to save your life. But I can never love you' (*GS* 184). Not surprisingly, even at this stage, Miss Rufford continues to use the language of hard determinism: I can never love you. Of course, she can't – she's *essentially* Catholic, and developing such feelings for one who's *essentially* a philanderer (a 'sentimen-

talist') is beyond her (thankfully, she feels, privately). Sadly, coupled with the impending calamities, it's no significant leap from this sort of fused objectification and self-objectification to: 'Shuttlecocks!' (GS 191).

It's too late, it seems to me, for Miss Rufford, John – just like it's too late for poor Florry and Teddy. But, I sincerely believe that it's not too late for you, dear friend. What I'm going to say now may come off as especially curt, but, I think, necessarily so, given the depths of your self-deception and your propensity for self-objectification and shrugging off of personal responsibility. Very early on in your manuscript, you recall meeting Florry and merely *drifting* and *desiring* (GS 20). If I had had to describe you, vaguely, as I knew you at Nauheim, I might have come to these very words, too. This might sound paradoxical, but, over the years, you seem to have deliberately strengthened your passivity; and, to have knowingly reinforced your inclination towards self-deception. In disowning your thoughts, passions, and actions, you've come to view yourself as nothing more than the plaything of the universe. And, in acting in accord with this, I feel that you are complicit in your own sustained torment.

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Roman Briggs

I used to wince when you'd say things, even – I *thought*, then – mostly in jest, like 'I am the attendant' (*GS* 180). As if there was, or could be, nothing more to the story. I know you must realize that that served almost as a sort of mantra for you, while we were together at Hesse. Similarly, I was always bothered when you'd make claims such as, 'I don't believe that for one minute [Florry] was out of my sight [during the twelve-year marriage]' (*GS* 14). Just as often as you'd self-objectify, you'd engage in this sort of hyperbole about your attention to Florry – and, more times than not, I should add, out of nowhere. Meanwhile, we all had suspicions about Florry, as much as we cared for her. I know that you did too, John, based on conversations which we've had at the baths. Contradicting this, later in your manuscript you write: 'I have *unintentionally* misled you when I said that Florence was never out of my sight. Yet that was the impression that I really had until just now' (*GS* 72, emphasis mine). But, John, if you're being honest with yourself, you'll admit that you came to this realization some years back.

I'm bringing up your proclivity for self-objectification and for self-deception because, as French suggests, these dovetail in many instances, yours being no exception. Allow me to draw attention to just one more series of events in your manuscript which supports this. There seems to be a conflation of your self-deception regarding nascent romantic feelings you'd developed for Miss Rufford, and Teddy's self-deception regarding his similar feelings. You recall regaining consciousness mid-sentence, at some point, observing to Leonora that, since

Florry was gone, you may now marry Miss Rufford. But, you insist sentences later that '[you] had never had the slightest conscious idea of marrying the girl; [and] never had the slightest idea of even caring for her' (GS 85). Compare this with Teddy's encounter with Miss Rufford in the park:

. . . *something happened* to Edward Ashburnham . . . until that moment *he had no idea whatsoever of caring for the girl*. He said that he had regarded her exactly as he would have regarded a daughter [. . .] But of more than that *he had been totally unconscious*. Had he been conscious of it, he assured me, he would have fled from it as from a thing accursed. (GS 90, emphasis mine)

Pages later, you pick things up:

. . . in speaking to her on that night, [Ted] wasn't, I am convinced, speaking a baseness. It was as if his passion for her hadn't existed; as *if the very words that he spoke, without knowing that he spoke them, created the passion* as they went along. Before he spoke, here was nothing; afterwards, it was the integral fact of his life. (GS 93, emphasis mine)

Here we have the marriage of self-objectification – Teddy is depicted as *something* which things happen *to*, and not as an agent performing deliberate actions – and self-deception – Teddy is not taking ownership of his thoughts or feelings, which absolves him, within his mind (and yours), of personal responsibility. Now, let's connect this up with

Roman Briggs

what you report of yourself a bit later: ‘I was in love with Nancy Rufford [. . .] *I had never thought about it until I heard Leonora state that I might now marry her.* But, from that moment until her worse than death, I do not suppose that I much thought about anything else’ (GS 97, emphasis mine). But, John, as you admit above, Leonora’s assertion regarding the possibility of marriage was said *in response to your* ‘unconsciously spoken’ observation: ‘Now I can marry the girl’ (GS 85). This is not my reconstruction of the order of events; I’m pulling, here, directly from the chronology which *you* offer in the manuscript. So, you can see, self-deception is at work, here.

The adjoining self-objectification is equally conspicuous. In your rendering of Teddy’s coming to understand that he has romantic feelings for Miss Rufford, you sap his agency, transferring it to words escaping his mouth, but not said by him. Your version of the events leading up to your realization reduces your own agency to an even greater extent. Your words, it seems, materialize from the mouth of Leonora. You’re Othering your passions.

Citing French, I suggested before that many fall into bad faith in attempting to alleviate the anxieties associated with the robust responsibility which issues from living freely. There’s a weight to responsibility, no doubt. In *choosing* objectification you bear a different burden, though: the weight of the universe. While French describes the dread associated with authenticity, there’s a unique two-pronged hardship which accompanies living in bad faith: here, you’ve chosen to live in service to

facticity, and to forfeit a special dignity earned by agents actively engaged in and responsible for their projects. You need not be a nurse-attendant, John – just as Teddy needn't have been a sentimentalist. Your story is not *essentially* sad; take responsibility for your part in making it that way. I pray that this is more helpful than hurtful.

Yours,

C. Freund

Notes [Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Les White for providing extremely helpful comments on an earlier draft of this work and for encouraging me to locate a home for it in print.]

1 These notes are not intended to be interpreted as the work of Conrad Freund—my contrived friend of John Dowell, and the author of this letter—and so are directed to the readers of this journal, and not to Dowell. They exist exclusively in the actual world.

2 Samuel Hynes writes: 'The problems involved in the interpretation of *The Good Soldier* all stem from one question: What are we to make of the novel's narrator? Or, to put it a bit more formally, what authority should we allow to the version of events which he narrates?' See Hynes, 'The Epistemology of *The Good Soldier*', *The Sewanee Review*, 69, 2 (1961), 225. To put a point on things, Hynes could have referred to the versions of events which Dow-

ell narrates. If we couple the fact that Freund had known the principals for a time at Nauheim with the fecund inconsistencies of Dowell's account, it's easy to imagine the former's astonishment and pronounced confusion in reading through the 'kaleidoscopic' account which arrived at his doorstep: see John Tytell, 'The Jamesian Legacy in *The Good Soldier*', *Studies in the Novel*, 3, 4 (1971), 365. If we, Ford's readers, have questions regarding what actually happened, imagine how Freund must feel. On the other hand, having known Dowell, perhaps he was better prepared than we for such incongruities in the story being told. Determining the authority allowed to Dowell has been a fruitful topic among critics, and for obvious reasons. In reaching out to Dowell here by proxy of Freund, however, I'm allowing the latter to explore a matter which is overlooked when the attention becomes fixed on parsing the details of the story: what Dowell's interpretation of the events can tell us about him and his worldview. And so, here questions pertaining to what actually happened will be bracketed in favor of those pertaining to what Dowell's rendering can tell us about him and his plight. As Nietzsche remarks, false accounts (to whatever degree) are often invaluable in helping us to diagnose their authors.

3 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* (1915; edited by Max Saunders, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 181; hereafter *GS*.

4 This is a reference to Jean-Paul Sartre. However, since Sartre *qua* philosopher doesn't exist in Dowell's 1910s, I will attribute his ideas within Freund's

letter to the fictitious academician, Cade French – aside, of course, from in-text citations within parentheses. In the interest of keeping the details of Freund’s letter contemporaneous with Dowell’s 1910s, I will relegate all references to other critics to these endnotes.

5 Sartre, *Essays in Existentialism*, translated by Wade Baskin (Seacaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing Group, 1999), 34; hereafter *Essays*.

6 Graf will stand in for Martin Heidegger, who didn’t introduce the notion of *thrownness* and its pull towards inauthenticity – *falling* – until our 1920s.

7 Sartre writes: ‘[M]an exists, turns up . . . and only afterwards, defines himself . . . At first he is a nothing’: *Essays*, 36.

8 Compare with Dowell’s own offhand generalization regarding the good and the moral: ‘Good people, be they ever so diverse in creed, do not threaten each other’ (*GS* 57).

9 Compare with Leonora’s generalizations regarding men: ‘[Leonora] saw life as a perpetual sex-battle between husbands who desire to be unfaithful to their wives, and wives who desire to recapture their husbands in the end [. . .] Man, for her, was a sort of brute who must have his divagations, his moments of excess, his nights out, his, let’s say, rutting seasons’ (*GS* 144).

10 The same, of course, can be said of the essential whore; but, no one ever accused Dowell of being overly fair in his assessments.

11 Alix will stand in for Simone de Beauvoir: see her 'Introduction to The Second Sex', in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, edited by Linda Nichols (New York: Routledge, 1997), 16-17.

12 I decided to include sexist language, since Freud would have also during the period in which his letter was written. It took all the *will* – speaking of which – that I could muster not to 'correct' this.

13 This procuring of women by Leonora for Edward – and, in order to retain possession of Edward qua thing – is another intriguing pattern in the novel. I don't think it's by accident that the character demonstrating the most agency routinely objectifies those around her (Charlie and Maisie Maidan; Florence; Nancy). While Leonora's tendency is to reify others, there are moments where she, too, gives in to essentialism regarding her own identity. At one point, perhaps due in part to her ongoing close proximity to Nancy, the pair perform a kind of call-and-response involving the assessment of each, that she is essentially morally bad: '[Nancy:] "We're no good – my mother and I" . . . [Leonora]: "No. No. You're not no good. It's that I am no good"' (GS 165).

14 This precedes a kind of judgement offered by Leonora, where Nancy is seemingly being punished, but, ironically for how her essential being (wholly passive fact) had affected Edward: 'It was the price

that the girl must pay for the sin of making Edward love her . . . The girl must become an adulteress; she had wronged Edward by being so beautiful, so gracious, so good. It was sinful to be so good. She must pay the price so as to save the man she had wronged' (*GS* 176). As with Dowell's judgment of Florence, here Nancy is handed down a punishment of sorts for being no more than, it is suggested throughout, what she essentially is and must be: *so beautiful, so gracious, so good*. How could a sentimentalist like Edward be expected to resist? He'd been trapped by her many pleasing traits.

Gillian Gustar

The Journal of a PhD Student

Gillian Gustar

This is the fourth of a series of short articles describing my journey as a PhD student researching madness in Ford's novels. So far, I have offered a series of snapshots. My first column discussed the 'start up' phase in which I was using a quantitative approach to scope my topic. The second went off the paper trail to Germany to uncover more of what had happened to Ford when he was treated there for a nervous breakdown in 1904. In the third column I deviated from the main route of my research down a metaphorical byway to consider Ford's use of animal imagery, something which might or might not prove to be significant for my thesis. Each has provided, I hope, a nugget of my learning about the research process and a brief glimpse into Ford's writing about madness. In this column I want to take a different approach and to hover above the PhD process to describe some of its challenges, the demands it makes and what it offers. In true Fordian spirit, it is an unapologetically personal and subjective account with no claims to being representative. However, I hope it will find resonance with fellow students, be informative for those considering PhD study and perhaps offer reflective stimulus to those who supervise doctoral study.

The first thing to say is that I have a past, a life before this PhD. All researchers do and that past shapes their interests, the questions they ask and the way they approach their subject. Even this

claim betrays my earlier education in the social sciences where the researcher is treated as part of the process, not as an 'objective' outsider. Specifically, I took a Masters degree in Organisation and People Development by 'self-managed learning' methods,¹ an approach which advocates knowing where you are starting from and understanding the context in which you are learning. It reminds me of the need to contextualise what I am about to say about my PhD experience.

I am what is often referred to as a 'mature' student, a term which I have come to see as unhelpful, for reasons which will become clear. I study on a part-time basis with the English department of a British university which is three hours journey from my home. These basic facts shape my experience and differentiate it perhaps from that of students in other contexts. Difficulties with access to university groups and facilities, balancing PhD work against other commitments, finding continuity of peer groups, the length of time to completion, and relatively high dropout rates are known problems for part-time students, and ones which cross cultures.² I was aware of the difficulties before I began, and though they make for a daunting process, I came to it with experiences which I thought would prove helpful. I had had a long corporate career in a field of work where it took years not months to see results. I had been working independently from home for several years, had experience of planning and managing competing strands of work, and an existing network of contacts who had walked the PhD path before me. I came armed with Masters degrees both in Literature and in Creative Writing

for Personal Development,³ a sense of how my own writing process works, and a clear idea of what I wanted to research. I felt as well-prepared as I could be but, of course, context is everything and these factors proved sometimes less helpful than I had imagined, and occasionally to be barriers.

This realisation had been seeping into my awareness but came into sharp focus when two events collided: my achievement of the step known as ‘the Upgrade’ in U.K. universities, and my country going into ‘lockdown’ because of the Covid-19 pandemic. They happened within a week or so of each other. I imagine that the upgrade would normally be a natural point of pause, a chance to take stock because it marks the transition from simply having a ‘good idea’ about a thesis to having persuaded your department that you have one which is both valuable and viable. In my case the process had not been straightforward so it was less a moment of jubilation than one of relief that I could continue my research. At the same time, I was now about to move into a new phase of the work at a moment of high national anxiety and uncertainty, and with many practical constraints.

Faced with changing circumstances, I did what had served me well in my corporate career – I pulled out my project plans, began to revise my goals and re-planned the work. If nothing else, this usually creates a comforting illusion of certainty. As I rewrote the plans again, however, in a much less stable context, I found myself questioning how far they had helped, and where they might have hindered me, in working towards the upgrade. Planning creates

a focus on outputs, on things which must be done to deadlines. It was useful in helping me to size the task ahead, to gain a sense of intent and urgency, and to commit to the relentless work needed. It was less good at creating the relaxed mental space needed to explore, think, argue or simply subconsciously process ideas.

I think it was the weird – both unreal and terrifyingly real – period of lockdown, which somehow unlocked my thinking. Forced back in on myself, I did the next thing I knew how to do. I wrote, reflexively, in my PhD journal. What emerged was a sense that what had served me well previously was perhaps not the best choice for the kind of work I was now engaged in. For instance, I was used to working alone, but on things at which I was already skilled and of which I had a lot of experience. I was used to distance learning, but the qualifications I had taken required regular submissions of assessed work, so I had a clear sense of how I was doing. My ability to plan large projects helped me not to feel overwhelmed and allowed me to complete six-monthly reviews of my progress and next steps with confidence. At the same time, I felt exasperated with myself when I fell behind my self-imposed schedules and began to see blind alleys in my research as unproductive. Knowing my own writing process was a mixed blessing. I understand writing as a form of thinking, and so wrote regularly and organically, but this did not convert easily into a coherent argument about what Ford was doing with madness in his novels and why it mattered. This led to significant rewriting which I began to see as another impediment to progress rather than

Gillian Gustar

a natural part of the process. In measuring myself against past standards and work I became increasingly self-critical and seriously considered leaving the programme.

My part-time status and physical distance from the university did play some part in this. Although I made an effort to attend early seminars for new students, as these progressed the cohort naturally split into those students frequently present at the university and so in contact with each other, and those of us who were not. Because of travel time, for a meeting which might last an hour or two, perhaps starting in the early evening, I would effectively have to commit a full day – so I became very selective about which I attended. I was comfortable working alone between supervision meetings and had you asked me I would have honestly answered that I was not finding the isolation of PhD study problematic. There is a difference though between something being unproblematic and it being a missed opportunity. There is also a difference between isolation and insularity. What I lacked, though I did not see it, was the calibration of my own ways of working and thinking against those of other students.

These insights came not through any brilliance of reflection but from our changed world. Much of what had previously taken place in the university buildings suddenly moved online and became infinitely more accessible to me. As a result, over this summer of 2020 I was able to participate in a Research Centre book group, to shape and facilitate a workshop on writing strategies with two other stu-

dents, to attend a regular forum at which students within the department share their research, and to present my own. Observations on and questions about my work from people researching in entirely different fields proved thought-provoking in ways that I had underestimated, and the opportunity to hear how others are framing their research is enriching. Isolation in a PhD, it turns out, is not just a physical thing. It is about not having found your tribes. I use the plural deliberately because I have long considered the Ford Society my natural home. It offers a stable community whereas the idea of a cohort is a very transitory thing for a part-time student. Some of the students I began with have completed, others are nearing completion and even those at the same stage will move forward to the finish line more quickly or slowly than me. Of course, the real continuity comes from the supervisory relationship, which is an anchor for the student, but is also a relationship which needs constant evolution to support the shift from dependence to independence which the PhD journey requires.

I think that this captures something important about the process of pursuing a PhD. It is at once intensely individual and at the same time enmeshed in networks of relationships. It requires both the mental relaxation to do what a fellow student calls the 'difficult' thinking and the mental discipline to craft that thinking into written argument. It demands a tolerance for ambiguity but also a determination to put a narrative around something inherently uncertain and messy. More than anything though, it asks of the student that they form a different relationship with themselves, that they let

go of, or at least adapt, parts of their way of functioning. Whilst the old adage that you have to be intrinsically interested in and motivated by your topic is certainly true it is not, of itself, enough. The real value of my PhD journey is proving to be as much one of self-discovery as it is about Ford and madness. That leads me back to the term ‘mature student’ and why I find it unhelpful. Implicit in the word ‘mature’ is the idea that you are fully grown or have reached an advanced stage of development. Whilst this may be true in some contexts, it is not true in relation to commencing a course of PhD study which, as I hope my personal account illustrates, might require unlearning or at least repositioning some skills and abilities. From now on, I claim the name PhD OWL, a term coined by participants in an online course on how to survive a PhD, and the name of another of my network groups.⁴ It stands for ‘older, wise learners’ and I hope to live up to it in navigating my way to completion of my research on Ford.

Notes

1 A process developed by Dr Ian Cunningham in the 1970s and very prevalent in the UK business world by the 1990s.

2 I have learned from an Australian-led international online group for older PhD students that the processes differ by country, but the difficulties can be similar.

3 A programme blending the disciplines of creative writing and psychology, designed to improve writ-

ers' reflexivity and to train them in using creative writing developmentally with others.

4 A MOOC developed by Inger Mewburn, 'the PhD Whisperer', for the Australian National University.

Seamus O'Malley

Helen Small, *The Function of Cynicism at the Present Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 288 pp.

Seamus O'Malley

To say we live in a cynical age states half a truth. Not in recent memory has there been so much distrust of established institutions and discourses, yet such cynicism has been met by a reinvigorated idealism that presents its own problems. Cynicism helped fuel the rise of illiberal movements and regimes, making it difficult to push back against the falsehoods of Donald Trump or the Brexit campaign: apologists don't defend the lies as much as insist that all politicians lie. But Helen Small, in her perceptive new volume *The Function of Cynicism at the Present Time*, warns against responding to such cynicism with only a reactive idealism, arguing for a continued role for a healthy cynicism as she explores its appearance in Western literature and philosophy. She wonders 'how moral and cultural ideals keep (or indeed, find) their value for people as those ideals come under pressure' (v). While such pressure might lead to unproductive or even toxic cynicism, Small wants to take a 'less alarmist view' (1) of cynicism and preserve an appreciation for it, arguing that it is not just for trolls and malcontents but 'a widely employed internal and external credibility check on those promoting moral ideals' (viii). Some cynicism is necessary for any period interrogating moral or ethical norms, and Small is 'interested in a better description of what cynical challenges to the dominant morality

can offer as part of a wider conception of public argument' (3).

Small does begin, as expected, with the Cynics of antiquity, but cautions that cynicism (in the lower-case) is 'a common aspect of human psychological functioning' (v) and even—if we are being cynical—the basis of psychology itself, which can reduce supposedly intellectual or moral decisions to self-interest (Freud's Id, Skinner's conditioning, etc.). And while we might debate how much self-interest precisely informs our decisions, that fact that it does to any degree makes cynicism's claims always worth considering. Like the broken clock, cynicism is guaranteed to be correct some of the time.

The ancient Cynics—Diogenes and Antisthenes especially—presented stubborn challenges to other philosophical schools, not through the penetration of Cynical critique so much as the style of its argumentation, which wasn't really arguing at all: the Cynics responded to any philosophical ideal by pointing out its origin in self-interest, and such a rhetorical gesture was intended to shut down a conversation, not engage in one. While subsequent western philosophy owes so much more to the Socratic tradition, in the Cynics Nietzsche—also not keen on rationalist debate—'found encouragement for his increasingly wayward relationship to accepted modes of academic philosophy' (47) and in one of his most famous moments Diogenes appears to accuse rationalist philosophers of 'the death of God.' Diogenes there confronts a self-satisfied moral order, in keeping with Nietzsche's deconstruction of moral binaries, which, the latter argues,

are built only on the self-interest of self-appointed moralists.

Yet Nietzsche objected to 'the low horizons of Cynic philosophy' (53), anticipating that they would meet his Zarathrustian ideals with scorn. Nietzsche's cynical influence can be felt, however, in descendants like Michel Foucault and Peter Sloterdijk, for whom cynicism provides 'a commitment to truth-telling understood as a courageous form of self-fashioning; a recognition that reasoning truthfully requires a confrontation with the ways in which rationality tends to cooperate with power; a vigilant awareness lest the pursuit of critical freedom impose its own new norms and constricting forms of subjectification' (18). A helpful reminder, as we endure modern media cynics and their cozier relationship to power.

Our own era sees cynicism in a wider public place than philosophical exchanges, Small devoting a chapter to Laura Kipnis's *Unwanted Advances: Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus* (2017), which Small dubs 'a cynic test for our times' (208). Kipnis argues in better faith than flamethrowers like Rod Liddle, making her work more worthy of debate. (One of Liddle's snide reactions to feminism appears; Small could have chosen from any number of similar trolls.) But Small investigates the high-profile feud between Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill to demonstrate that cynical strategies, and especially those deployed by moral provocateurs, are nothing new. That Victorian debate centered on Carlyle's 'An Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question' (1849), a text as racially inflammatory

then as now. Mill broke with its author over both the content and tone of the essay. The result, for the public, might feel familiar: in a climate of sensitivity over racial discourse, cynicism came across as more ‘authentic’ as it ‘violate[s] soft norms,’ and, in the process, was more entertaining—as we would now say, garners higher ratings—than sincerity, ‘and the substitution of entertainment for truth-seeking allows cynicism of both the serious and the casual sort to flourish’ (73). Such authenticity ‘may be a more or less calculated effect’ (75), Small does not need to tell us.

Mill eviscerated Carlyle in a series of public letters, deploying rationalist logic and a defense of liberal ideals against the racist diatribe that both authors knew was partly in bad faith. Mill won the debate as handily as Hillary Clinton did against Donald Trump. Mill’s shallow victory and ‘strongly antipathetic reaction’ (96) may have been Carlyle’s goal all along: ‘Looking to stir up conviction rather than to join in argument, he speaks over the heads of a limitedly tolerant “liberal” readership to a “boundlessly tolerant” audience that will forgive his peculiarities and respond to his ardour rather than his arguments....In doing so he creates a discursive situation in which his audience is asked at once to discount much of what is said in favour of how authentically it is said’ (99). Nietzsche and many others were impressed by Carlyle’s daring, and even the unlikely Matthew Arnold, as Small relates in her chapter on him, was drawn to the power of cynicism for a public criticism out to confront the Philistines. Mill was not blind to the dangerous appeal of cynical rhetoric, and warned that, while speech

like Carlyle's should be protected, liberal responses 'had better not be anaemic' (103).

What does any of this have to do with Ford Madox Ford? The Cynics were cynical about everything, and in ancient Greece this meant a distrust of the prime social community, the *polis* or city-state. Diogenes declared himself a 'citizen of the world,' a *kosmopolites*, and his remarks have been taken as 'a readiness to identify with the needs and interests of all humanity above those of one's place and culture of origin' (144). Small thus asks if Ford, one of cosmopolitanism's greatest champions, can be read for his cynical ideas and strategies. (Small never turns to Ford's most ardent expression of the cosmopolis, his 'Republic of Letters.') She complicates our idea of cosmopolitanism, however, noting that Diogenes, in forced exile from Sinope, was 'being more cagey than grandiose,' thus a 'negative cosmopolitan' (145) refusing any sort of city or community. So what kind of cosmopolitan was Ford?

Small pairs Ford with George Eliot. Both, facing a rising nationalism, 'looked to the resources of literature to help close the gap between identification with one's primary culture and identification with the whole of humanity', focusing on the distance between 'high aspirations and lived reality' (152). Eliot's cynical experiments in the early *The Lifted Veil* (1859) and the late *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879) trouble her reputation for moral idealism, and Small speculates that Eliot 'seems to have found the contemplation of the Cynic performance a kind of relief from the exacting demands of her own ideals' (156). *The Lifted Veil* especially

wonders what is ‘the appropriate ethical distance on the rest of humanity’ (159) as the realist novel worked so powerfully to generate sympathy and construct imagined communities.

Ford had small regard for the sentimental moralism of such ‘nuvves’ he saw embodied in Eliot, although Sara Haslam has complicated such an easy picture of their relationship and Small’s comparison would have benefited from consulting her work.¹ Small is acute, nevertheless, in articulating Ford’s style—across his many modes and genres—that cynically undercuts any sentimental solemnity: ‘The resulting combination of dogmatic self-assertion...and relaxed open-mindedness is a constant of Ford’s prose style, with little distinction in voice between the public correspondence...and private communication: both are, or seem, unguarded, freely demotic to the point of vulgarizing, quick and unsparing in their judgements while making no claims for their own final authority’ (169). This canny appreciation of Ford’s prose is both precise and the best evidence for Small’s thesis, more than her claims about specific texts, and she proffers Ford’s stylistics as morally testing established norms, both literary and political. (Ford’s friendly feuds with contemporaries like H.G. Wells, not mentioned by Small, might productively be read in light of Ford’s cynical responses to Wells’ many idealisms.)

Ford’s interest in cynicism was not philosophical but rather ‘psychological internalization,’ and in the wartime writings especially ‘the pressures on the cosmopolitan Englishman are multiple’: money, romance, and of course the nationalist nature

of the Great War itself (170). Ford felt he must 'take a literary-critical distance on the nation state and its politics [which] requires treating psychology beyond its involvement in morality' (171), and for Small this is what links his critique of nationalism to his weariness with Victorian moralism. Christopher Tietjens encounters 'a near-ubiquitous cynicism towards his philanthropic "decency"' but counters such cynicism with his own 'exercise of tactical cynicism,' distrusting anything produced after the eighteenth century (172). Ford, like Tietjens, fought a nationalist war in a cosmopolitan style. His propaganda made the case for a French-led European identity against the narrow nationalism of Prussian militarism. As propagandist he makes claims but 'remains as faithful as he can be to impressionism's insistence on the personal perspective and its reluctance to generalize' (174). The propaganda 'sets the tone for what was to become a key element of Ford's literary modernism during and after the war: a seeking out, from the personalized perspective, of conflicting views that are hostile, entrenched, not readily displaced. The effect is to decentre assumptions of privilege on the part of the male, educated, geographically mobile Englishman, but without claiming that the act of decentring itself has the power to produce change' (175). While it would not be productive to fall into the 'undiluted cynicism' (187) of the mute Mark Tietjens, Christopher's strategic and selective cynicism could be a model for our own struggles with nationalist cynicisms.

Small concludes her section on Eliot and Ford by remarking that 'some of cosmopolitan humanism's

strongest literary advocates have sought protection against casual cynicism from a controlled Cynic realism' (189). Thus if we respond to a cynical xenophobic menace with a naïve rationalist idealism, glorifying liberal institutions without a sense of their flaws, we fall into the Carlylean trap.

While Small's look at Ford is a narrow one, it generates multiple possibilities for scholars across Ford's works. Readers will be amazed at Small's span of knowledge, from antiquity to the present, across literature, philosophy, and psychology. Small works through her material compactly but provides enough glosses to fill in the reader's gaps, and the only possible critique of her approach is the extraordinary breadth itself: do Nietzsche, Ford, and Laura Kipnis really belong in the same book? Small can be content to let others produce more focused work based on her remarkable thesis.

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Notes

1 Sara Haslam, 'The Prophet and The Sceptic: George Eliot and Ford Madox Ford', in *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts: International Ford Madox Ford Studies 6*, edited by Paul Skinner (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 49–61.

Helen Chambers

Robert Hampson, *Joseph Conrad* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), 208 pp. £11.99

Helen Chambers

The quantity of secondary literature on Conrad is huge, approximately 800 monographs, biographies, edited collections, volumes of letters and catalogues, without counting the hundreds of peer-reviewed papers in the general and specialist literary journals, the untranslated material and the unpublished doctoral theses. There are moments when it feels as though one is moving in circles through a thick cloud of ‘Clotted Vapours’. Then suddenly a small airy space filled with light appears, and one breathes easily again. Such was my feeling when reading, initially at one sitting, Robert Hampson’s new book in Reaktion’s *Critical Lives* series. In this compact, almost pocket-sized and very affordable work the author, who needs no introduction, has, by some mysterious alchemy, distilled all the salient features of Conrad’s extraordinary life and output into a scholarly yet very readable narrative. It does not of course replace the 2007 edition of Zdzisław Najder’s biography which, with its wealth of previously unavailable Polish material and dense annotations, remains the definite reference work.

What shines out from Hampson’s book is its contemporary relevance and its approachability, never dull or pedestrian. The style is as elegantly clear as the author’s other major works, most recently *Conrad’s Secrets* (2012), on which this work draws for contextual material but does not duplicate. In

a finely nuanced way Hampson locates Conrad's works, in a loosely chronological manner, within their biographical and socio-political-historical context and also includes two opening chapters on Conrad's family background and maritime career, and two late chapters on his relationships with women and with France. Important critical studies and biographical works are given due recognition in the thoughtful, unobtrusive notes and select bibliography, which draw attention to important primary source material, including frequent referrals to the *Collected Letters*. Twenty-seven images break up the text, some very familiar, some less so, including several of Conrad's own pen and ink sketches of women.

The introduction, 'Conrad's Reputation', usefully summarises his literary fortunes from the start of his writing career, follows his reputation in Britain, North America and Europe during his lifetime and afterwards, and sketches his posthumous trajectory including early critical and biographical responses, adoption into the Leavis canon, subsequent theoretical approaches applied to his works, the increasing global reach of his work both in English literature departments and in translation, and its afterlife through Caribbean, South American, and African authors. Chapter One is biographical, usefully summarizing the political history of 19th century Poland, particularly in the early 1860s, and noting the 'catalogue of loss which plunged the Korzeniowskis into despair' (22). Two other important areas covered in this chapter are Conrad's formative childhood and adolescent reading, and the emotional and psychological consequences of

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the hostility of his guardian, Tadeusz Bobrowski, towards his late father Apollo. The next chapter, on Conrad's maritime career, is also chronological but Hampson nevertheless weaves in references to fiction based on these experiences, notably to his only command, the *Otago*, which informed 'A Smile of Fortune', 'The Secret Sharer' and, most importantly, *The Shadow-Line*. Conrad's relationships with women, taken up in detail later, are first touched on here, with brief mentions of his 'first loves', his friendships with Marguerite Poradowska and with Emilie Briquel, and that with Jessie George which led to his marriage in 1896, and to the launching of his writing career.

Chapters Three through Eight deal with the main novels, from *Almayer's Folly* (1895) to *Under Western Eyes* (1911) and alongside these are situated the thematically (rather than always chronologically)-associated short stories and, where relevant, the memoirs, *The Mirror of the Sea* and *A Personal Record*, and with each chapter seamlessly linked to the subsequent one. Instead of simply revisiting or summarizing standard criticism, Hampson enlivens each of these chapters by focusing on lesser studied works, and by providing new perspectives and less familiar contextual information. He also concurrently employs a book history approach, emphasizing the serialization, book publication and marketing of the works. It is worth commenting here too specifically on the short stories, whether they are precursors to major novels (for example 'Razumov'), opportunistic economically productive responses to the prevalent literary marketplace, emotional/psychological diversions during

the drawn-out gestation of a more complex work, or pieces stimulated by nostalgia for his maritime career, or by a transient encounter while travelling. Comments on particular stories are inserted into various chapters where they best fit in a biographical and/or literary creative context rather than strictly chronologically, and almost all of Conrad's 25 or so surviving short stories rate a mention. Locating these references would have been aided by a short index of titles.

In Chapter Three, 'Malay Fiction', on which Hampson has already written a full monograph (2000) we are offered a concise analysis of *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands* and of the genesis of the soon-be-abandoned *The Rescue*, of the Malay stories from *Tales of Unrest* including 'The Lagoon' and 'Karain'. All of these are contextualized not only into South East Asian history and Conrad's own experiences of the geopolitical region, but also against the prevailing market for Kipling and Rider Haggard as adventure romance, signalling how Conrad's output is here again viewed from the perspective of book history (publishing, market forces and serializations).

This parallel approach from a book history perspective continues in Chapter Four, 'Conrad and the Literary Marketplace', by introducing Edward Garnett, noting the decline of the triple decker and the rise of the railway novel, and the increasing importance of serialization, including a useful summary of the state of the serial market in Britain and in America. The chapter then centres on the novella, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, to which Hampson

devotes eleven interesting pages, emphasising how Conrad's first sea novel is far more than a simple tale of crew confined on a ship in difficult circumstances, and ending as expected with discussion of its famous preface. In Chapter Five, 'Marlow and *Blackwood's*', there is a refreshing take on Conrad's first African story 'An Outpost of Progress', in the context of the unusual colonial history of Sierra Leone. Here and elsewhere Hampson ensures that lesser studied works are given due consideration, and those which are verging on being over-studied are presented in a new light. The tired post-colonial arguments about *Heart of Darkness* are not revisited, and in the five pages on Conrad's most famous work the emphasis is on its contrast with 'An Outpost', its textual interaction with a typical *Blackwood's* readership, the complex structure of Marlow's narrative, 'trade secrets' and on the 'double culture shock' Marlow experiences on returning to Europe. Hampson then continues discussion of innovative narrative structures in his section of the almost equally well-studied *Lord Jim*, followed by a comparison of Jim's 'heroic self-image' with that of the 'racialized self-image' of the anti-hero Peter Willems in *An Outcast* (87).

The next chapter is perhaps the one of most interest to Ford scholars, as it is, despite the title—'The Americas, Nationalism, and Empire'—also about the Conrad–Ford collaborations, and is as fair and balanced as one could ask for. After a brief mention of the largely Fordian novel *The Inheritors* (1901), 'effectively Ford's retelling of "Heart of Darkness" in the form of Wellsian science fiction' (89), and a glance at *The Nature of a Crime* (almost entirely

Ford), several pages are devoted to *Romance*, set against a background of the 1820s anti-slavery movements in Britain and of contemporary Cuban politics. The collaboration is summarized thus: 'Conrad and Ford both learned much from this decade of collaboration' and 'the significance of the collaboration is shown more in what each went on to do separately than in the work they produced together [...]. This led to Ford's major works of the next two decades: *The Fifth Queen*, *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. As for Conrad, he went on immediately to write *Nostromo*, the most important political novel in modern English literature' (92-93). This heralds a discussion of Cunninghame Graham and *Nostromo*, in the context of Colombian history, of Conrad reading Graham's South American sources, of Italian history (Giorgio Viola is a 'Garibaldino') and, of course, of American capitalism, mining and asset stripping. Conrad's increasing political interests flow into Chapter Seven, 'Anarchists and Secret Agents'. This starts by discussing 'Gaspar Ruiz' (or its literary antecedents about the pirate Benavides) as 'a spin off from Conrad's South American research' (101) and then emphasises how, after *Nostromo*, Conrad continued to think and write seriously 'about nationalism, revolutionary struggle and the relations between labour and capital' (102). The important essay 'Autocracy and War' reflected that, 'as he rightly foresaw, the [Russian] uprising of 1905 was a rehearsal for the Russian Revolution of 1917' (102). Conrad became increasingly interested in anarchists, writing for magazines (and therefore generating income to pay his increasing medical bills), two stories: 'An Anarchist', further mining his South American back-

ground reading, and the mocking tale ‘The Informer’, which led directly to *The Secret Agent*. We are also reminded that one source of *The Secret Agent* was a conversation with Ford about contact with London anarchists through his Rossetti cousins. Hampson also notes how ‘London in the 1890s was briefly the centre of European anarchism [...] and proud of its long tradition of welcoming political refugees’ (111), i.e., not just Russian but also Polish, Italian and Ukrainian, and, of course, Karl Marx. There are informative contemporary illustrations from the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News* and the chapter ends citing Ford’s remark in *It Was the Nightingale* about political martyrs and refugees.

This leads on to Chapter Eight, ‘Betrayal and Breakdown’, in which Hampson firstly reminds us of the Polish accusations against Conrad around 1900, of him emigrating and thus betraying his country, and then leads to Conrad’s ‘confrontation with his Polish past’ (117) and the genesis as ‘Razumov’ of *Under Western Eyes*. Coinciding with the launching of the *English Review*, with Conrad’s increasingly troubled relationship with Ford, and with the rewriting of his own history in what was eventually to become *A Personal Record*, we are very clearly shown how these two works are deeply intertwined, particularly in the way in which Conrad evokes his mother’s memory. At the end of the chapter, ‘The Secret Sharer’ (written at the same time to pay medical bills) is linked thematically with *Under Western Eyes*, with Haldin, a hidden fugitive like Leggatt, and Razumov, like the young captain, thrown into a moral dilemma.

Chapter Nine, 'Poland Revisited', starts several years before the war, with Conrad writing magazine stories for money, including again some based on his maritime experiences. He quarrelled with Pinker and with Ford, maintained friendships with Marwood, Galsworthy and Edward Garnett but created a new circle of friends (130) including Józef Retinger. It was through Retinger's diplomatic and political networks and publications, which Hampson usefully summarizes, that Conrad became much more involved in the question of Polish independence, writing 'Poland Revisited', 'A Note of the Polish Problem' and 'The Crime of Partition'. A short note at the end of this chapter, on the seductive American wartime journalist Jane Anderson, leads to the next chapter 'Conrad and Women'. Here, after revisiting his relationship with Poradowska, his marriage and his ongoing literary (at least) interest in sexuality, starting as long ago as Nina in *Almayer's Folly*, Hampson discusses an until recently under-investigated area, the importance of Conrad's wide circle of intelligent women friends. This chapter is also the opportunity for a focus on two late novels in which Conrad has important things to say about women, *Victory* (1915) and particularly *The Arrow of Gold* (1919), his least studied long work but 'his formally most radical engagement with women' (153).

Chance (1914), written for a female readership, is dealt with in the next chapter, 'Commercial Success and North America'. We are reminded of the important role of Richard Curle in developing marketing strategies of Conrad's work, and how the initial opening of the American periodical market to

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Conrad's stories began as early as 1911 with 'Freya of the Seven Isles' followed by the very successful 'Some Reminiscences' (to become *A Personal Record*). The rest of this chapter deals concisely with collected editions, the lucrative sale of manuscripts, the 're-invention' of Conrad in America, Conrad's relationship with the early film industry and his 1923 New York publicity tour. 'Conrad and France', the last main chapter, reminds the reader of Conrad's lifelong love of that land, within a broad contextual framework of Polish-French politics, Napoleon, French literature, the early autobiographical elements in *A Personal Record*, the Marseilles years, and the time spent in Montpellier and Corsica. The two last novels, *The Rover*, with its valedictory feel, and *Suspense* are covered here as well as various stories with French and/or Napoleonic themes, 'The Sisters' fragment, 'The Duel', and 'The Warrior's Soul'.

This book, which is emphatically not 'Conrad-lite' but powerful 'Essence of Conrad', can be unreservedly recommended as the critical biography of Conrad for students, teachers and non-specialist readers, and even the most experienced and – dare I say – jaded Conradian will find refreshing new insights. It should be on the bookshelves of anyone interested in Conrad, the writer and the man.

Last Post

Notes on Contributors

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Helen Chambers made a late career leap from medicine to literature and history of reading. Based in France, she is a Visiting Fellow in English at the Open University, and part of its History of the Book and Reading Research Collaboration. The research strategies used for her PhD and recent monograph *Conrad's Reading* (Palgrave 2018) are now being extended to an examination of Ford's reading.

Gill Gustar is a part-time doctoral student at King's College, London, with a background in applied social science and psychology. She is currently combining these interests in her research into how Ford represents madness in his novels.

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Elizabeth Hibbert is a PhD candidate at the English Department of King's College London. Her thesis, entitled 'Imagining Deep Time in English Fiction Between the Wars', considers how the geological concept of 'deep time' might inform readings of interwar fiction by Ford Madox Ford, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. She grew up near Manchester, and previously studied at Pembroke College, Cambridge.

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Paul Skinner has edited Ford Madox Ford's *No Enemy*, Carcanet's annotated critical edition of *Last Post* and the collection *Ford Madox Ford's Liter-*

ary Contacts. He is General Editor of *Last Post* and blogs at reconstructionarytales.wordpress.com

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