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LAST POST



A Literary Journal from the
Ford Madox Ford Society

LONDON • NEW YORK

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Ford Madox Ford Society

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Paul Skinner
Editor

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Word of the day: Letters.

There is, as most of our readers know, a significant, if not seismic, shift occurring in Ford studies, though little of it is visible as yet. The first phase of the *Complete Works* is six volumes of Ford's correspondence – so some of us have letters very much on our minds.

In *Portraits from Life* (1937), Ford recalled the treasured letter that his mother Catherine had received from Ivan Turgenev, 'the Beautiful Genius', thanking her for sending him 'some of the special preparation of colchicum' used by Ford Madox Brown, a fellow sufferer from gout. The letter, Ford added, is 'as you would expect, dated only "*jeudi le cinq*" . . . I suppose I could find out the exact date by consulting a calendar for 1881 and discovering in what month Thursday fell on a fifth. . . . But I don't suppose that Turgenev was ever accurate in his days of the month. . . . and, if the truth must be told, I prefer not really to have the puzzle solved.'¹

The editor of Fordian letters—putative solver of puzzles and inveterate consulter of calendars—will, of course, regard these sentiments with equanimity. Probably.

'I will write you further on the subject of War', Wyndham Lewis wrote to Ezra Pound in June 1917. 'Do not expect my compositions to be well-worded, as letters (my letters) are only meant to be chat and slop.' Ford's letters—and, one might add, Lewis's own—are no strangers to chat, but eschew slop.² And do we see the 'drawing-room' Ford as well as

the writing self? 'It is a questionable project to analyze a writer's personality based on the fiction he has written', Mary Gaitskill wrote, 'or to cross-examine his fiction based on information about his life. Letters, however, are much more naturally revealing.'³

And so they are, especially those concerned with love or art, some of them clearly crafted with that unutterably particular recipient in mind, bespoke, even made to measure. As with Ford's letters to Stella Bowen and hers to him: it was, after all, a love affair almost exclusively conducted, in its first 18 months, by post.

'In years away from this when I am quite forgotten' he wrote, 'maybe you will turn up some of these old letters & feel a little like saying

"Ronsard m'a célébrée
Du temps que j'étais jeune!"⁴

In the last novel he published before *The Good Soldier*, Ford has *The Young Lovell* on his horse, Hamewarts, 'going decently by roundabout ways and paths from landmark to landmark that he might not trample down the long grass of which his bondsmen were making their hay all about him.' In the present context—and in the context of Ford's *oeuvre*—those lines are as symbolic or metaphorical as you wish them to be. We might confine it to noticing that the indirect routes result not from uncertainty or being lost but from knowledge, care and responsibility; and that, for 'bondsmen', we might read 'hominibus bonae voluntatis' ('men of

goodwill'), or some near-relation of it (Ford's form of the words varies a little in his frequent uses of the phrase), that small circle of readers for whom so many novelists write or must, eventually, settle for – if they are unable to enjoy 'that enviable cross between literary esteem and the broad popularity which is the haven that all we novelists desire.'⁵

That 'making hay' from the long grass is also suggestive: Christopher Tietjens and Valentine Wannop had walked 'through Kentish grass fields: the grass ripe for the scythe', and on the other side of a war, Tietjens' son would be outraged by the sight of 'the long trail of satiny grey' behind Mrs de Bray Pape's voluminous skirts as she rushes heedlessly through the standing hay.⁶

As an interim report, in any case, I can confirm that Fordian letter editors are pursuing their task with knowledge, care and responsibility. I also have it on the best authority that some more than others of those editors are doing so by markedly roundabout ways. . . .

Notes

1 Ford Madox Ford, *Portraits from Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 149. Stephen Crane is also granted that epithet, 'beautiful genius', in 'Stevie & Co.', *New York Essays* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1927), 21.

2 *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, edited by Timothy Materer (London: Faber, 1985), 76.

3 Mary Gaitskill, 'The Running Shadow of Your Voice: On Nabokov's *Letters to Véra*', in *Oppositions: Selected Essays* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2021), 181.

4 Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585): the last line of the sonnet's first stanza reads: 'Ronsard me celebroit du temps que j'étois belle'. Ford has changed 'beautiful' to 'young'. Published in *Sonnets pour Hélène*, II (1578), the poem lies behind W. B. Yeats's 'When You Are Old', written to Maud Gonne in 1891, and its first line is quoted in Ezra Pound's 'Canto 80'. When Ford published a full translation in *Buckshee* (1931), he rendered the line exactly as in this letter: *Collected Poems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), 301 (the accent there missing from 'étais').

5 As enjoyed by Violet Hunt's novelist mother 'in her day': Ford, 'Preface' to *The Governess* by Mrs Alfred Hunt and Violet Hunt (Chatto & Windus, 1912), ix.

6 Ford Madox Ford, *Some Do Not. . .* (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 131; *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 54.

Ford in 1922

Max Saunders

The centenary of the *annus mirabilis* that saw Eliot's and Joyce's masterpieces published was widely – and rightly – celebrated. But for scholars with interests beyond *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*, the collective focus on 1922 could also arouse a dissentient concern that we have fallen into making a fetish of that year; making it emblematic of modernism in a way that has become too facile. If our students wrote that modernism is *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*, we would mark them down as reductive, unwilling to think beyond the confines of the traditional modernist canon. Fixing on 1922 may make us feel we're avoiding that trap of being in thrall to a male elitist high modernist canon. But it fails to avoid it if the reason we choose it is because of Eliot and Joyce. Adding *Jacob's Room* doesn't really help; it's not Woolf's best novel – it doesn't have the same status in her oeuvre as *The Waste Land* or *Ulysses* do in their authors' work. Anyway, Woolf has herself now become super-canonical.

The main objection to the cult of 1922 is its singling out of the year; with the unintended consequence of deprecating works not published then, or writers who didn't publish major work that year. Take Dorothy Richardson. Does she miss the party because she had volumes of *Pilgrimage* out in 1921 (*Deadlock*) and 1923 (*Revolving Lights*) but not 1922? Katherine Mansfield was invited, on the strength of *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922); but is D. H. Lawrence out because *Wom-*

en in Love appeared two years too soon? Or Proust because he died in 1922, leaving the last volumes of *A la recherche* unpublished, and with *Sodome et Gomorrhe* appearing across two years, 1921 as well as 1922? Such questions show the absurdity of fixating on chronology. '1922' sounds nicely democratic. It implies you've sliced your sample disinterestedly, and the choice of any other year might be just as rich. But modernist scholarship hasn't celebrated 1920 and 1921, and is unlikely to make as much fuss about 1923 or 1924.

Outside the world of Ford Madox Ford studies, that is. For 1924 certainly is an *annus mirabilis* for Ford; a year in which he launched the *transatlantic review*, and published two masterpieces: *Some Do Not . . .*, the first novel of his postwar *Parade's End* tetralogy; and the brilliant critical memoir of his collaborator Joseph Conrad – another great modernist publishing nothing in 1922.

1924 could be said to be but one of several *anni mirabiles* in Ford's career. There were also 1905 when he became famous with his book *The Soul of London* – the first of his trilogy on Englishness. 1906 when he published the first of his trilogy of novels *The Fifth Queen*. 1907 when he published no fewer than six books. 1909 when he wrote *A Call* and edited the *English Review*. And most importantly, 1915, when *The Good Soldier* was published. That's at least six miraculous years! Ford's case shows up more problems with the single year approach to modernism. What when a writer has more than one peak in their career? What when (like Proust and Lawrence) they publish sequences of books span-

ning several years?

On the other hand, given the symbolic significance 1922 has acquired as modernism's zenith, and while its centenary still reverberates, at the risk of appearing to contradict my opening scepticism about the single year cross-section, the rest of this essay will argue for the importance of what Ford *was* doing in 1922. What Ford was doing in 1922 was writing, though; not publishing. Indeed, it was one of only two periods after the war when he didn't publish books every year – that one of the other periods was 1919-20 indicates that he was still struggling to regain his prewar momentum. (The other period included 1930 and 1932, after the Wall Street Crash and during the concomitant Depression.) Nonetheless, he was writing furiously. Surely that is what matters if we are to historicize modernism in this way. To make a fetish of *publication* dates makes little sense – especially for works that have a longer genesis than a single year, as *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* certainly did. (Joyce wrote *Ulysses* from 1914 to 1921; *The Waste Land* was mostly drafted in 1921.)

What Ford was writing furiously in 1922 was a pair of works which are extraordinarily interesting, even important; but which, for different reasons, have disappeared from view.

One is a poem – though the title page says differently, and gives a better idea of its knockabout inventiveness and versatility:

*Mister Bosphorus and the Muses or a
Short History of Poetry in Britain. Variety*

Max Saunders

Entertainment in Four Acts. . . with Harlequinade, Transformation Scene, Cinematograph Effects, and Many Other Novelties, as well as Old and Tried Favourites.

It was published by Duckworth in a handsome volume with wood-cuts by Paul Nash. The book came out in 1923; a few months after a novel, *The Marsden Case*. These were the first works to use the new name he'd adopted in 1919, 'Ford Madox Ford'. So one thing he was doing in 1922 was re-styling his public persona.

Ford had struggled to get his work published in the US before the war. His greatest success there came with the *Parade's End* novels in the later 1920s. But what American publishers wanted then was his fiction about the war; not his experimental poetry. *Mister Bosphorus* was never published in the US, where Ford's reputation was rekindled in the 1960s. Nor was it included in Ford's *Collected Poems* (there were two such volumes, a British one which appeared earlier, in 1914; and an American one, in 1936); nor in selections of his poems by Graham Greene or Basil Bunting.¹

If *Mister Bosphorus* was published and unknown, the situation with the other work is more complex. Ford worked on a manuscript called 'Towards a History of English Literature' through 1922. Insofar as it was known at all, which was not very far, it was thought unpublished. In fact, abridged versions of parts of it were published in Ford's *transatlantic review* through 1924, but under another title – 'Stocktaking: Towards a Revaluation of En-

glish Literature', and under a pseudonym, 'Daniel Chaucer'. So in this case too, there were several reasons why readers might have missed something. Ford scholars knew 'Stocktaking' was by Ford; but generally not that it came from the earlier typescript; nor that there were a preface and at least two further substantial chapters, possibly more, left unpublished when the magazine folded.

Ford wrote over eighty books. Even his admirers haven't found much time to look at these two unusual works, which will never displace masterpieces like *The Good Soldier* or *Parade's End* in assessments of his work.² So why do they matter? They're both intensely personal works. It would be too easy though to see them both as merely expressing Ford's sense of alienation from the British literary scene. They are both scathing about official criticism. But not simply because the literary establishment wasn't paying Ford enough attention. 'Towards a Revaluation of English Literature' – it's much more of a revaluation than a history – provides his familiar take-down of pompous nineteenth-century authorities – the 'tumultuously bearded Victorian moral great' he said had terrorised his childhood;³ and the deathly touch of Germanic philological scholarship. But 'Stocktaking' goes beyond the personal and familial – his German critic father, or bureaucratic litterateur uncle, William Michael Rossetti. What he gives here is the critical basis for his antipathies: his best elaboration of the case against the professionalised literary establishment, which not only makes the antipathies in his memoirs more intelligible, but connects them with his creative writing and his own criticism.

What's surprising about the way he does this is that it reveals his critical and also political stance as the opposite of what they are often portrayed as being. As championed by the American New Critics in the later 20th century, Ford appeared as advocate of 'technique'; a disciple of Henry James and the French Realist school of Flaubert and Maupassant; and like them, advocating a self-conscious technical vocabulary of arcane (often French) terms of the craft: *charpente*, *progression d'effet*, *constatation* etc. True, he writes condescendingly about English writers ignorant of such things, as if initiation into the mysteries of the craft conferred superiority on him and his associates like James and Conrad. Indeed, the whole project of this work is to develop a new technical framework and language for such a discussion:

It is necessary to have some sort of standard touchstone and technical language if you are to treat of a large subject with bearable succinctness and, as far as I know there exists in English Criticism neither any standard nor any touchstone; certainly there is no technical language to apply to literary matters.⁴

But Ford's motive isn't to elevate elite formalists above authors popular in the mass market. Instead, he transfers authority from critics to readers. 'Literature exists for the Reader and by the Reader', he says.⁵ Writing should give pleasure to readers. If it does, they'll read it. 'Literature is whatever written matter gives you pleasure: [*illeg.*] nothing else is literature' (Preface). That becomes his main crite-

tion of value:

I think that, in these matters, one must guard oneself against one's merely personal tastes. We must, I mean, finally come to the point when we say that Good Literature is that which appeals to great masses of humanity and that such Literature as is limited in appeal or has practically no appeal at all is not good: the uninstructed Masses not the More Select Classes or individuals must have their verdict accepted.⁶

Ford cites a prewar German study of the most popular books worldwide, in which Flaubert and Maupassant came out very high, with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* just ahead. He sees no contradiction between high art and popularity. Good technique makes writing appeal to readers. For him, it's what he calls 'the Intelligentsia' – the gatekeeper critics – who are the problem:

The quite natural tendency of the Intelligentsia is to make of literature as unconsumable a thing as may be, so that, acting as its High Priests, they may make mediocre livings and cement their authority over an unlettered world.⁷

It is not hard to see why T. S. Eliot, to whom Ford had sent the typescript for the *Criterion*, didn't publish it; though he told Ford he had 'got many suggestions from it', and that if Ford didn't publish it soon he might see Eliot's 'plunderings first'.⁸ Criticism of this sort champions works which need critics, annotators, explicators:

an immense horde – an ever-growing horde! -- of professors and postulants for professorships have seized upon the world of Printed Matter and decree ‘places’ to writers. These places are given not for any quality of readableness but because the writers are circumspect, respectable, pedantic and, above all, ‘write–about able.’

A writer, on the other hand, who cannot be understood without innumerable notes is just what the populace detests. In technical language he may be called ‘allusive’. Such a writer instead of himself describing, ‘rendering’ incidents or emotions, presents them to the reader by means of ‘quotations’ from other writers, or by allusion to the works of other writers, deceased and more or less obscure. Amongst the Professorial that passes for ‘culture’.⁹

This was written the year ‘The Waste Land’ was published. It would be another nine years before Richard Aldington published his cruel satire of Eliot in *Stepping Heavenward* (collected in *Soft Answers* the following year, 1932). But the core of his critique of Eliot’s method is the *ad hominem* version of Ford’s impersonal and inclusive mistrust of academic disdain for general readers.

As the examples of *Madame Bovary* and Maupassant’s stories suggest, it is also where critics censor works on moral grounds that they interfere with popular enjoyment. Instead, Ford advocates a paradoxical approach: it is only by eschewing moral at-

titudes to its subjects that literature can have moral effects.

it is no business of the imaginative writer, the producer of Literature, to bother his head with creative systems of morality. No doubt he will have an instinctive morality of his own but usually, outside Anglo-Sax-
ondom, and sometimes even within those bounds, he refrains from attempting to impose, except instinctively and without benevolence prepense, his own views upon his fellow men. His business is to project as exactly and with as little bias as he may, the results of pursuing certain courses in certain climates or latitudes: he has nothing to do with forcing humanity into moulds devised by himself. He is, in short, to the measure of the light vouchsafed him,¹⁰ reporter or Creator; he is never a prophet whether of good or evil.¹¹

It is only by showing how people really behave and what they really think about how they behave that you can foster understanding of human situations; not by telling people how they should behave and think. Art's value, for Ford, comes from enabling such understanding. This is a moral view, but one which sees civilisation as a matter of psychological realism rather than sentimental idealism:

the only civilising agency that is at work to-day as in other dark ages is the Arts and [. . .] the Arts do not work by direct means. They make you understand your fellow hu-

man being: they may indeed make you understand your fellow brute beast. In either case in the train of comprehension come sympathy and tolerance and after subjecting yourself for some time to the influence of the arts you become less of a brute beast yourself.

This is the only humanising process that has no deleterious sides since all systems of morality tend to develop specific sides of a character at the expense of other sides. [. . .]¹²

There is a political dimension to Ford's argument, part of which is that leaders also need to be readers:

how can a man conduct the delicate affairs of his fellows or lead his brothers to death if he have no acquaintance with the psychology of his time, and how can a man have acquaintance with the psychology of his time if he be unacquainted with the works of art of his day?¹³

Such views make it clear that any attempt to align Ford's theoretical perspective with the political Right – with 'Toryism' or feudalism – won't do – even if he sometimes does it himself. He clearly found the persona of the Tory gentleman appealing, in his fiction and his life. But he was perfectly aware that his commitment to a literature of the masses was, as he put it, 'Bolshevist doctrine'. It's nearer to Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* (1924) than it is to Leavis – though Leavis had been influenced by Ford's pre-war *English Review*. It is with good

reason that Ford figures in Nick Hubble's excellent study *The Proletarian Answer to the Modernist Question* (2017), showing how modernists could contribute to proletarian literature without coming from the working class or confining themselves to working class subjects.

That polarity of writer and critic structures *Mister Bosphorus* too. Indeed, the two works are very close in theme as well as spirit. Though a work of prose criticism, 'Towards a Revaluation . . .' discusses poetry too, and the authorial pseudonym combines the poets Arnaut Daniel and Geoffrey Chaucer. (Indeed, both works remind us that, if Ford's criticism tends to be associated with the novel, he was also a fine critic of poetry, and throughout his *oeuvre*.) In *Mister Bosphorus*, the main character apart from the eponymous poet and his Northern and Southern muses is the critic, Mr Bulfin. The story of impoverished poet upstaged by the self-important, financially secure critic, and of Bosphorus' escape from an uncongenial, cold, grey North to a Southern, Mediterranean Elysium, could be seen – as could 'Towards a Revaluation . . .' – as compensatory autobiographical fantasy: critics don't recognise good writing like mine: I'll show them! They'll be sorry when I'm gone. At the end of 1922 Ford and Stella Bowen left England for France; first to winter on the Riviera, and then to settle in Paris. His work in 1922 shows him gearing up for those decisions; justifying an emigration he must have known risked damaging his literary reputation by showing England as a country it had become impossible for him to live in as writer or a man. But what redeems both works is the way he shows them: in bravura

performances which redefine both criticism and creative work as readable, democratic, excited by the tastes of the masses and the cultural phenomena of the age.

Mister Bosphorus is hard to summarize, because both its methods and its intellectual scope are comparable to those of *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*. As I've written elsewhere, it isn't clear how much Ford knew of either while he was working on it.¹⁴ He probably read bits of *Ulysses* in the *Little Review*; he had certainly begun *Bosphorus* before *The Waste Land* was published.¹⁵ Anyhow, Ford's interest in music hall and cinema; his skill at parodying and pastiching the literature and history of most earlier periods were well developed before the war.

In 1914 Pound had thought Ford's pre-war long poem 'On Heaven' 'the most important poem in the modern manner'.¹⁶ The other long poem Ford wrote between that and *Bosphorus*, 'A House', was published in Harriet Monroe's influential Chicago-based magazine *Poetry* in March 1921, and later awarded the magazine's prize of \$100 for the best poem of the year.¹⁷ *Mister Bosphorus* introduces a new note into Ford's poetry. His earlier verse specialises in love and grief; the lyrical and elegiac; wistfulness and poignancy. These are in *Bosphorus* too, but as undertones in a poem fizzing with anger, comedy, satire, parody and pastiche. Where Joyce parodies the evolutionary phases of English prose in the 'Oxen of the Sun' section of *Ulysses*, Ford parodies the history of European poetry, from Classical Greek to Imagism, and even to the drafts of the *Cantos* which Pound had sent him in January

1922 for comment:¹⁸

BOSPHORUS: That's put the lid on! Rhyming no
more venture-ye!

I am dead sick of all this eighteenth-century
Insipid metre!

(Chorus, Female)

Bosphorus, our beautiful,
No more in the market-place we found thee!
Erased thy name from the tablets;
Beside wine-purple seas, forgotten;
The fleece unpressed;
Cyclamens
Faded in the autumn all unplucked by thee
Lustre on lustre;
Our locks ungarlanded by thee;
Forlorn, lack-lustre!
Forgotten the beautiful
Singer!

In the market-place sought we the Tyrrhe-
nian laces,
No more thy twined words;
The clepsydra measured out the hours
To the drip of its waters, never to the pluck-
ing
Of the ivory lyre!
Forgotten the beautiful
Lyric!

On the Acropolis
Sang other poets . . .

HERCULES: I am of course acquainted
With the historic outlines

Of Athenian poetry.

(1st Semi-chorus, Men)
To us most painful
This short-breathed division
(2nd Semi-chorus, Men)
How get
Into short syllables:
(Chorus, Male)
Divinities of Argos
Devising to each,
Unnumbered destinies?

HERCULES: The slow years passing,
Lustre melting to lustre,
Take we for granted!
Ray cast now on your reasons
For seeking this sacred
Womanless Wan-waste;
Lawless, licentious,
Gold-seeking, gold-haired,
Willow-waist wantons!

ATHIS: Sudden from sea-ways
Sail swart seafarers
Merchanting manuscripts
Stripe-eye, and star-dight
Mounting the market,
Bellowing : “Bosphorus!
Bring Bad Mad Bosphorus’
Million-worth Manuscripts!”¹⁹

Mister Bosphorus also plays with the modern manners of Aldington, Eliot, and T. E. Hulme, as well as the sonorities of Georgianism and the phonet-

ic Cockney of Kipling and others. ‘I can feel the fit / A-comin’ on me. Ark at me h’accent! Ho!’²⁰ By 1922, the ‘modern manner’ was beginning to turn into mannerism. Ford wasn’t just writing in it but ‘doing’ it; writing about it too by parodying it.

Where ‘Towards a Revaluation . . .’ embodies the readerly, interpersonal style it champions, subsuming the poetry into the criticism, *Bosphorus* does it the other way round. It is poem as critical act: both in telling a story of poet and critic; and in writing verse – which includes prose, like *Bosphorus*’ parody critical lecture in his sleep, which expresses the frustrations of a writer in a depressing, puritan and philistine milieu, then the triumph of pleasure, love and art:

ACT THE THIRD

THE ROMANTIC DRAMA, OR THE PROSE AGE

TIME: A.D. MCMLX odd.

PLACE: UTOPIA (any Workhouse or Proletariat Hostel).

FORE-STAGE: Afterwards: Any Home of Transpontine Melodrama.

” ” Any Home of Legitimate Drama.

SCENE I

Scene represents, as before, white-washed wall and arbour with inscriptions. Sunlight.

BOSPHORUS; PAUPER BULFIN.

They sleep, their bodies on form, heads on table. In workhouse uniform.

BOSPHORUS (in his sleep): ‘The earlier twentieth century was distinguished rather by prose than verse. This eminently practical era, dominated by the minds of the economists who gave it lustre, turned with contempt from those light fancies, those specious if agreeable fruits of the imagination to which former ages, though with diminishing avidity, had addicted themselves.’

PAUPER BULFIN (*awakening*): Ere, Boss! Boss! Bossy! Wake up!

BOSPHORUS: “Literature, called of the imagination,” cried the teeming and industrious populations, “well-suited though it may have been to ages that could afford to season their comestibles with a plentiful flavouring of Gallic salt, befits ill our sterner complexions.”²¹

It was after Ford had written these two works that he felt able to get back to novel-writing again. They got something out of his system. Almost as soon as he and Bowen reached Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat at the end of the year, he began on *Some Do Not* . . . To put it another way, they got his system out of *something*. The critique of Ford as Tory sees him as unable to shake off the spell of class and Englishness. But these works are both about disenchant-

ment with the British Establishment and its literary establishment, and about freeing himself from them; becoming a cosmopolitan modernist who could give pleasure. That lets him redefine himself, critically and poetically, in the process. There are stirrings of such ideas in his pre-war criticism. And they are more familiar from his later criticism of the 1920s and 1930s. But it is in these two works of reevaluation that he first – and most entertainingly – elaborates that critical position, which underpins much of his best subsequent writing, whether fiction, memoir, criticism, or cultural impressions.

Notes

1. My edition of Ford's *Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), gives ten pages of extracts; pp. 115-125.
2. The poem is discussed in *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, 123-124, 273-274; by Colin Edwards, 'City Burlesque: The Pleasures of Paranoia in Ford's *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses*', *Ford and the City*, ed. Sara Haslam, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 4 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 93-109; and Laurence Davies, 'Dissolving Views, or, the Lives of "Bad, Mad Bosphorus"', *Ford Madox Ford's Cosmopolis*, ed. Alexandra Becquet and Claire Davison, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 15 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 95-114.
3. Ford, *Mightier Than the Sword* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1938), 264.
4. Ford, unpublished 'Preface' to 'Towards a History of English Literature' (1922). Quoted with the kind permission of the Ford Estate.
5. Ford [pseud. 'Daniel Chaucer'], 'Stocktaking: Towards a Re-Valuation of English Literature', 'IV: Intelligentsia', *transatlantic review*, 1:4 (April 1924), 168-175 (p. 169).
6. 'Preface', 4.
7. Ford, 'Stocktaking [...] IV: Intelligentsia', *transatlantic review*, 1:4 (April 1924), 168-175 (p. 169)
8. Eliot to Ford, 4 Oct. 1923; *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton, vol. 2 (London: Faber, 2009), 239-240.

9. 'Preface', 7.
10. A favourite allusion of Ford's, to Wordsworth's late sonnet 'If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven'.
11. Ford, 'Stocktaking [. . .] IV: Intelligentsia', *transatlantic review*, 1:4 (April 1924), 168-175 (p. 171).
12. 'Intelligentsia', 169-170.
13. Ford, 'Stocktaking [. . .] I: Working Out a Standard', *transatlantic review*, 1:1 (January 1924), 65-76 (p. 67).
14. Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, II, 124.
15. *Ulysses* was published in Paris in Feb. 1922, but Ford didn't get to France till December that year. The book was banned in the UK till 1936.
16. Pound to Harriet Monroe, 23 May 1914: *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1971), 37.
17. 'A House', *Poetry*, 17 (March 1921), 291-310. Harvey, 53, 222-223.
18. See *Pound/Ford*, ed. Brita Lindberg-Seyersted (London: Faber, 1982), 62-67.
19. Ford, *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* (London: Duckworth, 1923), 64-65.
20. *Mister Bosphorus*, 17.
21. *Mister Bosphorus*, 71.

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Mr Sorrell's Castles

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Ford's novel *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, first published in 1911, tells the story of William Sorrell who, following a train crash *en route* from Southampton to London, finds himself transported back to the fourteenth century, in various locations around Salisbury in Wiltshire.¹

This was a region that Ford knew well. In 1893 he went walking in the Salisbury area. In 1904 he and Elsie spent some months living in the New Forest and then in Winterbourne Stoke, about ten miles from Salisbury, and we know that he went walking around nearby Stonehenge in the summer of that year. In 1910 he moved to Fordingbridge with Violet Hunt.² In *The Flurried Years*, Hunt describes walking with Ford to Stockton Wood on the hill southwest of Wylde, and visiting the naturalist William Henry Hudson at nearby Chicklade, Broad Chalke and Martin.³ In the same passage, Hunt mentions that this was when Ford was writing *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, a title that she says she found for him in Milton.⁴ She also claims to have found the name of the book's heroine Lady Dionissia de Egerton de Tamworth 'in a tablet in the porch of Salisbury Cathedral'.⁵ Salisbury Cathedral's current archivist can find no record of any inscriptions in the cathedral similar to this, so it seems that Hunt either made this up, or she misremembered in which church she saw it.

Whether Mr Sorrell really travelled back to the year 1326,⁶ or it was simply an illusion resulting from his serious head injury, the geography of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* is clearly based on a part of the world that Ford was familiar with.⁷ This essay aims to put Mr Sorrell's journey and his castles on the map.⁸

Let's start with the railway accident. Although Mr Sorrell in his concussed state is 'fairly certain' that the crash took place in Salisbury, that cannot have been the case. Salisbury is northwest of Southampton, on the line towards Bristol. As Map 1 shows,⁹ a train from Southampton to London would instead head due north from Southampton, via Eastleigh, Winchester and Basingstoke.¹⁰ A Bradshaw's timetable of 1906 confirms the route, and that the journey to Waterloo took around three hours, reaching Winchester after about 45 minutes.¹¹

[*See Map 1 next page.*]

Mr Sorrell would, however, have been aware of a major derailment that occurred near Salisbury station on 1 July 1906, in which 28 people lost their lives.¹² This was also caused by excessive speed, and it too was a fast 'boat train' to London linking with the ship from New York. However, it was on its way from Plymouth, where first-class passengers could disembark and get to London a day earlier than those who stayed aboard until Southampton.¹³

So Mr Sorrell's train, given that he ended up with 'blistered feet' and aching legs after wandering 'on and on for ages' (22) before ending up near Salis-

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Map 1: Railways from Southampton.

bury, probably crashed somewhere around Winchester – about twenty-five miles further east.

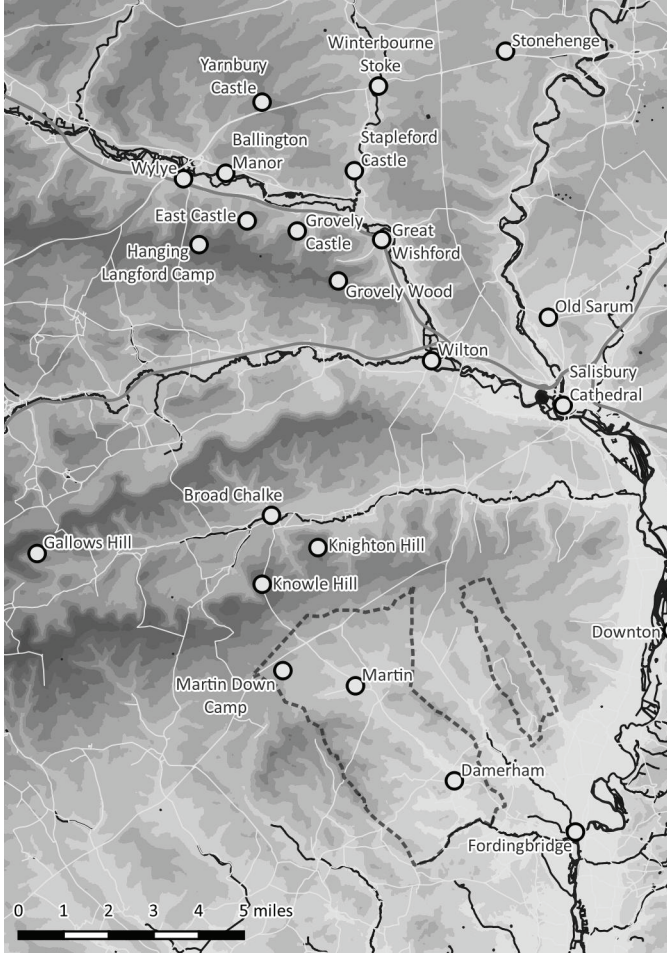
Map 2 is a modern-day map, showing some places that will feature in our story. Altitude is indicated by shading (getting a shade darker for each 25 metre increase in height). Rivers and water features are black, roads are white, and the railway is mid-grey.

[See Map 2 on next page.]

The map shows where Ford lived: at Winterbourne Stoke (top) and Fordingbridge (bottom right), and places we know he visited: Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral, Broad Chalke, and Martin. On the way out of Broad Chalke – on a road that Ford may well have travelled along – is a hamlet and farm by the name of Mount Sorrel.

Also marked are some real places mentioned in the novel. The town of Wilton; the villages of (Great) Wishford and Wylde (which Ford spells Wiley);¹⁴ Grovely Wood (Ford's 'Groley Woods'); the ancient settlement of Old Sarum; and the site of Stapleford Castle. The River Wylde (top left) runs east past Wylde village and Great Wishford, flowing into the River Nadder at Wilton, which joins the Avon at Salisbury. As the map suggests, the Wylde takes multiple meandering routes along the valley between Wylde and Wishford, which is prone to flooding, and old maps confirm that it sometimes changes course.¹⁵

The first useful checkpoint is when Sorrell finds



Map 2: *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* territory.

himself at the top of a hill with a steep drop in front of him. He turns round to look back along a 'closely grassed valley like the hollow of your hand, running downwards' (29) to see the distant spire of Salisbury Cathedral. He estimates that he is about seven miles southwest of Salisbury. Most likely, he was on Knighton Hill, about 6½ miles SW from the cathedral.¹⁶

Sorrell's surprise at seeing Salisbury Cathedral lends support to the railway accident being elsewhere. To avoid seeing the cathedral before this point, his trek west from the crash site must have taken him on a route a few miles south of the city, perhaps via the village of Downton, where he might have been able to cross the river, and onto Knighton Hill from the southern side of the ridge.

From Knighton Hill, our hero follows a nun and her mule due north to Stapleford Castle. His first view of the castle is 'coming round an angle of the Down' (63) from where he also spots a bridge and, about four miles distant, the neighbouring castle of Tamworth.¹⁷

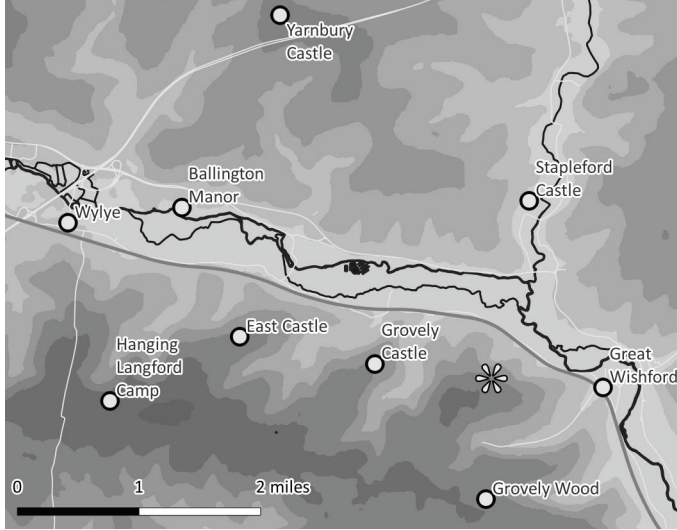
The site of Stapleford Castle, clearly marked on Ordnance Survey maps both today and in 1910, is a 'medieval ringwork and bailey castle, surviving as earthworks [lying] on gently sloping ground at the edge of the flood plain of the River Till'.¹⁸ 'Medieval' in this context is the period between 1066 and 1540, so the real Stapleford Castle probably existed in 1326, although it was long gone by the time Ford imagined the 'enormous grey, stone, very square castle' with its battlements and watch tower.

Stapleford's neighbour, Tamworth Castle, is more elusive. There is a Tamworth Castle – still very much a real castle – 120 miles north of Salisbury at Tamworth in Staffordshire, but it has no connection to *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, nor, as far as I can tell, to Ford. The fictional Tamworth Castle is, we are told, about four miles from where Mr Sorrell first sees Stapleford on the hill above Wishford. Several journeys described in the novel place it between Stapleford and the village of Wylve. Hugh FitzGreville came 'down the hillside towards the stream' to the 'gates of the castle' (151), so we can infer that it was close to the river. The frequent journeys between the neighbouring castles do not seem to involve a crossing of the river, so Tamworth must have been on the north side of the valley. We also know that a horse 'trotted off' with Sorrell for 'half an hour or so' (159) to get from Tamworth to Stapleford, suggesting a distance of perhaps three or four miles.

[See Map 3 on next page.]

Map 3 shows the area around the Wylve valley in more detail. For Sorrell to have been simultaneously able to see Stapleford Castle, the bridge at Wishford and the north side of the Wylve valley, there are few options for his location: it must have been near the point starred on the map at Ebsbury Hill, just under a mile west of Wishford.

We can thus rule out the other castles marked on the map in this section of the Wylve valley. Both East Castle and Grovely Castle are south of the river, some way up the hill, and would not be visible



Map 3: The Wylde Valley

from Sorrell's viewpoint. Grovely Castle is 'a univallate iron-age hill-fort of 13 acres', dating from the first millennium BC. East Castle, perhaps even older, is an 'irregular circular univallate [iron-age] earthwork, enclosing 3/4 acre'. Yarnbury Castle, a large prehistoric and iron-age fort on the hill north of the valley, is too far from the river, although it might just have been visible on the skyline. Nevertheless, the group of several castles close together perhaps influenced Ford's decision to set the novel here.¹⁹

Having returned to 1910, Sorrell revisits the area with 'young Lee-Egerton'. They pass Stapleford, then ride 'along the green valley beside the little stream' to discover that 'of Tamworth there was less even than of Stapleford. Upon a knoll half a dozen stone cottages huddled very close together, where of old the stables had been. Then they crossed the stream and went over the great hill beyond the town of Wiley' (345). This confirms that Tamworth was on the north bank of the Wyle, and suggests that it was quite close to the crossing of the river at Wyle. On the Ordnance Survey map of the time, there are two sites which fit this description. The better candidate is Little Bathampton Farm, now called Ballington Manor, which is next to the river, about 3½ miles from Stapleford and just over a mile from Wyle. It appears on the map as a cluster of buildings around a rectangular courtyard.²⁰ Great Bathampton Farm, a little further back from the river, is about half a mile to the west, next to the much grander Bathampton House.²¹

The third castle in the story is the 'little castle no

more than a stone house with battlements' (282) given to Mr Sorrell after becoming the 'Knight of Winterburne of St. Martin's'.²²

On leaving Tamworth, we are told that Sorrell and Dionissia 'rode away south from the Plain' (318) towards the little castle, which they did not reach until 'dusk was falling', having 'travelled over many bridges and across many valleys', and over several steep hills. Before them stretched 'the New Forest with its great sea of dark tree-tops' (319). A similar route is later ridden by the Young Knight on his 'fast and enduring' Arab horse. 'It was dusk when he passed his great castle of Tamworth, and night fell dark whilst he climbed the great hill behind the town of Wiley', and 'his horse scrambled up the hill or galloped down valleys' until 'at last in the black night he perceived ... the lights of the little castle' (328-329).

We also have the account of Sorrell's return to the area after returning to 1910. He and young Lee Egerton ascend Wyllye Hill,²³ and embark on a long gallop up and down hills until pausing just past 'the top of the last hill home'. From here, 'at the top of the long, broad grass valley', he spies 'a long way away ... the church tower of a little village that he took to be near Fordingbridge – a church and a cluster of buildings with patches of trees around them, peeping over the side of a low hill' (346-347). The 'last hill' is surely Knowle Hill, which looks southeast down the valley, past the villages of Martin and Damerham, to Fordingbridge, ten miles distant. The tower must have been that of St George's Church, Damerham (the Church of All

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Saints at Martin has an eighteenth-century spire), about seven miles away.

It therefore seems likely that the little castle was somewhere near the village of Martin, which lies (after a number of ups and downs) about 15 miles south of Wylke. There are three further clues that reinforce this conclusion.

The first is that, on arrival at their new home, Sorrell and Dionissia are greeted by ‘a very old and stupid man’ who ‘could not understand the speech they spoke’ because ‘he was of Hampshire, and those of them who spoke any English at all spoke it in the manner of Wiltshire, which was very different’ (320). Ford is surely having a joke with us here. The parish of Martin, together with a smaller area to the east (indicated by the dotted lines on Map 2), had been part of the county of Wiltshire until 1895, when it transferred to the jurisdiction of Hampshire (where it remains).

The second clue is that Martin was the home of Ford’s good friend, the naturalist William Henry Hudson, whose writing Ford greatly admired.²⁴ The previously cited passage from Hunt’s *Flurried Years* confirms that Hudson ‘afterwards told me that he had been actually living in Marten [sic] on the day we drove through’, during 1910 when Ford was working on the novel. Hudson’s book *A Shepherd’s Life*, published the same year, features a fictional village called Winterbourne Bishop, which has been identified as Martin.²⁵

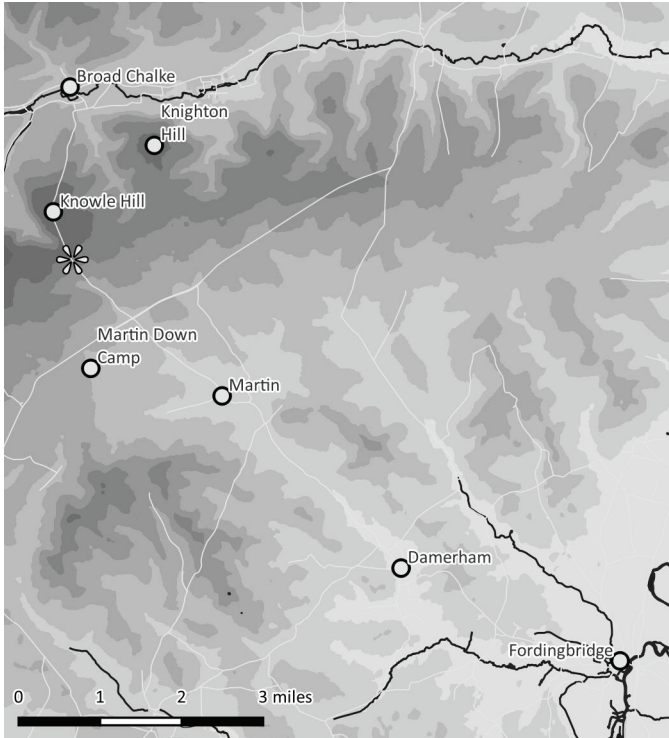
The third indication is a hand drawn Ordnance Sur-

vey map of Cranborne from 1807, on which Martin is marked as ‘W St Marten’.²⁶ The ‘W’ stands for West, not Winterburne, but it at least establishes that Martin was at one point sainted – a fact that Ford might have heard from Hudson, who would have studied the local history.

What about the little castle of Winterburne St Martin itself? When he first saw it, Sorrell was ‘in a broad valley, that was all grass’ (319), and the castle was ‘standing upon the hillside by itself, for the church and the little village which belonged to it were over the hill’. Later, from the castle, Sorrell ‘went over the hill with his men, and saw in the starlight ... the village that he possessed’, so the castle must have been quite close to the village – perhaps a mile or two at most.

[*See Map 4 on next page.*]

Map 4 shows the approach to Martin in more detail. Sorrell and Dionissia would have crossed the river at Broad Chalke and then climbed Knowle Hill or taken the less steep route up the valley separating it from Knighton Hill. From the ridge, they would have had a view down the valley towards Martin. On the hill to the right, at the head of a dry valley, is Martin Down Camp, a bronze-age enclosure with signs of later Roman occupation. It is rectangular in shape, which fits the description of the layout of the little castle: ‘[the] stables ... lay round a courtyard, though it was all encompassed by the moat and a wall with towers and bastions ... no one there had been in a castle of that shape.’ Martin village is not visible from the Camp due to undulations in the



Map 4: Approach to Martin

terrain, so it could certainly be described as ‘over the hill’ from the castle.

One further passage in the book provides a clue to the location of the little castle. Whilst Sorrell and young Lee-Egerton are taking in the view from Knowle Hill, a girl on a bicycle shoots past them, ‘going very fast’ (347). Identifying her as the nurse who looked after him, Sorrell ‘took the reins and then, irrationally, spurred his horse’, then ‘galloped off down the road that turned immediately and mounted the hill towards the cluster of old and falling buildings’ that are the ruins of the little castle of Winterburne St Martin. That description is quite an accurate portrayal of the route to Martin Down Camp.

The viewpoint marked with a star on Map 4 is one of the few locations from which the churches at Damerham and Martin, and Martin Down Camp, are all visible. It is on the road between Broad Chalke and Martin, which Ford would have known well, and could well be the spot he had in mind when describing Sorrell’s two views of the Martin valley – one with Dionissia, the other with Lee Egerton some 600 years later.

We can be confident that Ford imagined the little castle to be somewhere in the Martin valley between Knowle Hill and Damerham, and the most likely location is Martin Down Camp. There was no ‘cluster of old and falling buildings’ there in reality, so Ford has invented this, although there are many examples of farms and manor houses in the area that might have inspired him, perhaps including

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Hewlett's Old Rectory in Broad Chalke, or one of Hudson's lodgings in the area.

Despite the surreal nature of the story itself, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* is very much set in the real world, in an area that Ford knew well. As is often the case, his descriptions may be cryptic and incomplete, yet a close reading reveals a surprisingly accurate portrayal of the landscape by someone who clearly had a keen eye, a good memory, and a deep appreciation of the places he visited.

Notes

1 Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (London: Constable, 1911): page numbers in parentheses hereafter.

2 These biographical details are taken from Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, Volume I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

3 Maurice Henry Hewlett was also living at Broad Chalke, in the Old Rectory. In *Return to Yesterday* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1931), Ford says he ‘saw a good deal of him in his beautiful mediaeval manor at Broad Chalke at a time when Hudson had his hiding hole in the valley behind’ (290). That would have been around 1904, when both were writing books about Tudor queens. Hewlett was still living there in 1910.

4 The line is from Milton’s *L’Allegro*, published in 1645.

5 Violet Hunt, *The Flurried Years* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1926), 101-102.

6 Lady Blanche—the only contemporary character to confirm the date—tells Sorrell that ‘It is the year of our Lord, 1326’ (84). Later, he has misremembered the year, stating that ‘If this really is England of the year 1327, it is quite obvious that I can’t behave exactly as if it were 483 years later’ (126), and asking ‘Is this a pageant, or is it the year of grace 1327?’ (129).

7 It is likely that Ford owned a copy of the 1902 Bartholomew Half Inch map *Sheet 33 – New Forest and Isle of Wight*, which includes all of the real places mentioned

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in this essay (except for Stonehenge, which is too far north, and Knowle Hill, which is not named). This is the map containing the ‘Bromshaw Teleragh’ misprint that found its way into *The Good Soldier* (see <https://www.fordmadoxfordsociety.org/last-post-blog/a-new-forest-typo-part-1-the-origins-of-branshaw-teleragh>).

8 Ford also visited Carcassonne while he was writing the novel, which might have provided inspiration for some of his castles.

9 The maps in this paper have been produced with QGIS software, using location data from OpenStreetMap and altitude data from NASA’s Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM).

10 The map shows modern railway lines, which are little changed from the main routes in 1910, although the network was substantially pruned in the 1960s.

11 See <https://archive.org/details/Bradshaw1906/page/n85>

12 See <https://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/events-summary.php?eventID=73>

13 The Salisbury rail crash was a major news story just a few days before Ford set off for Germany. Three months later, at the end of September 1906, Ford returned from New York on board the *SS Minnetonka*, which docked at London rather than Southampton.

14 Ordnance Survey maps from around 1910 use the modern spelling, but earlier maps use a variety of spellings, including Wiley, Wily, and Wilye. Violet Hunt calls

it Wylie.

15 There are many old maps available online. A good source for old Ordnance Survey maps is the National Library of Scotland collection at <https://maps.nls.uk>. A range of other maps, including some older ones, can be found at <https://www.georeferencer.com>.

16 Mr Sorrell notices earthworks on a neighbouring summit, which he assumes to be the remains of a Roman camp. This does not help pinpoint his location, as many hills in this area are amply supplied with ancient fortifications, mounds, earthworks and similar features.

17 For a while early in the book, Ford refers to 'Stapleton' and 'Tamville' rather than 'Stapleford' and 'Tamworth'. With one exception, all of these misspellings were corrected in the revised US edition (Philadelphia: J. Lippincott, 1935).

18 According to Historic England https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=214405&resourceID=19191

19 These details are from Historic England (see note 18)

20 In 1910 it was occupied by Edward James Ashford and his family. See <https://archive.org/details/around-wiltoninoloounse/page/102>. I can find no connection to Ford or his circle.

21 Neither of these candidates for Tamworth Castle is on a noticeable 'knoll', although it is possible that any knoll would have been lost during the 20th century, perhaps by flooding, or development and road-building.

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22 As with Tamworth Castle, there is a real village called Winterborne St Martin, close to a real castle – Maiden Castle near Dorchester. However, it is too far away (40 miles southwest of Salisbury) to be a viable candidate for Mr Sorrell’s little castle.

23 At the top, Sorrell points out a nearby ‘clump of dark pines’ where there used to be a gallows. Near the summit of Wylve Down lies the site of an iron-age village called ‘Hanging Langford Camp’. According to the Survey of English Place Names (<http://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/>), the name probably refers to its position on the hill ‘overhanging’ the other Langfords. There is also a ‘Gallows Hill’ to the west of Broad Chalke.

24 It was Hudson who in 1904 had recommended the New Forest as somewhere for Ford to recuperate. Ford ranked Hudson among the greatest writers of English prose. In *Thus to Revisit* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1921), Hudson is ‘the unapproached master of the English tongue’ (69), and he is praised effusively in *Henry James: A Critical Study* (1913), *Return to Yesterday*, *The March of Literature* (1938) and elsewhere.

25 See https://martinparishcouncil.gov.uk/?page_id=219

26 See <https://britishlibrary.georeferencer.com/maps/57a66ff9-715f-5fad-9aeb-a84b7838b706/>

This was believed for some time to be Ford's first published story—until it was pipped by 'An Unpublished Letter' (*The Sketch*, 15 March 1899)—appearing at an extraordinarily interesting juncture, both historically and biographically. In February 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain had been ratified in the Senate: Ford's admired Stephen Crane, whom he'd met in 1897, had been involved in the Spanish-American War, as reporter and, to a slight extent, as participant. The Second Boer War would break out in October, the conference between Paul Kruger, President of Transvaal (or South African Republic), and Alfred Milner (Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner in South Africa since 1897), to resolve the differences between Boers and Uitlanders, having broken down in June. The following year, Ford and his wife Elsie would encounter anti-British hostility in Belgium and Ford would, he remembered, be chased down a London street by 'a howling mob of patriots'. In fact, by October 1899, Ford was ready to show Joseph Conrad some pages of *The Inheritors*: 'the villain was to be Joseph Chamberlain who had made the war. The sub-villain was to be Leopold II, King of the Belgians'.

L'Affaire Ingram¹

Ford Madox Hueffer

I don't know just how I come to be able to give you the true details of the story that people agree to consider piquant. Of course I know Mrs. Ingram—

but then: so do a number of people—a great great number. Poor young Rayner seems to me to be a butterfly broken on a vast wheel.² I think Mrs. Ingram treated him very badly. Indeed, I told her so.

‘You’ll make me have a fit of spread-eagling,’ she said, ‘if you say that. I’m not a good American—but I hate your army and your ways. That young man was coming up from his Military Academy to join just that abominable regiment that treated me so badly. “Well,” I said to myself, “I guess”—(I did say “I guess”—I felt real American and riled at that), “I guess I’ll sadden one member of that regiment. I’ll take the guilt off him, and then when he gets to be colonel, he’ll set a kind of tone that’ll stop his officers from being rude to American ladies again.”’

‘But, my dear Mrs. Ingram,’ I said, ‘I don’t think that the officers were responsible—I think it was the privates who laughed you off the stage. I believe the officers of the Royal and Loyal have an excellent eye for char—’³

‘It doesn’t matter who it was. It was someone in a red coat. See here—do you think that a real American is going to sit still and be insulted by the garrison of a dirty little one-horse town like Canterbury? There now, see what you’ve made me say, when I love every stone of that old place. You know they behaved real mean to me, those soldiers.’

‘It wasn’t a good play,’ I said.

‘No, it wasn’t,’ Mrs. Ingram admitted; ‘but I was acting it—I’ve sent it down everywhere else.’

‘You shouldn’t have worn that black and white dress. It never suited you. That was what did it.’

‘What do you know about my dresses?’ she said. ‘You English will want to dictate what I’m to wear next. I guess the women would commit me to the Tower if I didn’t come out a frump. But you should have seen the young man’s face. I should think (there now, that’s *English*)—I should think the smell of new bread will make him shudder for the rest of his life.’

‘What about new bread?’ I asked.

‘Ah, now you want to know,’ she said bewitchingly. I did—and in the end I gathered the story episode by episode.

You see, there wasn’t a single person in the house to warn young Rayner. In a decently conceived house-party there would have been. Rayner’s aunt was an excellent lady, whose ancestors had moved in a close preserve of county families; their descendants’ brains had suffered, I should say. There were in the house Rayner’s aunt and uncle—host and hostess—Rayner’s cousin, a young man who chuckled at his cousin’s mishaps, several other young men who did the same, one or two excellent matrons, and a colonel or two, and finally Mrs. Clavell Ingram and young Rayner.

Mrs. Ingram wasn’t a good actress when she was on the stage; but she was magnificent off it. On this occasion she elected—as far as the rest of the house-party was concerned—to be rather demure:

slightly quakerish. She affected grey⁴ in her dress, paid attention to the colonels and matrons, talked about her ancestors, the Pilgrim Fathers, and kept the young men at a discreet distance—all save poor Rayner. Rayner had taken a very excellent place near the head of the list of candidates passing out of the R. M. A.⁵ His training had filled him with the idea—I believe it is part of the unofficial code of the Academy—that it is the duty of the officer and gentleman to ‘board’ any kind of petticoat that fluttered within measurable distance. He was also burning to relieve himself of a vast amount of Woolwich⁶ shop. He gave Mrs. Ingram a stroke a hole on his uncle’s links, and stopped in the middle of a put to describe a gun that he had turned on his own lathe in the workshops. She was seven up at the turn and four on the game;⁷ but she kept an ear for him. It is surprising the pains the woman merciless will endure in furtherance of a cruel plan. Then she advanced her works—began to talk. She glowed over the Constitution, traditions, derring-do, and what not of the British nation. She turned the light of her discourse on Fuentes D’Onoro,⁸ Dettingen,⁹ the defence of Kars¹⁰ and Rorke’s Drift,¹¹ until thin red lines seemed to blaze in vivid flashes of limelight. She idealised the British feudal system and the fine old country gentleman; she talked about donjons,¹² mouldering ruins, ivy-clad keeps, and Launcelot and Guinevere with the boundless enthusiasm that is the deodand of Transatlanticism.¹³

‘It nearly choked me to see how he swallowed it all—raw, dreadfully raw,’ she said. ‘It was like watching a tramp bolt hot cakes. His complacency was beautiful. “Oh! we are all that,” he said

(to all intents and purposes). “Of course you can’t help seeing and feeling it. But seeing it makes you extremely respectable in our eyes.” I made him go district visiting with me, and professed to be disappointed that the village grocer didn’t kneel by the roadside when he passed. “When *you’re* squire,” I said, pretending to express all sorts of hidden tenderness in the *you’re*—“when *you’re* squire I hope you’ll keep all these dear old customs up. It would be so nice to walk through a street full of kneeling tradesmen.”¹⁴ “Tradesmen’s” a nice English word, isn’t it? Oh, I’m getting on with my English. I shall be at a “Papa-potatoes-prunes-and-prisms” level ever so soon. One day I let him catch me weeping on a stile.

“Eh! What is the—Can I be of any assistance?”

“Oh! not you—anyone but you!” I sobbed.

“But I thought—I—you—I mean—”

“Oh! what do you mean? Oh! I’m so miserable. I—” I said. I put a tremendous amount of passion into the scene—something like that Mrs. What’s-her-name you’re so in love with. I seemed to catch her way of moving her hands, and the wild staring glances that she turns on at the third act.”

“But whatever is the matter? This is dreadful,” he said.

“Oh! save me! save me! if you have an atom of manhood, if you have a spark of soul, take me away from this dreadful place. Oh! be my Launce-

Ford Madox Hueffer

lot! be my Launcelot!”¹⁵

“Of course I will—I am. But what is it all about?”

“Then I put on your favourite’s noted slow, distinct, every-word-a-knell style.

“My husband is coming down. Everything will be found out. I’m ruined. You don’t know his jealous tyranny. He has the sight and discernment of a vampire”¹⁶ (fancy speaking of poor old Charley like that!) “He will unmask everything. Yes, I’m ruined.” I gazed at the ground before me in speechless grief.’

“But I don’t see—” he was beginning.

“See—you’re a man! Oh, you men—you men—you see nothing, and all the while you—break—our—hearts” (with a tremendous pause between each word).

“You know I’m most awfully sorry, and if there is anything I—”

“Oh, take me away from this dreadful place!”

“But where could we go?”

“To France—to Paris, anywhere. Now at once—Oh, come!”

“But it would make my uncle most awfully angry.”

“Oh God—you talk about your uncle at such

a moment!”

“But I haven’t got any money.”

“My old family jewels are in this bag. We can sell them when we get to Paris, and I’ve got money enough to take us there.”

“But my career would be ruined.”

“Ruined!” I said, in accents of stony despair, “and what am I? Ruined—ruined—ruined—body and soul!” and I burst into tears again.

‘I knew how he hated a scene—it made his collar limp, I believe. He was so unused to them.

“I must go at once,” I went on, and I took a step or two down the path.

“Can’t you just wait until to-morrow?—I haven’t got any luggage.”

“Luggage!” I said with ineffable scorn (I owed a good deal to your Mrs Jim¹⁷ again). “Luggage! He’ll be up at the house by now. He’d murder us. I daren’t go back. No—I’m going alone—alone—alone—alone.”

‘I went on. He was over that step and after me in a minute.

“Can’t we do anything else?” he said.

“There’s no other way,” I said. I didn’t weep any more. I’d made my handkerchief so dreadfully wet. “We must catch the down train in twenty minutes.”

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“Then I’ll—I’ll come,”” he said chokily. Of course, it did mean a good deal to him. I don’t much blame him for exhibiting emotion. Just as we got on to the high road a cart with a big white tilt came lumbering along.

“Can you give us a lift?” I asked the man. “We want to get to the station in time to meet a friend off the down train.”

‘Of course he “lifted” us—indeed he expressed delight.

‘It was dreadfully jolty, and the day was hot for October. We were going along between high hedges. The bread was as hot as anything and smelt. My goodness, it did just smell! That’s why I think your young friend won’t just like inspecting the regimental bakehouses when he’s on duty. I guess he had a pretty warm ten minutes,’ Mrs. Ingram added with abominable levity.

‘You were a brute,’ I—your humble servant, the reporter—remarked.

‘I guess that’s just what I laid myself out to be,’ she replied, and continued:—

‘He was feeling real funny, I think—for an abductor of innocence. The way he answered the bland baker’s harmless remarks nearly made me split. The man opined he’d got the earache, and recommended him to put a hot onion-heart in his ear and take a “drop of brandy.” I thought your friend would have exploded then. We came to the keeper’s cottage at the corner of the road.

“I’ve just got to drop a loaf here,” the baker said; “but you’ll catch your train easy, Miss.”

“There was just about the most agonised silence you ever heard under that tilt for about one and a half minutes. Suddenly Rayner exclaimed:—

“By God! there’s my uncle and your husband!” He turned as white as a sheet. He didn’t try to escape. There wasn’t anywhere to escape to unless he burrowed under the loaves. Colonel Rayner and Charley were coming along in the dog-cart.

“Hello, Claire,” my fell tyrant exclaimed, as they got abreast.

“I was just coming to meet you,” I said. “I thought you were going to walk.”

“I was,” he answered, ‘only Colonel Rayner picked me up on the way. Do you want to go any further in that conveyance?’

“No, I guess not,” I said. “I was helping Mr. Rayner to guard the family jewels. They are in this bag.” I gave it a shake and they rattled a good deal.

“You’ll break them,” Charley said.

“Oh! it’s only old bottles,” I said. You should have felt young Rayner jump; he fairly made the baker’s seat shake. “Mrs. Rayner asked me to take them into town for the doctor to fill. They are for some poor old dependents of hers—and I guess that’s the best sort of family jewels in this country, looking after the poor.”

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‘It was a sort of a dig at your young friend. He was no end proud of those musty old bits of glass of his family’s.

‘That’s about all there is. I hopped up on to the dog-cart and young Rayner went on to get those bottles filled. I didn’t dare look at him, but I guess he felt real relieved.’

‘He was rid of a very bad bargain,’ I said.

‘I dare say,’ Mrs. Ingram replied. ‘All the same, I got a poke at your old Lion.’

‘I don’t see it,’ I said.

‘You don’t want to,’ she answered. ‘But I guess your stuck-up army will be cautious how it treats American actresses in future.’

‘I don’t see that either,’ I said again.

‘You don’t want to *either*,’ she mimicked me.

It was a hopeless matter for discussion.

Notes

1 Published in *The Outlook*, 3:74 (1 July, 1899), 709-710. Not in David Dow Harvey's bibliography: see Max Saunders, 'Ford Madox Ford: Further Bibliographies', *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, 43:2 (2000), 131-205 (135). See also his 'Empire of the Future: *The Inheritors*, Ford, Liberalism and Imperialism', in *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal*, edited by Laura Colombino and Max Saunders (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 125-140 (126). Saunders again cites the story—'in which an American actress recounts to the narrator how she tricked a young British officer into thinking she loved him and wanted to elope'—in 'The Case of *The Good Soldier*': *Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier*, edited by Max Saunders and Sara Haslam (Amsterdam: Brill Rodopi, 2015), 133-147 (137). I recall no other references to it, save for a footnoted mention in Sara Haslam's 'The Hueffers and the Conrads in 1899', *The Conradian*, 47.1 (Spring 2022), 66-75.

2 'Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?' See 'Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot' (l.308), in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, edited by John Butt (London: Methuen, 1985), 608.

3 A nice elision: as spoken, obviously tending to 'character'; as written, allowing for 'chaff', 'charades' and 'charlatans'.

4 In *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 14, Mark Tietjens remarks 'A hedge-sparrow, noiseless and quak-

er-grey'. He had used the phrase in *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* (London: Duckworth, 1923), 12, 22. James Joyce uses the term 'quakergrey' in the 'Circe' chapter of *Ulysses* (1922; London: The Bodley Head, revised edition, 1969), 626, which Ford read (and reviewed) in the year of its publication: see *Critical Essays*, edited by Max Saunders and Richard Stang (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2002), 218–227.

5 Royal Marine Artillery.

6 Site of the Royal Arsenal.

7 'On the turn': after nine holes, 'the game' being the full round of eighteen holes.

8 Fuentes de Oñoro is a village in the province of Salamanca, western Spain, site of an 1812 battle at which Wellington's forces defeated the French army during the Peninsular War of 1808-1814.

9 In the War of the Austrian Succession, the 1743 Battle of Dettingen was fought here in Mainz between the French army under the command of the Duc de Noailles and an allied army of British, Austrian and Hanoverian forces.

10 Russian troops lay siege to Kars, in the north-east of Turkey, during the Crimean War: the Ottoman garrison, which was led by British officers, surrendered in November 1855 after prolonged resistance, weakened by an epidemic of cholera and exhausted food supplies.

11 During the Zulu War, following the defeat at Isandlwana, a garrison of 150 men at Rorke's Drift fought off 4000 Zulu warriors (January 1879). Most of the British defenders suffered injuries but only 17 were killed, against an estimated 400 Zulu dead. The 1964 film *Zulu*, directed by Cy Endfield, starring Michael Caine and Stanley Baker, focused on this engagement.

12 The central tower of a castle, the innermost keep.

13 A deodand, under common English law, was an article or personal chattel that caused the death of another and was therefore forfeit to the crown: the doctrine was abolished in 1846. Ford used the term towards the end of *Ford Madox Brown* (1896) and five times in his 1913 novel, *The Young Lovell*, set in the late fifteenth century.

14 In *The Heart of the Country* (1906), Ford writes of hearing in the village where he was living 'a wealthy lady lamenting that the little girls did not curtsy to her': see *England and the English*, edited by Sara Haslam (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2003), 141. Vincent Macmaster acquires, with his wife's money, 'a nice little place in Surrey' where, 'As an amusing detail the villagers there already called Macmaster "squire" and the women curtisied to him': *Some Do Not*. . . (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 296. In *Last Post* (66), Mrs de Bray Pape 'apparently approved' of 'the children of the tenants kneeling down when she drove out' in Tietjens' father's coach and six.

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15 A central figure in the Arthurian cycle, whose adulterous relationship with Arthur's queen, Guinevere, was an important motif in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as Ford makes clear in his 1902 book on him; see also 'Gloom and the Poets', Chapter III of *Ancient Lights* (1911).

16 Bram Stoker's *Dracula* had appeared two years earlier (1897).

17 Probably fictional but conceivably referring to Cissy Grahame (b. 1862), actress-manager, married to James Allan.

Letter from America: Thoughts on NASCAR

Meghan Hammond

‘And, again, I am painfully aware that some one may come along and assert that even the unending plains through which the trains proceed with the air of being out upon eternal, level journeys—even those plains are not America. Some one is always ready to say to me, even in the Middle West itself: “Ah, this is not AMERICA. You do not know America until you have seen the Coast.” And gentlemen from the South tell me that the West is not America, and young women from Seattle tell me that New Mexico is not *America*.’ (Ford, *New York Is Not America*)

In the final chapter of *New York is Not America*, Ford recalls the unnerving sensation of falling asleep on the train from New York to Chicago and waking up somewhere in AMERICA. All he knows about AMERICA is that he hasn’t glimpsed it in New York. He gets closest to feeling like he might have found the elusive AMERICA when he’s passing through Indiana.

I don’t live in AMERICA. I live in these United States of America. Specifically, in the state of Illinois. More specifically, in Chicago, a city that in Ford’s day could be accused of being in AMERICA. No longer. We are the third largest city in the U.S. but a blank spot on the map of AMERICA.

But this past summer, on the Fourth of July weekend, AMERICA came to Chicago.

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Well, NASCAR came to Chicago. Baseball is our national game. Basketball and football are the sports we actually enjoy. But NASCAR is the epitome of AMERICA. A large number of white men, and occasionally a white woman, zoom around a big oval again and again in incredibly fast vehicles. The thrill is that sometimes they crash. And every once in a while, they die. What sport.

NASCAR's holy cathedral, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, is not far from Chicago, by North American standards. It's just under two hundred miles away. But it could just as well be on the moon. It's in the AMERICA Ford never really found, despite travelling across our plains on the fine Pullman train cars of the 1920s. AMERICA isn't for the likes of me. It makes me nervous.

Reciprocally, my city makes AMERICA nervous. The people of AMERICA call Chicago the murder capital of the nation. We Chicagoans take great umbrage with this moniker. We exclaim that we only have the most murders by overall number, not per capita. "Don't forget to count per capita!" we shout. Of course it's not really the murders that bother our critics. The citizens of both AMERICA and the United States are utterly inured to murder. No, it's all that unnerving diversity and the threat de jour, wokeness, that makes AMERICA fear us so.

You'd think that no one would accuse NASCAR of being woke. But you would be wrong. Give it a little Googling if you dare. You'll find that NASCAR has joined the madness of the "woke agenda." First of all, there's one black NASCAR driver now. Second,

NASCAR banned the Confederate flag at its races in the year 2020. Yes that's right, 2020.

So perhaps as part of the critical race theory madness sweeping these United States, woke NASCAR came to the Windy City in July 2023. It was a move seen as mutually beneficial for NASCAR and our city. NASCAR would have a chance to expand its fanbase in a city of millions and Chicago would have a chance to get some much needed money. So our former mayor, since voted out of office, struck a multi-year deal with NASCAR.

In a gesture toward Formula One, Chicago's oval NASCAR track was a street circuit around Grant Park. The project interrupted the doings of our downtown area for weeks. We complained stridently about the traffic. But we always complain stridently about the traffic. The result was to be a fabulous visual of impossibly fast cars racing along Lake Michigan and past our mighty skyscrapers. In Ford's day, those skyscrapers were very much in AMERICA. Now they're just in Chicago.

The fabulous visual will have to wait for next year's race, however. Just as the cars were set to blow our minds with their speed, our city experienced a debilitating flash flood (our particular cross to bear in the era of climate catastrophe). The weekend was a bust for NASCAR and the city, with races shortened or canceled and the promised tourism dollars failing to meet estimates by far.

However. We got one real treat. You see, while we don't have stock car racing here in Chicago, we do have a lot of illegal street racing. And one such

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street racer couldn't resist the urge to sneak onto the course the night before the big race and zip around in his neon yellow Corvette, to the delight of the entire city and the visiting NASCAR fans. The cops caught him and gave him a ticket for being naughty.

That's one delight that the elusive but powerful AMERICA shares with its shadowy twin, the United States. No matter which country we live in, we all love an ersatz rebel. Not a real rebel, for God's sake, never that. We all want to rebel. What we're not so keen on are the consequences of our actions. We, the people of both AMERICA and the United States, might say we want this or that rebellion. Some small number of us mean it. But most of us just want to watch the naughty man break the rules and drive very fast, only to be gently scolded by kindly authorities.

The Case of the Missing Cromwell: Ford Madox Ford, Art, Life and Letters in 1899

Sara Haslam

Introduction

Arthur Mizener's biography of Ford Madox Ford, *The Saddest Story*, was published in 1971, a driving force of second-wave critical attention to Ford and his work.¹ The significance of Mizener's contribution to Ford studies is acknowledged in the introduction to the definitive life of Ford – Max Saunders credits him alongside David Harvey's 'pioneering' 1962 bibliography in *A Dual Life*.² However, Mizener's account of Ford's writing life also set a small but lively hare running that has not stopped since:

Conrad was hard at work [in 1899] on *Lord Jim* and Ford had—thanks to Edward Garnett—now found a publisher to commission 'my colossal book on the Cinque Ports' and had carried a plan for a novel about Oliver Cromwell far enough to sell the idea to a publisher.³

There is a lot going on in this biographical sentence, which links the account of Ford's and Conrad's work on *Romance* in the spring of that year to Ford's labours on what would become *The Inheritors* – significant activity with demonstrable results, in which Cromwell certainly played a bit

part.⁴ However, it is Mizener's attribution to Ford of a novel about Cromwell, a provocative one to those working currently on *The Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford*, which constitutes that hare. The source of Mizener's authoritatively expressed reference would be highly prized by any biographer: it was the diary kept across 1899 by a closely involved contemporary witness, Ford's wife, Elsie Martin-dale Hueffer.⁵

Mizener is the only one of Ford's biographers to date who has had access to Elsie's diary. Later writers who address the idea of a Cromwell novel cite him.⁶ Douglas Goldring, on the other hand, made no mention of it in his biographical account, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite*, published in 1948.⁷ The lack of supporting textual evidence does not of course invalidate a claim as to the novel's existence. New material occasionally surfaces from any writing life, especially one as chaotic as Ford's; or—unlikely though this may be given his publications by 1899—Ford could have sold the idea alone and stopped there.⁸ And the novel's apparent subject, due in part to the influence of his painter grandfather on his career, would surprise no-one who knows Ford's writing well.⁹ Before too many more years had passed, Ford's reputation would be boosted significantly by the appearance of *The Fifth Queen* trilogy (1906-08), historical fiction based on the Tudor period.

And yet I hope to demonstrate in what follows that Mizener's hare was in fact released because of a misreading of Elsie's text. This was not the Cromwell anyone should have been looking for. The

number and range of nods to 'Old Noll' at this point in Ford's life do make this a more than usually complicated issue (even the Hueffer dog bore his name), and if I'm right about the misreading, it would be understandable perhaps for other reasons as well. The year in question was a particularly heady one in Ford's writing life: he'd met Conrad the September before. He was desperate to secure income for his writing, as was usually the case, writing furiously and often unsuccessfully when it came to securing publication. But I have gone back to Elsie's diary, now more widely available to researchers along with others of her books and papers, to explore in more detail the case of the missing Cromwell.¹⁰ Further light can be shed on the mystery thanks to current work on Ford's unpublished letters. 'There is an abominable muddle about my Cromwell', is how one notably frustrated 1899 example begins.¹¹ Indeed.

Elizabeth ('Elsie') Martindale, known mainly to scholars of the period as the first and only legally recognised wife of the writer Ford Madox Ford, was born on 3 October 1876. She was the third child of Dr William Martindale, a pharmacist, and Mariah Hannah Martindale.¹³ The family business was on New Cavendish Street, London, and the Martindales lived on Devonshire Street, which adjoins Harley Street. Elsie, along with her older sister Mary, attended the Praetoria House school, founded as a kindergarten in Marylebone by Dr and Mrs Praetorius in 1881. When the couple moved the school to Folkestone two years later, they turned it into one for boarders and the girls and their younger brother Leonard went too. The Praetoriuses,

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The diarist: Elsie Martindale Hueffer



Fig. 1 Catherine Hueffer (née Madox Brown), portrait of 'Elsie Madox Hueffer' (1895), known by Elsie's descendants as 'The Wedding Ring'. Permission courtesy of Mary Waugh.

innovators influenced by the German educational reformer Friedrich Froebel, were friends of both Ford's maternal grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, and the Martindale family. Biographical accounts suggest that Brown's grandson Ford joined their school as a boarder, but it is more likely he attended in London first, moving south when it relocated.¹⁴ French and German speaking, outdoor play and sports were key features of the educational context for Ford and Elsie. They played chess together in the evenings and, before long, they were considered a couple by their friends: Elsie was nicknamed the 'captain's wife' (Goldring, 33).

Elsie enjoyed painting. She thanked her mother for a 'nice paint-box' in a letter home on 23 June 1889, describing a school trip the previous day to an old farm which she painted and enclosing her attempt. She and Ford, along with all other pupils, also read widely, deeply, and seriously. Later, when Ford had left the school and he and Elsie were courting in earnest, he somewhat pompously assumed the role of Elsie's educator: in a biographical account of a day out in July 1892 he notes that the couple had 'talked of the books that she should read [...] for the more certain opening out of that most beautiful of all flowers, her mind'.¹⁵ Perhaps she accepted his instruction. In their love letters of that period, however, Ford demonstrates his respect for Elsie's skills as a writer and musician (he originally felt himself to be destined for a life in music) and they talk of their shared devotion to an artistic and creative life.¹⁶

A dramatic 20 months after Ford wrote up the

account of the day trip quoted above, the couple eloped. There was a court case as Elsie was under 18 and her parents, having tried repeatedly to separate them, had Elsie made a ward of court. The judge, learning that Ford and Elsie were in fact married, ‘quashed the order restricting intercourse’ (Saunders I, 83) and by the summer of 1894, having repelled further legal challenges, they had settled at Bonnington, on the edge of Kent’s Romney Marsh, to begin their married life.

Elsie was a valuable and observant diarist. She first kept a diary, so far as records show, across the Easter after their marriage. This is a fragmentary record, covering in its four-and-a-half pages 9 April to 23 April 1895; Easter Sunday fell on the 14th. As well as revealing a serious lack of household funds, it provides evidence of the fact that Elsie was both writing independently for publication, and conceiving of herself as a writer, aged only 18. While the letters between the couple in the early 1890s attest to the fact that, to an extent still to be fully understood, Ford and Elsie were both contributing to the manuscripts that were also passing between them, in 1895 she is writing alone.¹⁷ Elsie was certainly looking for extra income in part. On the bank holiday Monday she expresses the hope that ‘Robert [Garnett]¹⁸ or Mrs H will relieve us by tomorrow’s post’, noting a sentence later, ‘Just going to commence on “Mary’s Grave”’ – a story that she had not ‘mastered’ by the Thursday, though she had written ‘Burning the Bush’.¹⁹ Ford’s mother, ‘Mrs H’ as they both called her, had also by then come to the rescue, and sent her and Ford some money.

Elsie's early attempts at publication drew on the rich seam of material offered by their new rural existence – and Ford's closely observed 'peasant biographies' were among the most notable elements of his first 'boomed' success, the *England and the English* trilogy, published 1905-08. Following a garden get together with neighbours including Mrs Mary Walker and Mrs Mary Sprattford, Elsie noted on 19 April 'Since then I have written "Going Home". I have now only one more to write before I send them up to Edward [Garnett]. Hope he will approve of them'. (Ford had grown up with the Garnetts – Edward, married to the translator Constance Garnett, was a reader for Fisher, Unwin and had 'discovered' Conrad in 1894.) Olive Garnett certainly did approve of Elsie's stories, and we know from her own diary that Edward respected his sister's opinion, sharing current manuscripts with her.²⁰ While visiting Elsie and Ford the previous November, Olive had been asked to read Elsie's 'Mrs Larkins' by the budding author, who had already submitted it without success to the *Yellow Book* and was about to try the *Cornhill*. On the co-writing question, Elsie told Olive at this time that she and Ford had written 'The Sowing of the Oats' together – 'probably a reference', Saunders has suggested, to 'The Last Sowing', an unpublished novel which Olive also records that she read.²¹ Olive, visiting again, then, in November 1895, reported wider reading of Elsie's work, including a story about 'Mrs Walker'. Her verdict was positive: 'A lot to read here'; '[the stories] are so simply good and true'.²² Elsie waited 10 years, but a story with the title 'Going Home', featuring a Mrs Walker and a Mrs Sprattford, not to mention the locally prized 'mushroom ketchup'

that is prominent in Ford's accounts as well, was published in *The Speaker* in July 1905.²³

In 1899, Elsie formalised her approach to life writing, keeping a diary almost every day in a commercially available bound volume from 14 January 1899 to 6 January 1900 (Fig. 2). In the case of the missing Cromwell it is to this text that we turn, following Mizener's lead, for the first clues. While the 1899 diary offers welcome detail as to the collaborative work between Ford and Conrad as well as Ford's own writing in the months after they met – and also the relationships between the two families (Christina Margaret had been born to the Hueffers in 1897 and Elsie fell pregnant with Katharine in 1899) – Elsie seems to have done very little creative writing herself.²⁴ She is exuberant when Ford sells work and when a necessary house move is confirmed, and she provides detailed comment on both people and place, domestically and further abroad. The Pent, the farmhouse on the Kent Downs which the Hueffers sub-let to the Conrads soon after they met and in which the Conrads lived until 1907, is a frequently shared location in 1899.

Elsie's detail includes, for example, that Conrad was 'depressed' on 6 December, while Jessie had a 'bad headache'. Conrad was 'very bad with gout' on 28 March. Across the year, there was much health-related misery on the Hueffer side. 'Mrs H' arrived on 17 February to help look after what was a sick family. She stayed a week. Elsie left to recover fully while Catherine tended in the main to Christina – until the point when Ford wrote with worrying enough news about their daughter to bring her back home.

Though she did travel to the Pent without Ford in 1899, on this occasion, sick herself, Elsie went elsewhere to get well.²⁵ Later in the year, though, Elsie was preoccupied by her possible pregnancy. On 20 September, she told her sister Mary the news. ‘She very surprised [sic].’

Even if her fiction writing had had to be put on hold, Elsie’s reading receives occasional mention in the diary (the novels *No. 5 John Street*; *Moonlight*; *Evan Harrington*; *Nicholas Nickleby* are all cited),²⁶ and her artistic ability does find an outlet in 1899 – an easier one than fiction writing to work into family life. One of the happiest entries, that of 12 June, describes her singing ‘some of F’s songs’ when the Conrads were there (see Fig. 2; also note Elsie’s record of Ford beginning work on the Rye chapter of *Cinque Ports*, as well as Borys, the Conrads’ son, failing to appreciate Cromwell the dog and thereby upsetting Christina). Elsie sang ‘magnificently’ according to Olive Garnett.²⁷ She had also been practising from time to time the songs bought on a London trip in early February, when she had enjoyed *Tristan and Isolde* with Mary (‘Lucile Hill [the American-born soprano] splendid in the Liebestod’), and Burne Jones and Rembrandt exhibitions.²⁸ Singing was perhaps enough of an outlet to preserve Elsie’s artistic integrity, and therefore aid such domestic harmony as was experienced by the couple that year.

Marital quarrelling is more a matter of record in Elsie’s diary and is sometimes protracted. Notably, on more than one occasion the pattern of poor relations looks as though it is broken by some good

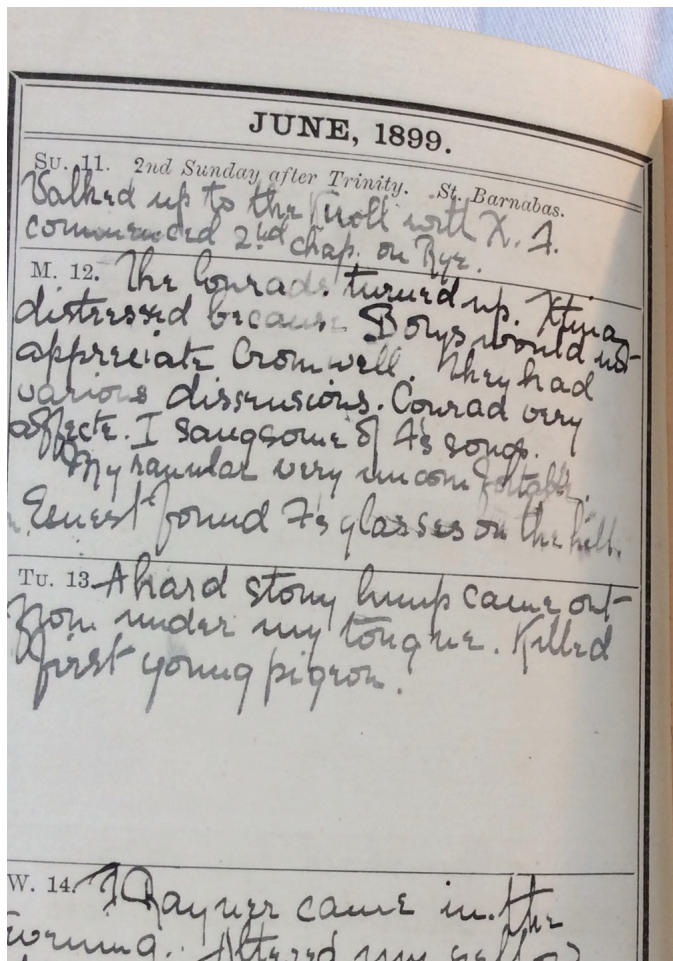


Fig. 2 Elsie's 1899 diary, week of 11 June.
Permission courtesy of Charles and Gillian Lamb.

news related to Ford's writing. Across three days in January 1899 the entry is identical: 'Rain – Quarrelled' until on the 19th there is news and activity related to *Cinque Ports* – they still argue, late in the day according to the entry, but they also 'made it up'. In May they quarrelled on 15th and 16th, according to her record, while on the 17th they hear that Blackwoods has accepted Ford's *Cinque Ports* book. 'Hurrah', she notes. Elsie demonstrates both pride and some vicarious pleasure in Ford's successes and deserves credit for her part in managing the home (she made a lot of clothes that year). She managed Ford too, perhaps to the degree that his writing, and in turn their living, was made more possible.²⁹ She was not doing Ford's typing though, even after the household's first machine arrived on 14 April that year, but was sending his manuscripts to a 'Miss Smith', and recording receipt of the results.³⁰ (What Elsie does not record in the diary, possibly because she wasn't aware of it, is that Ford recruited Olive Garnett as a research assistant, aided by the ticket for the British Library Olive's father obtained for her that July. Olive 'copied all day', apparently for free.³¹)

The gender politics of Elsie's account are clearly revealed through assessment of their comparative individual labour at this time, but they also inflect almost everything else, even access to golf courses: 'Drove down to Camber, & found no playing for ladies. Returned disgusted & went blackberrying', Elsie noted on 23 September.³² Christina did not sleep much in these months, and Elsie often mentions her resultant exhaustion, and the sickness that came with her second pregnancy. Related is-

sues, including gender-derived expectations of significance, may help to explain why, even when the diary could be consulted by a biographer, it seems to have been passed over rather hurriedly. Mizener does reference Elsie's writing, but then there is that hare.³³

Elsie first mentions 'the Cromwell' on 16 February 1899. A letter has come about it from 'Rathbone'. There is no further detail but this first reference introduces a figure who proves essential to unravelling the mystery.

'The Cromwell': key players

Harold Rathbone (1858-1929) was an artist member of a prominent Liverpool family.³⁴ Inspired by the Arts & Crafts Movement, he founded the Della Robbia Pottery, a ceramics factory, in Birkenhead in 1894. As a developing artist, however, he had been a pupil of Ford Madox Brown and was an expert on his work. The same year he launched the pottery, he had secured at the May sale of Madox Brown's effects a series of his original cartoons and had a selection of them reproduced.³⁵ Early in 1897 he held an exhibition of his pottery featuring designs by Madox Brown. Olive Garnett was there, along with her brother Robert, and she notes that 'Ford gave us tea' (Johnson 1993, 84).

Perhaps it was on this occasion that either Ford or Elsie conceived a plan that led to the letter they received, I believe from Harold Rathbone, in 1899. Robert had had, after all, a long-standing role as the Hueffers' fixer, or 'homme d'affaires'.³⁶ Indeed, Elsie's next diary reference to 'Cromwell' is when

she hears from Robert – who also knew Rathbone - ‘about’ him on 12 July.³⁷ What might Rathbone and Robert Garnett have been jointly trying to ‘fix’, using their combination of professional expertise, and how?

My initial answer to the ‘how’ element of this question (the ‘what’ being as it usually was: lack of funds) came as a result of focus on the Pent. After the plan had been hatched to sub-let their home to the Conrads, ostensibly to provide Conrad both with more workspace and a better climate for his gout (though Goldring writes that ‘Elsie found [it] lonely and depressing when left there alone’ (64) and her 1899 diary makes it plain how forceful she could be in her opinions about their accommodation and what should be done about it) Conrad wrote to Ford that the ‘time approaches for me to step in amongst your relics’.³⁸ We can turn to Jessie Conrad’s written account, published in 1935, for further detail. Jessie describes in *Joseph Conrad and his Circle* some of the ‘really fine’ Hueffer possessions at the Pent: ‘there was a writing desk that had once belonged to Christina Rossetti, a big table designed by William Morris, and a picture cupboard belonging, or having belonged, to Ford Madox Brown. There were also hanging above the couch in the front room a death mask of Dante G. Rossetti and one of Oliver Cromwell, gruesome relics that held for me a good deal of awe’.³⁹

Ford does not include a Cromwell mask in Appendix B, ‘A list of Madox Brown’s more important works’, in his biography of his grandfather, but a ‘[Head of D.G.R.]’ is there (*Ford Madox Brown*,

434) and is listed as owned at that point by Robert Garnett. In November 1894, six months after the sale of Brown's effects, Ford's brother Oliver had 'appeared' at the Garnetts to take away Robert's cast of D.G.R.'s head, shortly before Ford and Elsie were in town to negotiate with publishers about the planned life of Brown.⁴⁰ Ford does make mention of a 'life mask of Oliver Cromwell' in the main text of the biography – citing it as a 'guide' for Madox Brown in his work on his famous 1877 painting, 'Cromwell, Protector of the Vaudois' (312 n.). Mary Bennett in turn cites this note in her *Catalogue Raisonné* of Madox Brown's works (278), though given it is described as 'huge' this example may not have been created or owned by Brown.

Returning to Elsie's 1899 diary provides a strong indication that this thinking is moving at least in the right direction and that a Brown work, perhaps a mask hanging on the walls of the Pent as Jessie described it, was the subject of Rathbone's and Garnett's 'fixing', providing an opportunity to bring much needed income to the Hueffers that year ahead of Katharine's birth.

Art and Life

Elsie talks most frequently about the 'Cromwell' in October, as Mizener spotted, though in close reference to the Fine Art Society, an important detail which he apparently overlooked. 'F. went to London about Cromwell. Fine Art Soc. offer 175' (11 Oct), Elsie tells us.⁴¹ 'F. returned ... Has sold Cromwell' (12 Oct). Although Elsie is concerned about the lack of further news on 28 October ('nothing from the Fine

Art people'), on 18 November she was able to celebrate: 'money arrived from the Fine Art Society'.⁴² There was a notable outcome for Elsie personally: 'F presented me with £25. I now possess a banking account'. She wrote her first cheque four days later, to Liberty's, for fabric for clothes.

Mizener's hare assumes its proper shape: Brown art with a Cromwell theme that was sold in 1899; but a death mask, perhaps not. It is Ford's unpublished letters (both incoming and outgoing) that provide the final pieces of evidence in the case of the missing Cromwell, and I return in conclusion to where I began, with the 1899 letter from a frustrated Ford.

Ford was writing about his 'abominable muddle' to Joseph Pennell (1857-1926), the American etcher, artist and major illustrator of books and magazines who settled in London in the 1880s. (Pennell and his wife Elizabeth met Ford Madox Brown at an 'at home' of the Robinson family in 1884, along with William and Lucy Rossetti.⁴³) Max Saunders' recent discovery that one of Pennell's replies in this exchange with Ford had been misattributed to Arnold Bennett in Cornell's catalogue means that the epistolary conversation between the two men has become more fully visible. This particular reply is critical firstly in the case of the missing Cromwell because it provides evidence that Brown did indeed make a Cromwell death mask, whether or not it is featured in Ford's inventory – or Mary Bennett's. In a postscript to the letter's main subject, Pennell writes: 'I will send you a print of the S. K. M. mask that you may see it is the same as yours'.⁴⁴ The Victoria and Albert Museum was called the South

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Kensington Museum until 1899, and it holds in its collections an unattributed nineteenth century 'Mask of Cromwell'.⁴⁵

Secondly, and more significantly, Pennell's letter encourages more detailed study of all Brown's works with a Cromwell focus and their provenance, indicating as it does the existence of a significant Brown work – and a painting in fact rather than a mask – being in Ford's possession at that time. In the exchange between Ford and Pennell, which I'll be dating in volume 1 of the *Collected Letters of Ford Madox Ford* to the summer/early autumn of 1899, and which had begun much more calmly, it is clear that Ford is seeking to lend Pennell a Madox Brown painting. This activity was time critical. Ford will have wanted to get the work to Pennell in time for a piece he was illustrating: a series commissioned by the *Century* in 1899 called 'Oliver Cromwell', written by John Morley.⁴⁶ The 'abominable muddle' occurred when the lent work went missing in transit – somewhere between, Ford thinks, the National Gallery, Pennell's house and Macmillan's, who published *Century*. Thankfully, for many reasons, it turned up. John Morley's 'Oliver Cromwell', 'With pictures by, or after, Samuel Cooper, Joseph Pennell, Ernest Haskell, Van Dyck, Ford Madox Brown...' was published in the November 1899 issue of the *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*.⁴⁷

Begun in 1853, 'Cromwell on his Farm, St Ives, 1630', as one of Brown's two finished paintings to feature Cromwell became known, was commissioned by William Brockbank in 1873, the year,

coincidentally, of Ford's birth.⁴⁸ Brockbank sold it at Christie's in 1897, Bennett states in the painting's Provenance (261), and it was, she says, 'with F. M. Hueffer' in 1897 and 1898.⁴⁹ (The credits in the *Century* piece support her assertion. Above the caption the following text appears: 'Painted by Ford Madox Brown. Photographed from the original by Frederick Hollyer. Owned by Ford Madox Hueffer.'⁵⁰) Bennett's financial record tracing does not extend to include the Hueffers, but it is nonetheless very helpful. The work was purchased by W. H. Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme, in October 1899, in a deal brokered by the Fine Art Society. Bennett cites in evidence an invoice to W. H. Lever dated 16 October 1899, four days after Elsie tells us that Ford had 'sold' the Cromwell. Ford received £175 for the painting. The Fine Art Society invoice is for £210, indicating the Society's £35 commission for the deal, or their mark-up. The money arrived with the Hueffers on Saturday 18 November.

Probably the Hueffers did not leave this particular relic behind at the Pent when they moved out in October 1898. It seems certain that Jessie would have mentioned its presence on the walls if they had done. Wherever it was hung or stored, they parted with it the following autumn, and for a healthy sum. The Hueffers needed good news that October. Writing on *The Inheritors* was not going well, though Elsie's diary records a change in tone on this front and restoration of good relations with the Conrads the following month. The Hueffer family drove over together to the Pent on 14 November and she writes that 'they were very pleased to see us I think'. Ford visited twice more in November, the second time

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with Christina (and perhaps Cromwell the dog). Elsie's diary concludes on Epiphany 1900: 'Getting a bit straighter. Put up curtains. Ethel, X [Christina] & Tommy [the pony] went out in the afternoon.'

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Archival sources

Elsie Martindale ALS to Mariah Martindale, 23 June 1889; Lamb family archive

Elsie Hueffer 1895 and 1899 diaries; Lamb family archive

Ford Madox Ford Collection, Carl A. Kroch Library, Rare and Manuscript Collections #4605, University of Cornell, Ithaca

Notes

1 The first wave was characterised by publications such as the April 1948 issue of the Princeton University Library Chronicle (entry E911 in David Dow Harvey's *Ford Madox Ford 1873 to 1939: a Bibliography of Works and Criticism*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962) – and then *Parade's End*, published in one-volume form for the first time by Knopf in 1950. For recent work on Ford's reception see Sara Haslam, 'Ford studies in the twenty-first century: bibliography, criticism and the gaps on the map', 'Introduction' to Haslam, Laura Colombino and Seamus O'Malley (eds), *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 1-22; and Karolyn Steffens and Joseph Wiesenfarth, 'Ford's Reception History', 39-60, in the same volume.

2 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, vii.

3 Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: a Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1985), 50-51.

4 *Romance* was not published until 1903 and at this early stage was titled *Seraphina*; chapter 1 of Ford's memoir of Conrad provides a striking account of the older novelist's first encounter with Ford's manuscript, which Ford read to him (*Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance*, London: Duckworth, 1924). *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story*, the 'first fruit' of Ford's and Conrad's collaboration and on which work began in 1899, was published by William Heinemann in 1901 (*The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story*, ed. David Seed, Liver-

pool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, ix). Would-be novelist Arthur Etchingham Granger, narrator of what Saunders terms ‘this curious hybrid work’ (I, 118) confesses to an obsession with ‘the Lord Oliver’ and that he had, a ‘great many years before [...] set about one of those glorious novels that one plans – a splendid thing with Old Noll as the hero or the heavy father’ (*The Inheritors*, 51-52). Instead, Granger sets about collaborating on a *Life of Cromwell* at the suggestion of its beleaguered author, Churchill (54). Early in his introduction to *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story / The Nature of a Crime*, published in 2022 in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad*, Jeremy Hawthorn notes that ‘Ford was responsible for the lion’s share of both works’ (xliv).

5 A note on names: Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) was both baptised and began publishing as Ford Hermann Hueffer. He formally assumed the middle name ‘Madox’ in 1915 (though all three Hueffer children used it in the same way informally as a sign of their love of their grandfather, Ford Madox Brown), and the surname Ford in 1919. His published works are listed under the surname Ford, but Hueffer is often used in this piece due to the context.

6 Examples occur in Alan Judd’s biography, *Ford Madox Ford* (London: Flamingo, 1991, 69), Saunders’ biography (I, 117), and in Hawthorn’s edition of *The Inheritors* (xlviii).

7 Douglas Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: a Record of the Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (London: Macdonald, 1948); hereafter Goldring.

8 Ford’s record wasn’t slight by any means, especially

as he was 25 at the time, but it only included one novel. *The Shifting of the Fire* had been published by T. Fisher Unwin in 1892; then there were fairy tales, stories, a collection of poetry and a biography of his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown – all published under various names: Ford H. Madox Hueffer (*The Brown Owl, The Feather*), H. Ford Hueffer (*The Shifting of the Fire*), the pseudonym ‘Fenil Haig’ (*The Questions at the Well*), the misprinted ‘Ford Huffer’ (*The Queen Who Flew*) and Ford M. Hueffer (*Ford Madox Brown*). See Harvey’s *Bibliography* and Max Saunders’ ‘Ford Madox Ford: Further Bibliographies’, *ELT* 43: 2 (2000), 131-205.

9 Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), Ford’s maternal grandfather and ‘elder statesman of the Pre-Raphaelite movement’, repeatedly represented English historical figures in his work, including Cromwell. See Newman and Watkinson’s *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1991)—the quotation above is taken from the back cover of their biography—and Mary Bennett, *Ford Madox Brown: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), Volume 1. On Brown’s influence on Ford’s life and development as an artist, both before and after his father’s early death in 1889, see, for example, Saunders I, 23-29. Editors of *The Inheritors* have noted Brown’s stylistic influence (Seed xiii; Hawthorn lxiii), and Hawthorn expands the discussion to consider other real-life models for the novel’s characters (lviii-lxii). As noted above, Ford published a biography, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work*, in 1896.

10 Elsie’s papers and letters are mainly held in the family archive of Charles and Gillian Lamb, descendants of Ford and Elsie’s younger daughter Katharine, in Dublin.

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11 Ford Madox Ford, unpublished letter (n.d. but 1899) to Joseph Pennell (1857-1926), the American etcher, artist and illustrator.

12 Grateful acknowledgement is offered to Mary Waugh, Elsie and Ford's granddaughter, for permission to reproduce this portrait of Elsie, which was hung as part of an exhibition celebrating the work of Ford Madox Brown's two painter daughters, '[Uncommon power](#)': Lucy and Catherine Madox Brown, at the Watts Gallery, Surrey, UK in 2021-22. In Elsie's novel *Margaret Hever*, one of the many autobiographical elements includes a portrait painted of Margaret by a female relative, featuring a prominent 'gold chain': Elizabeth Martindale, *Margaret Hever* (London: Duckworth, 1909), 100.

13 Martindale launched his celebrated and still standard reference work, the *Extra Pharmacopoeia of Unofficial Drugs and Chemical and Pharmaceutical Preparations*, in 1883.

14 Goldring (31-32) and Saunders (I, 33) note that schooldays began in the autumn of 1881, when Ford was 7. Praetoria House was founded in 1881 and moved to Folkestone in 1884, according to the architects' plans for a rebuilt school under a new owner in 1904 https://www.ribapix.com/design-for-the-new-school-at-praetoria-house-folkestone_riba21123#

15 Francis Hueffer, Ford's father and music critic of *The Times*, died suddenly in 1889. Ford, and later his younger brother Oliver, left Folkestone for financial reasons and went to University College School in London. Ford Madox Ford Collection, #4605 / 2.10. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

16 Nathan Waddell offers excellent summary and analysis of both the related biographical narrative and scholarship on this subject in ‘Ford, Family, and Music’, in Haslam et al., *Routledge Research Companion*, 79-93.

17 See Haslam, ‘The Other in Ford’s Making: Elsie, fiction and collaboration’ in Isabelle Brasme (ed.), *Homo Duplex: Ford Madox Ford’s Experience and Aesthetics of Alterity* (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2020), 21-41. This earlier activity also formed one basis for their frantic appeal to Elsie’s parents not to separate them during their courtship. Ford had, somewhat optimistically it turned out, reported to Elsie after an intervention by Madox Brown that her father ‘had not the slightest idea of separating us’ because he ‘had not known we were working together’: ALS Ford to Elsie, dated 2 May 1893 (Cornell #4605/33.08).

18 A solicitor and, along with siblings Olive and Edward (who feature in the following section), a long-standing family friend.

19 Possibly reconceived as ‘The Burning of the Barn’, which survives in manuscript form (14pp) and was written when the couple were living or staying at the Pent - where they moved in October 1896. ‘The Burning of the Barn’ was published by the *Daily News* on 26 November 1908.

20 She describes reading ‘some MSS’ while staying with Edward and Constance in 1890 (Johnson 1989: 53).

21 Olive recorded this in her diary for 20 November: *Olive and Stepniak: The Bloomsbury Diary of Olive Garnett 1893-1895*, ed. Barry C. Johnson (London: Bartlett’s Press, 1993), 135. Saunders’ comment is taken

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from a further bibliographical study, as yet unpublished. The majority of 'The Last Sowing' manuscript held in the Ford collection at Cornell is in Elsie's hand (pp. 4-251), while the remainder is in Ford's (pp. 252-342) and the early leaves are missing.

22 Johnson, *Olive and Stepniak*, 223-224.

23 *The Speaker*, 12 (22 July 1905), 390. Mary Walker supported many areas of the couple's domestic life. Elsie's later diary records her doing the washing (Elsie notes 'she earned her dinner well', 4 April), bringing vegetables, cooking dinner, shopping with Elsie, helping Elsie to bake in the brick oven - leading on a later occasion to the joint production of 12 loaves and 2 cakes in one day (28 April). In early November, Mrs Walker 'guessed' the news of her pregnancy. 'Meary Walker', as Ford calls her, is one of the most powerfully drawn characters in his published work (Saunders I, 93-94).

24 For more detail on what the diary offers as to both sole and collaborative writerly activity, see Haslam, 'The Hueffers and the Conrads in 1899', *The Conradian*, vol. 47 no. 1 (Spring 2022), 66-75. Paul Skinner's review of the Cambridge edition of *The Inheritors / The Nature of a Crime* is in the same issue, 103-112.

25 "Went to Lucy's by Oxted", Elsie writes on 20 February, suggesting it is Lucy Cowlshaw she stays with. The architect William Harrison ('Harry') Cowlshaw was born at Limpsfield, where the Hueffers were now living, in 1869. He designed their cottage and also the Cearne, the nearby home of Edward and Constance Garnett, and was now living with his wife Lucy (née Garnett, sister to Edward and Olive) at Kiln Farm. Ford had published a

piece, 'The Work of William Harrison Cowleshaw' in *The Artist* in September 1897. Fanny and Sergey Stepniak had also lived close by since 1895, and Fanny becomes a close friend to Elsie over the course of 1899.

26 She recorded reading *No. 5 John Street* (1899), by Richard Whiteing, on Saturday 22 April; *Moonlight* (1898), by Mary E. Mann, on Monday 15 May ('[...] in the afternoon. Sent with an extraordinary inscription from Robert [?Garnett]'; *Evan Harrington* (1861), by George Meredith, on Tuesday 23 May (on 26 May – 'finished Evan H., to my distress'); and noted that she 'Finished Nicholas Nickleby' on Thursday 12 October.

27 Johnson, *Olive and Stepniak*, 91.

28 The trip took place over the weekend of 3 February. 'Up late', she wrote on 5 February. 'Attacked Tristan without much result'.

29 Arthur Mizener describes Elsie as 'extremely orderly' (*Saddest Story*, 34). No one ever said that about Ford. Edward Garnett made an explicitly gendered related observation, as well as insulting Ford. According to his sister, he 'amused' them all 'incessantly' in 1894 in his 'mock reverence for Elsie's masculine powers' while treating Ford 'like a well-meaning baby' (Johnson, *Olive and Stepniak*, 133).

30 On 1 February and 7 February, for example.

31 Richard Garnett, Olive's father, was keeper of printed books at the British Museum and the family had accommodation on site. Barry C. Johnson, *The Diaries and Letters of Olive Garnett: An English Girl in Old Russia 1896-1897 and in England 1897-1958* (Padstow, Corn-

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well: Tabb House, 2019), 148. Helen Chambers shows the extent of Olive's assistance in Ford's *Cinque Ports* project in 'Ford's Reading VI: Researching his "foul and filthy" book', *Last Post* 6 & 7 (Spring & Autumn 2021), 70-82.

32 It is hard not to see in this some precursor of the suffragette Valentine Wannop's politicised invasion of the golf course in Ford's *Some Do Not...*, volume one of *Parade's End* (1924-28). On domestic/gender politics, Ford seemed to have been a much more engaged parent than many men of his era, as I have argued elsewhere (Haslam 2020: see note 17).

33 *Stories from de Maupassant*, Elsie's translation of nine stories, was published by Duckworth in 1903. For more on Elsie and Conrad, see Helen Chambers, *Conrad's Reading: Space, Time, Networks* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 190-197.

34 I was an undergraduate at the University of Liverpool and my university halls bore their name.

35 This is advertised in the back of Ford's biography of Madox Brown. Ford also notes that Rathbone was studied for the head of John of Gaunt in Brown's famous painting, 'Wycliffe on his Trial' (1885), and one of only two personal testimonies he publishes in Appendix A of *Ford Madox Brown* is by Rathbone – an extract from a letter in which he describes 'adopting Madox Brown as my master' (374, 428).

36 This description is Douglas Goldring's (*Last Pre-Raphaelite*, 73). In an unpublished letter dated 3? March 1899 Ford wrote to Elsie as follows: 'Robert has settled that loan [...] so if you like to send the bills down to me

[...] I shall pay everything we owe in Hythe tomorrow' (Cornell #4605 / 34.006).

37 Olive tells us Rathbone came to breakfast with Robert soon after the Hueffer court case had played out, in June 1894 (Johnson, *Olive and Stepniak*, 94).

38 *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad. Volume 2: 1898-1902*, edited by Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 110.

39 Jessie Conrad, *Joseph Conrad and his Circle* (London: Jarrolds, 1935), 66.

40 Olive's diary (Johnson *Olive and Stepniak*, 128).

41 Ford received an advance of £150 for *Ford Madox Brown*, a 'handsome' sum for an advance in those days, Goldring notes (60).

42 There is an archive at the Fine Art Society. Though it has been thoroughly checked, no formal record of this aspect of the sale remains. My thanks to Associate Director Patrick Duffy for his assistance in this matter.

43 Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Joseph Pennell: Life and Letters* vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1919), 117.

44 Cornell #4605 / 44.082 – letter misattributed to Arnold Bennett in the archive.

45 <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O308988/mask-of-cromwell/>.

46 His wife recalled in her book that 'for the Cromwell, most of the architecture and landscape he did himself.

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He unearthed engraved portraits long lying forgotten in the Bodleian, discovered rare miniatures in private collections, followed the trail of previous documents presented by Cromwell lovers' (*Joseph Pennell*, 337). Readers can judge the results for themselves <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112001985834&se-q=28&q1=Morley>

Grateful thanks to the editor for identifying this link.

47 Vol. LIX, No. 1, 3-23. Brown's painting is on p. 14 captioned 'Oliver Cromwell on his Farm at St Ives'.

48 The original 'design for a projected painting', as Mary Bennett calls it (176), was titled 'St Ives, A. D. 1636'. It was only formally taken up, and as a separate work, when commissioned in 1873 by Brockbank. The early design was given to John P. Seddon in 1856/57. Bennett's *Catalogue* provides details of the several other studies, sketches or duplicates of Madox Brown's Cromwell works. Ford discusses Madox Brown's first trip to St Ives in 1856 to 'see Cromwell localities' (*Ford Madox Brown*, 126).

49 A Garnett family purchase possibly released the painting back to Ford, Bennett's notes suggest. Robert Garnett had bought the head of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, we know.

50 Hollyer was a well-known photographer of Pre-Raphaelite figures and works <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/frederick-hollyer-life-and-work>.



Ford Madox Ford— Drawing by Janice Biala, c. 1930's

The Milor and the Dancer in *Last Post*

Dominique Lemarchal

One of Ford's literary tenets was that the writer should provide surprises.¹ *Last Post*, the fourth volume of *Parade's End*, written to answer the question 'what became of Tietjens?',² is built on two major surprises: the choice of Mark Tietjens and Marie Léonie as central characters and a narrative using an alternation of inner monologues.

That the last volume of *Parade's End* should place Mark who represent[s] 'the England that the continent applauded' (40) up to the war, at the center of the stage, while offstage, so to speak, Christopher 'keeps on going', makes sense; that Marie-Léonie, his French mistress now wife, should be given a consistent personality and life and almost equal space is more intriguing. So, this article will examine how the use of Mark's and Marie-Léonie's alternating inner monologues³ enriches and completes our knowledge and comprehension of the world the first three volumes have set up, and allows Ford to create the general effect⁴ he is after in *Parade's End*.

As the book opens, Mark Tietjens is lying on a makeshift bed, in the open, immobile and mute, deep in thought, attended to by a 'heavy elderly peasant'. He is looking back on his life, trying to assess it, apparently rather satisfied with the way that he has played the game as an Englishman and a gentleman, and reflecting about the impression he has made.

The shift to Marie Léonie's train of thoughts shows her thinking of him, '[her] man', concentrating on how best to nurse and feed him. Still, barely ten pages into the volume, her mind switches to discussions she has had with Mark's doctors on Armistice Day, convinced as she was that Mark's silence was a manifestation of his will, not a stroke, as they had diagnosed; in short, she believes that if he wanted, he could talk.

She pleaded with these gentlemen (the doctors) to consider as a possibility that the terms of the armistice were of such a nature as to make a person of Mark's determination and idiosyncrasies *resolve* to withdraw himself for ever from all human contacts, and that if he did so determine, nothing would cause him to change his determination. The last word he had spoken had been whilst one of his colleagues at the Ministry had been telephoning to tell her, for Mark's information, what the terms of the Armistice were. At the news which she had had to give him over her shoulder, he had made from the bed some remark. [. . .] What the remark had been she could not exactly repeat; she was almost certain that it had been to the effect—in English—that he would never speak again. But she was aware that her own predilection was sufficient to bias her hearing. (26-27)

For Marie-Léonie to achieve a lasting imprint in the reader's mind, she has to be given a story, a background, and a personality strong enough to bal-

ance Mark's. So, seeing her reflecting on her role in Mark's evolution who, in effect—she has 'seen to it'—has turned into 'a good Frenchman' (128) while patiently, devotedly, attending to him, feeds our interest in her, through what Ford called 'progression d'effet'.

In fact, Mark also seems to perceive how important her influence on him has been: 'No doubt twenty years of listening to the almost ceaseless but never disagreeable conversation of Marie-Léonie had been a liberal education' (71). The twenty years spent with her, two nights a week, in fact, have in the end mattered more than he had bargained for.

His long association with Marie-Léonie, his respect for the way in which she had her head screwed on, the constant intimacy with the life and point of view of French individuals of the *petite bourgeoisie* which her gossip had given him—all these things together with his despair for the future of his own country had given him a very considerable belief in the destinies and, indeed, in the virtues of the country across the Channel. (95)

This complements and alters the perception of Mark given by the first volume of *Parade's End*. In *Some Do Not. . .*, Mark, a minor, background character, is mostly an object of ridicule until Christopher resists him and imposes his own will. What one gathers in *Some Do Not. . .* is that Mark is working for the office of government in Whitehall, apparently in charge of transport and the railways (38-39),

that he has the reputation of being indispensable, though keeping his presence light, and views his colleagues as incompetent imbeciles.⁵ The battles he has to fight as a higher civil servant do not take place in the killing fields of France and Belgium: they take place behind doors and along corridors at the Ministry. Fortunately, twice and sometimes three times a week, he enjoys the attentions of Marie-Léonie, his warrior's rest: 'Mark regarded her with the ironic indulgence you accord to a child, but indeed, when he had been still in harness, it had rested him always to come home to her' (17).

As he goes over his life, it is more rewarding to think of Charlotte,⁶ his dancer,⁷ carefully picked up on the Edgware Road (24) than to ruminate about work. He remembers how carefully he had planned picking her up as he 'knew about women', and did not want to expose himself to worry. He had played by the rules for such encounters and got her address from the Apollo Theatre. She had no need to know his name, address or occupation, or that he was wealthy—which she learned only thirteen years after they'd first met, from a newspaper (39)—the understanding being that he would come to her twice a week.

Marie-Léonie had known what the gentleman in the bowler hat was about when she was 'picked up by him on the Edgware Road'; she was well aware, 'men being men', of the risks involved in the rapprochement (24). It had taken her time, years in fact, to overcome her fears of being jilted. As a dancer, she knew that she would have to give up the stage at some point, so that being picked up by

a *serious* man was crucial. She had to be cautious. Still, she has the qualities of a *Félicité*, the admirable servant from *Un Coeur Simple*,⁸ ‘frugal, shrewd, astonishingly clean and healthy’ (18), she is genuinely caring and disinterested, has shown no greed, and even after becoming Lady Tietjens, ‘elle n’a pas demandé plus’ and kept her place.

She has looked after Mark well, yet also stood her ground. Paradoxically, not knowing English has helped her to preserve her territory and idiosyncrasies. Her social life being very much restricted to the sort of part-time common law marriage she has with her ‘Milor’, not speaking English meant she could live, undisturbed, a life that suited her. Besides, her ‘Milor’ spoke French—gentlemen do—so what use would learning ‘their’ language have been? See how well she manages with Gunning!

Mark approves of her in his condescending way; he may well have a soft spot for her, but has certainly not gone as far as to talk *with* her. In her tacit contract with her Milor, there are no discussions or conversations: she talks, he listens. The one occasion, she had noticed, when he had discussed with a woman had been with Christopher’s girl. Rules suffer no exception. He feels he has done well, got away with it all, and is blind to the effort and attention she has put into achieving what the French call a ‘collage sérieux’, until, ailing and ageing, he had married her – though perhaps that had been Christopher’s initiative.

Directly connected as we are to Mark’s thoughts, we see him gradually, monologue after monologue,

lose his impassability, until he breaks down and confesses 'dans son for intérieur' in chapter V. Although he has the satisfaction of having 'done his job' well, he is not at peace, overwhelmed by worry. And, monologue after monologue, memories of his disagreements and violent row with his brother revive his 'irritation', which is how Christopher's presence in the text is built:

If Christopher is re-constructed in *Last Post*, he is so through the dominant interior monologue of the book, his brother Mark's, enhanced and qualified by those of Mark's wife, Marie-Léonie, Valentine who is pregnant with Christopher's child, and Sylvia Tietjens. While Christopher goes about his new business out of our sight and out of reach of our insight, these three and other voices recall and reinterpret the figure we have come to know; they concern themselves with his future.⁹

And that is why he holds centre stage in the novel and why Ford tells Isabel Paterson that he cannot tell her the end of Tietjens . . . which is still writing itself.

Mark ruminates, in a combination of disingenuity and resentment: he has played the game by the rules, of which the dressing code of the gentleman has been a key element: 'in his bowler hat with his carefully rolled umbrella and with his racing glasses slung diagonally across him' (23) and the 'regular change of shirts dutifully provided by Marie-Léonie.' He had kept his cool, not allowed him-

self profanity;¹⁰ he credits himself for generally ‘not stirring a hair’ (70), yet keeps going back to what happened with Christopher. He passes from dismay—how did his father actually die? By accident, or did he shoot himself? (68-69)—to guilt: ‘that he, Mark, had practically killed his own father, he was ready to acknowledge’ (70), remembering the violent verbal confrontation with his younger brother (*SDN* 205) which he sees as the ‘most dreadful moment’ of his life (89)—though there seem to be have been several such ‘worst moments’—till at long last something finally breaks, and long repressed emotions surface as he reaches out to Valentine, and dies.

In the old days covered in the first two parts of *Some Do Not*. . . , Mark Tietjens believed he was the ‘master of his fate’ (87) because there were rules for everything. Those rules he had used to satisfy his desires, selfishly, never breaking the codes of his class, never causing scandal. An English gentleman, heir to a large fortune, he had not dissipated the family wealth and nobly served the state by holding a job at Whitehall.

Chapter V adds a lot to our knowledge of the Tietjens family, explaining why Tietjens senior had always been wary of Christopher, ‘a bad hat’ (69). He had asked Mark to *investigate* Christopher’s ways (not to talk to Christopher or with him) and Mark had accepted the mission, but not wanting to dirty his hands or extend himself, he had passed it on to someone he did not really know, asking him to ‘find whatever he could’. The findings, mostly rumours, had been unfavourable. Their father having

then died, Mark had confronted Christopher, the prospective heir, father to a son when he was unmarried and childless.

In 1917, just before Christopher caught his train to return to France, their quarrel had thus reached monstrous proportions:

“But damn it all!” Mark said, “You’ve Groby to all intents and purposes. *I’m* not going to marry and beget children to hinder you.”

Christopher said:

“Thanks. I don’t want it.”

“Got your knife into me?” Mark asked.

“Yes. I’ve got my knife into you,” Christopher answered. “Into the whole bloody lot of you, and Ruggles’s and ffolliots and our father!”

Mark said: “Ah!”¹¹

And that had been it! And although Valentine had got the two brothers to shake hands—Christopher might after all not return—they’d done it for her sake only.

As Mark lies there, his memory perhaps no longer being what it used to be, endlessly returning to two humiliating moments, we come to understand that he confuses two dates. The first one is that of his wedding¹² to Marie-Léonie: 20th October 1918. He had been sick, so sick that Marie-Léonie thought him about to die and decided to call Christopher, who had come to the rescue, actually taking over from Mark, arranging their wedding in haste—Marie-Léonie had believed him to be on the phone

to make arrangements with the pompes funèbres (44)—and a few weeks later, the ‘infernal day’ of Armistice. On the ‘infernal day’ of Armistice, Christopher had barged in, and, true to his word—“You won’t be a penny the poorer by me” (*SDN* 264, 266)—asked Marie-Léonie for forty pounds. That had constituted the break-down in Mark’s ‘scheme of life’ (87), his phrase for what he felt on losing control of the situation being ‘intense mortification’:

But no . . . that must have been about twelve, or earlier or later, on that infernal day [. . .] he remembered an almost infinitely long period of intense vexation. Of mortification in so far as he could accuse himself of ever having felt mortified [. . .] when Christopher had announced what had seemed to him then his ruinous intentions (83)

Only then did he receive the call from the Ministry; the office called asking him for the code he held and which they needed to implement the decision that ‘there was going to be no advance into Germany’. He had not protested, his thoughts quickly turning to the private consequences of the situation. His brother was done for; the country finished, himself finished, and he remembers having written a letter to Christopher. Once the idea of retiring, not only from the office, but the whole world, had come into his head it had grown and grown on top of his mortification and his weariness. He had done his job.

He remembers in effect asking him to help him disappear from the public scene, disguising it as a no-

ble gesture of brotherly support. Hence the cottage where, as a gentleman, he dies in state, so to speak, attended by a devoted few people who admire and love him and do not see through his wonderful last performance: it also turns out to be comfortable for Marie Léonie, a 'farmeress' at heart, her ladyship to the servants, looking after the hens and making cider, while enjoying Christopher's and Valentine's company. Though he had to acknowledge that he had 'let his own people down pretty badly—beginning with Christopher' (84), there is no need to shed the mask and confess. He can maintain the performance, play the game to the end until he tells himself: 'Now I must speak' (203).

Chapter V also provides the reader with a flurry of enlightening revelations around Groby, which Mark had never wanted—it would have been too much work running it—and a closer look at the Tietjens family, explaining why Christopher had for a long time been considered as an heir.

Ford mentioned liking whodunnits; but such novels reach stasis, the questions raised receiving an answer, whereas with Ford, you never know which is the common experience of living and which the deeper realism he is striving for.¹³ We remain unsure of what we have witnessed: the last gentleman dying, illustrating Darwin's theory of the extinction of a species, or a splendid public performance covering the depth of a private shock.

Each to his own truth, then: the man who dies holding Valentine's hand will be remembered differently by different people: he will remain 'is lordship'

to 'the Gunnings of the land' (179), admirable and unbending; to Marie-Léonie, a true 'Milor with the spleen'(39), powerfully exercising his will to the end; to Valentine, a man with whom she had a strange connection; for Mark junior, Uncle Mark, and for Christopher, the incarnation of what he can no longer stand and had to break from.

In terms of psychological build-up and consistency, Marie-Léonie is thus much more complex than the '*coeur simple*' we first take her for. A pendant to Mark's monologues in the narrative, she stands for France, its queer ways and 'bric à brac', and provides Ford with an opportunity for what he calls 'propaganda', which the French, he finds, neglect, as he again underlines in an interview given in French to *l'Intransigeant* in 1934: 'the time is now ripe for a vigorous counter-attack from France'[. . .] 'This is how France should speak to the nations: Today, France alone stands upright in a world on the edge of collapse . . .'¹⁴

In a way, Marie-Léonie was not to learn English if Ford was to have his fun. As Caroline Patey has skilfully shown, Ford's talents as translator, lexicographer and ethnographer, and his enjoyment of those skills, were remarkable.¹⁵ There are a few, usually comic, scenes in which French is spoken directly, usually Christopher's interventions. But with Marie-Léonie, French is kept to a strict minimum and rendered in English and characterisation by speech—you actually have the impression of hearing her talking to herself—works as an 'effet de réel', crucial to building her up into a real, significant presence.

When Marie Léonie appears, ‘shapeless in her long pinafore of figured cotton’, she begins ‘a breathless discourse in French’ (15); her discourse then given in English manages to produce an impression of Frenchness, going beyond the usual borrowings and translation notes. Marie-Léonie’s tone is lament and Ford gives her a refrain in French that varies from the simple *Mon pauvre homme* to a fuller sentence: “*Mon pauvre homme! Mon pauvre homme! Ce qu’ils ont fait de toi!*”, translated further down: “My poor man! What they have made of you!”¹⁶ The context makes it easy to understand who ‘ils’ stand for: the French pronoun refers to that ‘strange people, the English: ‘*Quel pays, Quels gens!*’ (121)—also something Mark ends up thinking, disenchanted as he is with his own country—and, in the present situation, more specifically her ‘brother-in-law and his woman’ (29), or at other times, the ‘several pompous and, for her, nearly imbecile, English physicians’ (25).

A good deal of her lament focuses on Mark’s diet: if only they helped her feed him properly, the French way, but: ‘They were determined that he shouldn’t have vegetable soup because they wanted him to have meat juice. They were anthropophagi. Nothing but meat, meat, meat!’ (16). She also resents the practical conditions he is in, the makeshift hut, ‘a contrivance that daily excited her annoyance’ when she thought they could have ‘obtained one of those ingenious machines [. . .] Why indeed had They not procured one of those huts for the tuberculous that she had seen depicted in a catalogue?’ (29).

Ford’s insertion of French personal pronouns: ‘*Ils*

would not let her apply', '*Elle* might very well feel umbrage', more specifically, their doubling and dislocation at the head of sentences works very well: 'She said that *Ils—They*—had combined to render her soup of vegetables uneatable'. Indeed, most of the time, oral conversational French, perhaps not very elegantly, somewhat conceitedly, some say, doubles the personal pronoun when subject: '*Moi, je*', '*Toi, tu*', '*Lui, il*', '*Elle, elle*', '*Eux, ils*', and this effect is recreated by doubling the pronouns, one in French, one in English, not always in this order. It is a very efficient and light trick that imprints the structure and cadence of French on Marie-Léonie's English.

The fact that her refrain is not translated in a note, but simply inserted in its English version further down in the text, can be seen as imitating the way someone living in a foreign country for long, hence steeped in another language, inevitably ends up using both languages. That Marie-Léonie, though refusing to speak English, should do it after twenty years in England comes very naturally.

To complete the impression given of Marie-Léonie, Ford gives her a second refrain which expresses her satisfaction at the life she's had with her 'milor', using the same technique of inserting the English further down in the text: '*elle ne demandait pas mieux*' or '*pour moi-même, je ne demanderais pas mieux*', 'she didn't ask better' in English. There are also gallicisms, turns of phrase copied from the French: 'if you have hunger', for '*si tu as faim*', 'currents of air' for '*courants d'air*' in a sentence that also uses 'malady' and 'chambers', or 'you can see well, like

that'. A few well-known French exclamations such as '*Oh là là!*' or '*Pensez-y!*' are also distributed here and there.

But the most interesting field, a delight for those who know Ford, is that of his borrowings from the French, which form delightful clusters, the most amusing one being what the French would call '*vocabulaire galant*' verging on the naughty: '*Collage*', '*collage sérieux*'—a situation Ford found himself in a number of times and caused him endless problems until, after having changed his name from Hueffer to Ford and moved to France, he could refer to Stella as Mrs Ford—'*cocotte*', '*cocotte rangée*', '*poule*', '*femme légère*', '*petite bourgeoise*', '*maîtresse femme*', some, such as *bas bleu* or *poorly-doted*' suggested by Valentine's situation (19), Valentine who, as well as remaining unmarried, has had to wait so long for her '*nuit de nocés*' let alone '*voyage de nocés*'...

A key word and notion for Marie-Léonie is [se] '*caser*'. Usually, '*caser oneself*' (17) means finding a husband; but for an unmarried woman such as Marie-Léonie, a woman with no independent means and the imperative need to watch her reputation, finding such a man as Mark—so long as the terms of the underlying contract are clear and he is a gentleman—is the equivalent of '*se caser*', except for her situation when he dies, a problem that weighs heavily on her mind.¹⁷

Because she is so indignant at how difficult it is for her to keep her man on a proper diet, a cluster forms around her obsession with the '*navet*', or rather ab-

sence of '*navet de Paris*' (16), and everything to do with her need as a good French *ménagère* to get quality products to cook from: '*poulets au grain*' (34). That cluster expands into a broader one around housekeeping: '*ménage*', household items, bedding terms such as '*eidredons*' (20), clothing items, such as '*casquette*' (34), tools and such, '*vase-de-nuit*', '*veilleuse*', '*main-de-fer*', for example.

As Mark has observed, 'her conversation had another quality that continually amused him: she always ended it with the topic with which she had chosen to begin. Thus, to-day having chosen to begin with *navets de Paris*, with Paris turnips she would end' (18). Her obsession with this specific kind of turnip, 'barrel-shaped, round, round, round like an adorable little pig till it turned into its funny little tail', helps, she understands, to distract her from her anguish at Mark's imminent death – 'That was a turnip to amuse you; to change and employ your thoughts' (16).

She comes to feel that 'Monsieur her *beau-frère*' (29) and 'Elle, whom for convenience she would call her *belle-soeur*' (31) are purposely preventing her from producing the right soup, the soup that would properly nourish her ailing man. The vegetables she has are no good: the carrots are '*pourris*', 'the leeks like wood'. She at least wants the proper *navet* and would in fact find it normal that the aeroplane which Christopher uses should be put at her disposal not only to bring seeds but the turnips themselves.

As appears above, the cluster around family terms

is also noticeable, revealing of Marie Léonie's doubts as to where she will live when Mark dies: whether she'll return to her village of Falaise in Normandie—a chosen few borrowings are linked to her memories of the landscapes of her native Normandie, her 'pays' (34) and its *clochers*—or continue to live in England, and what Christopher's attitude will be to her 'once Mark was dead' (36): 'la famille', 'fils de famille', 'mère', 'grand-mère'.

She mocks the stilted French of 'Monsieur Christophère' (44) but, although she resents his snobbery and lack of consideration for her tastefully and carefully accumulated furniture and bibelots, when he, 'a well-trained meal sack of the *'dix-huitième'* (43), is reduced to selling bits and pieces of old furniture for a living, she feels that his heart is in the right place and that he can be trusted. All the same, she stands her ground and strongly, almost vehemently, vindicates her own cultural tastes in art and decoration, in an accumulation of references, the name of 'Casimir-Bar'—the sculptor 'promiscuous Monsieur Rodin' had conspired against—coming up again and again, and lists French novelists in whose books she had first read about English Milors (39).¹⁸ For her, these memories are what she has kept of her origins and lineage, her native Normandie; they work as a proud reassertion of her French identity, Norman origins, pride of place, and good common sense, making it obvious that underneath the title of Lady Mark Tietjens, the native qualities of Marie-Léonie Riotor, brought to her Milor as her trousseau, are still there, unadulterated.

In *A Mirror to France*, the ‘tribute to a much-loved country’ he published in 1926, before he started writing *Last Post*, Ford talked of the ‘job of France’, ‘whether she likes it or not’ as being ‘to stand between us Nordics and the Mediterranean littoral’ insisting that ‘France has to be unchanging or we cannot live’.¹⁹

In the post-war world, for France to remain and do her job, she had to leave the ‘Northern Boreal countries’, all Norths indeed—which for Ford also included leaving Paris north of the Seine, its right bank—firmly behind. ‘So, if in the world from now on there is to be any of the pleasantness that we loved [. . .] the civilisation of France, which stands between those frugal Mediterranean quietudes and our Nordic appetites, must preserve itself’ (*Mirror to France* 57-58).

In spite of ‘the love of one’s land’,²⁰ England, in Ford’s case, even the softened version that *Last Post* gives, was his past. The new Ford lived in Provence, where no doubt he found counterparts for such unchanging good country people as Norman Marie-Léonie and English Gunning.

Notes

1. See Ford, *Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), Part III, 'It is above all to make you see'. 'Surprise' is one of the headings in the 'list of formulae for the writing of the novel at which Conrad and the writer had arrived' (179); it begins: 'We agreed that the one quality that gave interest to Art was the quality of surprise' (189); hereafter *Joseph Conrad*.

2. Dedicatory letter to Isabel Paterson, *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet, 2011), 3-7; page references to this edition are in parentheses hereafter. Ford teasingly pretends to answer the question which might have been on Paterson's mind as to what became of the hero.

3 Mark's and Marie Léonie's inner monologues constitute the bulk of the narrative, the other voices being the gardener's, Christopher's son, Sylvia's and Valentine's which complement our understanding of the situation.

4 The section in *Joseph Conrad* headed 'General Effect' begins: 'We agreed that the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind. A novel must therefore not be a narration, a report' (180).

5 Ford, *Some Do Not. . .* (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 262, 268-269.

6 Mark has re-named her 'for public consumption'. Marie-Léonie's real name is Charlotte: 'Marie-Léonie Ritor looks different from a casual Charlotte' (108).

7 A 'calque' from the French 'avoir sa danseuse'. Marie-Léonie has been trained as a *coryphée* [leading dancer in a corps de ballet] at the Paris Opera (34).

8 Félicité is the devoted servant of Flaubert's *Un Coeur Simple* whose name Ford uses as the title for the last chapter of *Between Saint Dennis and Saint George, A Sketch of Three Civilisations* (1915). *Félicité* is taken up in the Introductory chapter in *A Mirror to France* (1926). For Ford's love of Flaubert and Maupassant, see, for example, *Joseph Conrad: 'Our chief masters in style were Flaubert and Maupassant: Flaubert in the greater degree, Maupassant in the less'* (195). Ford and Conrad had a common interest in translation as Ford's long discussion on how best to translate the beginning of *Un Coeur Simple* shows. Also see *Joseph Conrad*, 31-32, for a rendering of their discussions on how to translate from the French.

9 See Cornelia Cook, 'Last Post: "The last of the Tietjens series"', *Agenda*, 27, 4/ 28, 1 (Winter 1989/ Spring 1990), 23-24.

10 This is disingenuous. In thought and sometimes in verbal exchange, Mark uses invective. So does Christopher, when overwhelmed by his feelings.

11 Ford, *Some Do Not. . .*, 263. The quarrel extends for some 20 pages: 248-269.

12 Mark had not planned to marry Marie-Léonie, a Papist; with the wedding, Christopher's initiative, a change of will automatically intervenes. The existence of a rule for marrying one's mistress is also mentioned.

13 See Isabelle Brasme, '*Parade's End*' de Ford Madox Ford: vers une esthétique de la crise (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2016). In her last chapter, Brasme focuses on *Last Post* as creating a vibrating, insecure, unstable form of reality.

14 Ford, 'Que Pensez-Vous de la France?', *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence* edited by Dominique Lemarchal and Claire Davison-Pégon, IFMFS 10 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 29-42.

15 Caroline Patey, France as fieldwork or, Ford the ethnographer, in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence*, 133-142.

16 This choice comes as a relief to a French translator who otherwise would have to incessantly use asterisks to indicate 'En français dans le texte' and translate phrases and fragments in 'N. d. T.', short for 'Note du traducteur'.

17 The impression given is that Marie-Léonie would prefer to stay in England and live with Christopher and Valentine but reassures herself that, should Christopher not behave well to her, she could return to her native village of Falaise.

18 Such enumerations and stock-taking—also found in *A Mirror to France*—can be seen as the treasure trove of a collector as Caroline Patey shows in her article (note 15).

19 Ford, *A Mirror to France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), 29.

20 Ford, 'Footsloggers', in *Selected Poems*, edited by Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2003), 91.

Heavenly Sandwiches and Corporal Replenishment

Paul Skinner

‘The purpose of meals is companionship and communion’, Ford Madox Ford wrote in 1927, ‘otherwise they are mere stoking.’¹ ‘Companionship’ seems straightforward enough; ‘communion’, on the other hand, provided Ford with a great many opportunities for wordplay and a productive ambiguity. As he later wrote in *Provence*: ‘A chef whose dishes leave you certain of the ingredients he has used is not a good chef.’²

The standard definition of ‘communion’ is an act of communing, spiritual intercourse, fellowship, the sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings. There is also, of course, Holy Communion: the service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated and shared; the Eucharist, commemoration of the Last Supper.

That phrase ‘spiritual intercourse’ hints at how close the two meanings, the two usages, can be, blurring or bleeding into one another. In *A Man Could Stand Up—*, Christopher Tietjens reflects on just what the enemy forces are keeping him from:

They stood between him and Valentine Wannop. If they would go home he could be sitting talking to her for whole afternoons. That was what a young woman was for. You seduced a young woman in order to be able to finish your talks with her. You could not

do that without living with her. You could not live with her without seducing her; but that was the byproduct. The point is that you can't otherwise talk. You can't finish talks at street corners; in museums; even in drawing-rooms. You mayn't be in the mood when she is in the mood—for the intimate conversation that means the final communion of your souls.³

Although Ford converted to Catholicism in 1892, and the matter of his religion has engaged some scholars,⁴ the companion of his last decade, Janice Biala, didn't remember 'any talk about religion'. She added: 'It didn't play any role in our life' and remarked that Ford 'was certainly no practicing Catholic', though 'I imagine he believed in Catholicism philosophically.'⁵ Quoting this, Alan Judd remarks: 'As so often with comments about or by Ford, there is that qualifying last sentence.'⁶ And any reader with an extensive acquaintance with Ford's work will certainly have been struck by the frequent use of saints and saints' days—not least in the dating of his letters—of priests as characters in his novels, talk of retreats and blasphemy, religious metaphors and biblical references. My interest here is in those occasions in Ford's work on which food and religion explicitly rub shoulders (or haunches). Food and heaven, food and love. 'Being fed was like love' for Jessop, in Ford's *The Marsden Case*, a meal provided through the good offices of Madame, clearly based on Frida Strindberg, in a nightclub modelled on her Cave of the Golden Calf.⁷

Recounting, towards the end of his life, the story of his first meeting with Stephen Crane, Ford wrote: 'I took him at once to be a god – an Apollo with starry eyes. I have never had this feeling about any other man but Hudson, and Hudson's divinity was of a more hidden, woodland order.' And his chapter on W. H. Hudson does indeed begin: 'In the days when there were still gods [. . .] there was Hudson.' The latter memory centred on the French restaurant called the Mont Blanc, in Gerrard Street, Soho, where, 'on Tuesdays, the elect of the city's intelligentsia lunched and discussed with grave sobriety the social problems of the day'.⁸

But Ford had, in fact, had that feeling about one other man, as he recounted more than once, apparently referring to the Imagist dinner, financed by Amy Lowell, which succeeded the BLAST dinner by two days. There was, alas, 'bad food' – and there were speeches, Ford recalls. 'Then Gaudier rose.' It seemed 'as if he stood amidst sunlight [. . .] It was like the appearance of Apollo at a creditors' meeting. It was supernatural.'⁹ References to Apollo occur with generous frequency in the Ford oeuvre: in the novel which carries his name, the godhead descends into what sounds like 'the type of kitchen in which Ford might have cooked', as Venetia Abdalla phrases it, and she goes on to describes Frances Milne's serious attention to a rabbit carcass, bay leaves and accompanying vegetables.¹⁰

A more rewarding dining experience than the Imagist dinner seems likely at the residence of the Reverend Duchemin and his wife, where some 'minute flowers' in a glass bowl

made there, on the breakfast-table, a patch, as it were, of mosaic amongst silver chafing dishes, silver épergnes piled with peaches in pyramids, and great silver rosebowls filled with roses, that drooped to the damask cloth, a congeries of silver largenesses made as if a fortification for the head of the table; two huge silver urns, a great silver kettle on a tripod and a couple of silver vases filled with the extremely tall blue spikes of delphiniums that, spreading out, made as if a fan [. . .] on the golden mahogany sideboard that had behind it green silk curtains on a brass-rail were displayed an immense, crumbed ham, more peaches on an épergne, a large meat-pie with a varnished crust, another épergne that supported the large pale globes of grape-fruit; a galantine, a cube of inlaid meats, encased in thick jelly.¹¹

If the rendering of accurate material detail intertwined with the subtle doubtfulness of their solidity ('made there . . . as it were', the doubled 'made as if') is characteristic, so too is the way in which Ford sets up one extreme—of size in this case, 'tiny', 'a patch'—against another, here a cornucopia of bulk and extent: 'piled', 'pyramids', 'great', 'filled', 'largenesses', 'fortification', 'huge', 'extremely tall', 'immense', 'large', 'thick'. Nor is it simply a matter of size and quantity, given the seven instances of 'silver' and one each of 'golden', 'damask', 'mahogany' and 'silk'. As Christopher Tietjens understandably observes to the future Lady Macmaster, "You do do the thing in style, I must say" (*SDN* 115).

Set against this exaggerated lavishness, though, is the asceticism of the incumbent. As Mrs Duchemin confides to Tietjens: “He doesn’t get anything out of it himself. He’s ascetic to unreasonableness. On Fridays he eats nothing at all. It makes me quite anxious . . . for Saturdays” (*SDN* 116). Tietjens will later explain to Port Scatho: “The late Mr Duchemin was a scatological—afterwards a homicidal—lunatic. He had recurrent fits, usually on a Saturday morning. That was because he fasted—not abstained merely—on Fridays. On Fridays he also drank. He had acquired the craving for drink when fasting, from finishing the sacramental wine after communion services. That is a not unknown occurrence” (*SDN* 235).

There are less drastic consequences in another instance, with some circumstantial similarities, when *A Call’s* Robert Grimshaw is concerned over a Greek Orthodox priest’s ‘slight fit of giddiness’ in Kensington Gardens. “Your dizziness has left you, Father?” he asked. “It is the long fasting. I was on the watch for you to fall.” It is, he knows, the end of Lent. They disagree over the benefits of fasting, the priest asserting that, “If we have fasted long, we have given ourselves to the angelic hosts.”¹²

In the chapter that closes Part Two of *A Man Could Stand Up*—, prior to what is the manifestly climactic moment, bringing together the culmination of two critical threads—those of underworld descent and resurrection—Christopher Tietjens sends Lance-Corporal Duckett ‘to “A” Company dugout to ask if they could favour him with a sandwich and some coffee with rum in it’ (*MCSU* 163).

Major and minor themes are intricately enmeshed in this chapter, some elegantly dancing, others as though glimpsed from a window briskly passed—‘The Company had reported that morning five cases of the influenza that was said to be ravaging the outside world’—that phrase, ‘the outside world’, repeated three times in the succeeding three lines (*MCSU* 163-164), the triadic nature of the repetition itself a recurring motif in the tetralogy and in the wider context of Ford’s oeuvre.¹³

On his return, Duckett balances himself before Tietjens on the slope, ‘holding in his right hand a small tin can and a cup, in his left an immaculate towel containing a small cube.’

The Lance-Corporal was deft. . . . He set the coffee tin, cup and towel on a flat stone that stuck out of that heap; the towel unfolded, served as a tablecloth; there appeared three heaps of ethereal sandwiches [. . .] The meat in the sandwiches consisted of *foie gras*, that pile: bully beef reduced to a paste with butter that was margarine, anchovy paste out of a tin and minced onion out of pickles; the third pile was bully beef *nature*, seasoned with Worcester sauce.... All the materials he had at disposal! (*MCSU* 168)

Less triad, more trinity: the flat stone is manifestly an altar, that ‘immaculate’ towel an altar cloth, three implements, three constituents, those three heaps of ‘ethereal’ sandwiches. The ritualistic and sacramental nature of this episode, once established, is elegantly reinforced by slighter pres-

sure, the angelic nature of the boy—angels are of no determined gender—and the strong connection in Tietjens’ mind between Duckett and Valentine: ‘Tietjens said: “You used to wear a white cap and white overalls?” He liked to think of the blond boy resembling Valentine Wannop dressed all in slim white.’¹⁴

The Lance-Corporal has been ‘chief assistant to one of the chief cooks in the Savoy. He had been going to go to Paris.’ He adds that he was ““What you call a marmiton, sir!”” – kitchen boy or scullion, as a footnote explains. He regards cooking as ‘an Art’, a point of view to which both Tietjens and his creator would be sympathetic. Indeed, Duckett ‘would have preferred to be a painter, but Mother hadn’t enough money.’ Would Tietjens say a word for him after the war, since jobs would be difficult to come by, given all those ‘blighters who had got out of serving’? Tietjens replies:

“Certainly I shall recommend you. You’ll get a job all right. I shall never forget your sandwiches.” He would never forget the keen, clean flavour of the sandwiches or the warm generosity of the sweet, be-rummed coffee! In the blue air of that April hillside. All the objects on that white towel were defined: with iridescent edges. The boy’s face, too! Perhaps not physically iridescent. His breath, too, was very easy. Pure air! (*MCSU* 168)

Iridescent: the word and the idea derived from Iris, ‘the rainbow goddess’, the link between heaven and

earth, messenger to the gods. In the *Iliad*, she rescues Aphrodite from the field of battle when Diomedes wounds the goddess. Even the comment on the boy's breath may stir a memory of Genesis 2:7: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life'.

In Ford's unfinished novel, 'True Love & a GCM', in a hospital tent behind Armantières: 'There was a young boy, looking singularly pretty and touching with pink skin and bright yellow hair, lying sideways on a white pillow.' Gabriel Morton asks where he comes from and what he does. From Lohrhaupten, in the Bavarian Spessart is the answer. He is a swineherd (a faint echo of "Excellency, a few goats", the response in *Romance* which caused Conrad to exclaim: "This is genius!").¹⁵ Morton asks if he is comfortable and the boy answers: "es ist doch Himmel . . . It is just heaven." Ford writes: 'That was what had broken Morton's back. It was too much.'¹⁶

In the trenches, those two 'communions' are, precisely, intermingled, in Tietjens' mind and on the page as he debates 'whether he should first drink of the coffee and army rum to increase his zest for the sandwiches, or whether he should first eat the sandwiches and so acquire more thirst for the coffee'. It depends, of course, on what is in the sandwiches: 'It would be agreeable to fill the void below and inwards from his breastbone. But whether do it first with a solid or warm moisture?' (*MCSU* 168)¹⁷

Those ethereal sandwiches—heavenly, extremely

delicate and light, in a way that seems to be not of this world, airy, spirit-like—hint also at another recurring motif in Ford's work, mentioned earlier, the jostling of the huge and the small, the slight repast before the earth ingests three men, including Tietjens: 'It was like being a dwarf at a conversation, a conflict—of mastodons. There was so much noise it seemed to grow dark. It was a mental darkness. You could not think. A Dark Age! The earth moved.'

Elsewhere, sandwiches seem to represent the mundane, the earthly, the sleeves-rolled-up secular, to be set against the religious: in a sense, an opposition of the highest and the lowest. In *Last Post*, the Catholic Marie-Léonie concedes that an English vicar should, as a 'functionary of the State' be received with 'a certain modesty and reserve.' She herself, having 'a suspicion of Huguenot blood', consequently knows how even Protestant clergy should be received; but has seen Valentine Wannon lay a hand on the Vicar's shoulder and point—with a *trowel*—to the front door, suggesting that, should he be hungry, he join Christopher, who is in the dining-room, eating a sandwich.¹⁸ A little later, another glance at Catholicism seems not unrelated to culinary matters, when Mark reflects of Christopher and Sylvia's son that 'the boy was by now a full-fledged Papist, pickled and oiled and wafered and all' (*LP* 106).

A decade earlier, in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, Mr Sorrell, on his hazardous train journey—bound for the fourteenth century and some local skirmishes, rather than for a world war, as Christopher Tietjens will be, a decade later—observes a fellow-passen-

ger, a nun, 'with an expression of enjoyment, eating a sandwich out of a paper bag'. He is moved to laughter: 'It seemed to him as absurd that a nun should eat sandwiches as that she should travel in a Southampton-to-London express.'¹⁹

Just a few months after that novel was published, Ford was in Rome, arriving in late November to report for *Collier's* on the Investiture of American Cardinals. There, he encountered, unsurprisingly, nuns ('a long row of Sisters of Mercy') which may indeed have reminded him of characters in his book. But there was also another striking instance of 'the Church and the world in an odd juxtaposition', as he saw in his hotel Cardinal O'Connell abruptly elevated—mechanically—'for I never expected to see a cardinal in a lift.' He feels 'a pang of jealousy' since he seems to have been the only person in the hall to whom the Cardinal did not offer his hand and passes on to the bar, 'for I had no breakfast this morning.'²⁰ Neither earthly nor heavenly sustenance, then.

Though the postwar Ford left London for Sussex and then England altogether, he would recall of the pre-war period: 'London was adorable then at four in the morning after a good dance.' Walking in the dawn with the great chorus of birdsong, turning into someone's house for grilled sausages and coffee. 'There you breakfasted—usually on the lead roof above a smoking room, giving on to a deep garden. There would be birds there too. Those who cannot remember London then do not know what life holds.'²¹ This enchanted time of day emerged a few years later in Ford's 'Four in the Morning Coo-

kery', complete with culinary directions, breakfast recipes and more detailed memories of those pre-war occasions: 'But heavenly . . . that's what these parties can be if you observe all the rules.' He ends with the recollection of 'looking over the dark forest of Holland Park', in a select company that includes the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—Ford's friend C. F. G. Masterman—and the Professor of Poetry of Oxford University. Ford seemingly means not Herbert Warren but W. P. Ker, since the Professor offers a poem of his own: 'I'd rather be an eagle [pronounced eagull] than a seagull; / I'd rather be an emu than a sea mew!' Richard Aldington would later quote the poem as part of 'a legend about Ker', placing the recitation, 'with utterly solemn features and in a sepulchral tone', at a meeting of the Poets Club. Ford's article ends—almost—with Masterman reciting 'one of his favourite poems', which was 'about heaven and had a burden: "For these there must be in heaven; Even in heaven."' This is followed by the remark that 'Within a fortnight there was Armageddon'—yet it concludes, perhaps fittingly, with the thought that 'we might yet recapture those fine last raptures if sufficiently we would use the chafing dish . . . Try!'²²

A curious later instance of culinary and heavenly connections occurs in the wake of the famous picnic on 16 August 1932—sixteen adults, 'a shoal of children', half a hundredweight of *bouillabaisse* and sixty-two bottles of wine—some five miles from Cassis, on the beach of a *calanque*, one of those 'inland arms of the sea between the wine-red cliffs of the promontory near Marseilles'.²³ At some point during that day, Ford remarked to Allen Tate that

it must have been in some such cove that Aeneas and the other refugees from Troy had rested and eaten. Shortly afterwards, Tate bought, in Toulon, a second-hand copy of the *Aeneid*, which he had not read since his schooldays, and wrote a poem later called 'The Mediterranean'.²⁴

In the *Aeneid*, the Trojans are haunted by the prophecy of a fearful hunger that will force them to gnaw and devour their very tables. In the event, having landed in Italy, they settle down to eat and, still hungry when the food is exhausted, turn to the thin cereal platters on which they have piled their meals. It is Aeneas's son, Iulus, who remarks that they are even munching their tables, which reveals to Aeneas that the prophecy is being fulfilled, that they have found their new land and that their troubles are ending.²⁵ The immediate reference in Tate's poem is to the picnickers 'devour[ing] the very plates Aeneas bore' and asking 'What prophecy of eaten plates could landless/ Wanderers fulfil by the ancient sea?' The journey to the shore and the feast offer tantalizing prospects of connection with a world where 'the Known Sea still were a month wide', the search for a homeland literally a matter of life and death, rootedness and a living tradition still real possibilities.

Tate's concern is with that 'famous age/ Eternal here yet hidden from our eyes', the necessity for, and impossibility of, access to it, the live presence of forefathers. Westward is that rich land, America, where grapes rot on the vine, because we have lost that sense of live contact, because our journeyings cannot matter in quite the same way. One of Tate's

critics remarks of the poem that the picnic evokes not simply a vision of the past but a communion with it.²⁶ This is true and, years later, Tate made the connection explicit, seeing poetry as ‘analogous to the idea of communion, religious communion’.²⁷

By the time of the picnic, Ford had been safely in France (if also looking west) for almost a decade. In Paris, when unable to sleep, he would go to a café to eat their speciality, ‘a very superior Welsh rabbit’ (‘not rarebit’), before returning ‘through the new day to his bed’, to sleep ‘as sleep the seraphim.’²⁸ In Provence, he might dine on a grilled *mulet*—‘a Mediterranean fish that is nearly as good as the *loup* and a tenth of the price of that gift from the gods’²⁹—but could, in any case, keep at a distance that ‘Anglo-Saxondom where food is no more talked about than love or Heaven’.³⁰ This would seem to serve, in fact, as a lucid and economical summation of the dominant ‘triad’ in Ford’s life. The glaringly absent fourth element is, of course, art—or would be, rather, were Ford’s own art not one that so insistently and capaciously contains the other three.

Notes

1 Ford Madox Ford, 'The Lordly Dish', in *New York Is Not America* (London: Duckworth, 1927), 159-160. The essay was also included in the slightly later *New York Essays* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1927).

2. Ford Madox Ford, *Provence* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), 330. His 'In Praise of Garlic', *Harper's Bazaar* (August 1937), 104, 126, 129, included the remark that, 'When you eat the almost divine meats of a great French chef, you never know how his sauces are compounded' (126).

3. Ford Madox Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up—* (1926; edited by Sara Haslam, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 165; henceforth *MCSU*. See 172: 'Their communion was immutable and not to be shaken!' and the textual note (238) to that sentence. The word 'communion' there had originally been 'love'. Indeed, this is presented as the crux of a major plot strand of the novel: Tietjens 'had invented his fantastic quarrel with Brother Mark: because he was going to take Valentine to live with him. You could not have a Valentine Wannop having with you in a Groby the infinite and necessary communings.'

4. See, particularly, Martin Stannard, 'Reformations: Ford Madox Ford and Transubstantiation' in *The Poetics of Transubstantiation*, edited by Douglas Burnham and Enrico Giaccherini (London: Ashgate, 2004), 104-117, who remarks that Ford 'was temperamentally closer to the next generation of Catholic proto-modernists – Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene and Muriel Spark—

than he was to his contemporaries, Conrad and James' (108).

5. Sondra Stang, 'An Interview with Janice Biala (1979)', in *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Sondra J. Stang (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1981), 225.

6. Alan Judd, *Ford Madox Ford* (London: Collins, 1990), 21

7. Ford Madox Ford, *The Marsden Case* (London: Duckworth, 1923), 90.

8. Ford Madox Ford, *Portraits from Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 23, 38.

9. Ford Madox Ford, *No Enemy* (1929; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2002), 106. See also Ford Madox Ford, *Thus to Revisit* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1921), 176-177.

10. Ford Madox Ford, *Mr Apollo: A Just Possible Story* (London: Methuen, 1908), 159; Venetia Abdalla, "What Shall I Say About His Curry?": Ford Madox Ford in the Kitchen', *Last Post: A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*, 1.5 (Autumn 2020), 9-27 (14-15). She observes that it represents 'the true food of the gods in Ford's world', as against the predictions of 'Boomfood' that H. G. Wells was prone to (15) and also touches on Ford's 'quasi-religious glorification' of a cabbage bought in the market (13), in *A Mirror to France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), 185. Ford mentioned Wells looking forward to a Utopian State, with 'a week's supply of nourishment in your vest-pocket in the form

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of little pellets', in the opening paragraph of 'Dinner with Turbot', *Vogue*, 94, 6 (15 September 1939), 104, 130-131.

11. Ford Madox Ford, *Some Do Not*. . . (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 102; henceforth *SDN*.

12. Ford Madox Ford, *A Call: The Tale of Two Passions* (1910; with an afterword by C. H. Sisson, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1984), 116-118.

13. Much wider than that, of course. See, for instance, Paul Fussell, 'Threes', *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 125-131. Published during a later war, Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* notably displays what Frank Kermode terms the 'triadic pattern that has a long history in Woolf' (1941; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), xxi. Caroline Patey cites Somerset Maugham's *The Partial View* (1969), 174, on Flaubert's 'abundant, even excessive use of the triad', in her 'Croisset-London and back, or, Flaubert's Anglo-Saxon ghosts': *Franco-British Cultural Exchanges, 1880-1940: Channel Packets*, edited by Andrew Radford and Victoria Reid (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 151-167 (152).

14. Sara Haslam discusses the role of Duckett and Tietjens' identification of him with Valentine, in the context of the rebirth theme: *MCSU* xli-xliv. In *No More Parades* (1925; edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 86, O Nine Morgan had looked at Tietjens 'with a sort of wonder', as 'you might look at God [. . .] Probably not blessed, but queer, be the name of God-Tietjens!'; hereafter *NMP*.

15. Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), 147.

16. Ford Madox Ford, *War Prose*, edited by Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 130. The incident is recounted too in *Return to Yesterday* (London: Gollancz, 1931), 118-119. In Ford's peculiar wartime story, "Fun! – It's Heaven", also in *War Prose* (149-153), the doctor's vision of dead soldiers finds them laughing together in a tea-room, 'chaffing the waitresses even – and eating éclairs' (151). In the 'Preface' to *On Heaven and Poems Written on Active Service* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1918), 7, Ford comments: 'I know at least that I would not keep on going if I did not feel that Heaven will be something like Rumpelmayer's tea shop'. This is referred to by the author of the column 'The Letters of Eve' in the month after the book's publication—"Heaven is like Rumpelmayer's," says Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer': *The Tatler and Bystander*, No.880 (8 May 1918), 142. In an article, 'The Spiritualists' Ideas of Heaven' (*Daily Mirror*, 6 March 1920, 4), G. Corrie Thompson remarked: 'I say nothing even in contradiction of Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer's "glorified Rumpelmayer's."'

17. There are, in fact, several instances in *Parade's End* of Tietjens' views on this: Father Consett remarks to Sylvia and her mother that, having talked often to Tietjens, "Except in matters of the two communions—and even in these I don't know that we differed so much—I found him perfectly sound" (*SDN* 52). Sylvia herself acquires 'the habit of going into retreat—with an Anglican sisterhood in order to annoy Tietjens, who hated convents and considered that the communions should

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not mix' (*SDN* 203). Most strikingly, over breakfast in the depot mess-hut, Tietjens engages in debate with McKechnie, the padre and the colonel in command of the depot, all of whom listen while he dilates on 'the historic aspects of the various schisms of Christianity' and accept his 'rough definition' of the difference between transubstantiation and consubstantiation (*NMP* 96).

18. Ford Madox Ford, *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 20; henceforth *LP*.

19. Ford Madox Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (London: Constable, 1911), 11.

20. Ford, 'The Investiture of the American Cardinals', *Collier's*, 48 (16 December, 1911), 11, 12. There is an extended and enlightening discussion of this article and its occasion in Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 355-358.

21. Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, 429-430.

22. Ford, 'Four in the Morning Cookery', *Harper's Bazaar* (December, 1938), 106. The poem was, of course, Ford's own 'On Heaven'. He recalled that Masterman 'had a good deal of it by heart.' During their trip to Germany in 1913, Ford wrote in *Return to Yesterday*, Masterman 'had driven me nearly crazy by quoting at the most inopportune moments' in his 'solemn and unctuous parliamentary voice', "But these there must be in Heaven/ . . . Even in Heaven'" (420). 'Four in the

Morning Cookery' is one of the three articles discussed in detail by Nanette O'Brien in her 'On Glamour and Garlic: Ford Madox Ford's Food Writing in Glossy Magazines', *Last Post: A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*, 1.5 (Autumn 2020), 61-80 (72-74). On Ker, see Richard Aldington, *Life for Life's Sake* (London: Cassell, 1968), 63.

23. The date is confirmed by Ford's remark that the previous day had marked the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August): *Provence*, 293.

24. For details, see Ford's *Provence*, 291-293; Thomas Daniel Young and Elizabeth Sarcone, editors, *The Lytle-Tate Letters: The Correspondence of Andrew Lytle and Allen Tate* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987), 63-64; Frank MacShane, *The Life and Work of Ford Madox Ford* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 215; Saunders, II, 430-431; Tate's note in *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 255-256.

25. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated and with an introduction by Frederick Ahl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), III, 255-257, 394; VII, 112-129.

26. Robert S. Dupree, *Allen Tate and the Augustinian Imagination: A Study of the Poetry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 141.

27. Stanley Kunitz and Allen Tate, 'Communication and Communion: A Dialogue', with an introduction by Henri Cole, *The Southern Review*, 21, 2 (1985), 405. The interview took place on 30 March 1966.

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28. Ford Madox Ford, 'Four in the Morning Cookery',
103, 104.

29. Ford Madox Ford, *Provence*, 323.

30. Ford Madox Ford, *A Mirror to France*, 217.

Miranda Seymour, *I Used to Live Here Once: The Haunted Life of Jean Rhys.*

New York: Norton & Company, 2022.

Reviewed by Shannon Neal

Taking its title from Jean Rhys's ghostly short story, 'I Used to Live Here Once', Miranda Seymour's biography of Jean Rhys is a detailed and well-researched account of Rhys's life. The first new biography of Rhys in over a decade, *I Used to Live Here Once* is refreshingly self-aware. Seymour's extensive source matter includes Rhys's own autobiography, *Smile Please*; her papers in the McFarlin Library in Tulsa, Oklahoma; a research trip to Dominica; and new interviews with many who knew her, including Ellen Moerman, Rhys's granddaughter. With footnotes, endnotes, and a useful index, this biography is concerned with recounting what we actually know of Rhys rather than of her myth. Seymour's most significant contribution to our knowledge of Rhys is in the final two decades of her life, a period afforded over a third of the biography's length. Throughout, details of life are paired with a focus on literary history, as Seymour tracks Rhys's reading and writing practices and devotes much space to the spectacular late bloom of her career. Rhys was a person of 'remarkable resilience', a truly voracious reader, and a meticulous writer whose literary craftsmanship deserves respect (273).

Through an informal, but directed narrative style, Seymour takes care to join the many colorful and painful threads of Rhys's life and career. Not strict-

Reviewed by Shannon Neal

ly chronological—each part’s subchapters often cover overlapping periods of time—Seymour uses a mixture of thematic focuses, such as Rhys’s connection to Dominica and her reading practices, that rear up, on top of, despite, and due to each other, unfurling the complexities of a life through organized tumult. This style continues throughout the biography, matching Seymour’s informal tone and steady voice that at times rises dramatically or falls gently on a personal note. The biography is broken into eight parts, with 22 subsections, with a foreword and afterlife, loosely styled after Rhys’s own textual structures.

Multi-modal archival materials aid Seymour in illustrating the key parts of Rhys’s life. This is used to greatest effect regarding her childhood in Dominica. There are many photographs, notably including one of Rhys’s childhood home in Roseau that was captured by Seymour shortly before its demolition. Also, a map of Dominica circa 1900 and a translation of a Creole song Rhys was recorded singing in her later years precede the body of the text. As the only map included in the biography, Dominica is marked as a point of return for both the biography and Rhys herself. Though Rhys’s childhood in Dominica is covered by one of the shortest parts of the long biography, this map and the inclusion of the song is used to showcase how Dominica stayed an embedded part of Rhys’s identity throughout her life. Threaded together in the first part is an account of how Rhys was ‘discouraged’ from knowing her mixed race relatives (6-7), loved the Dominican landscape, was impressed by Black Dominican culture, and was greatly impacted by the violent

and racist history of her white Creole plantocracy family. Her mother's staunch racism, covered without reserve by Seymour, ensured Rhys's distance from any society of peers, separated from English children and Black Dominican children alike. This alienating racial and caste consciousness was recently explored by Caryl Phillips in his fictionalization of Rhys's early life, *A View of the Empire at Sunset*.

Seymour returns to the idea of Dominica as the wellspring of Rhys's art while discussing her 1930s writing in part four, particularly in relation to *Voyage in the Dark*, and relatedly addresses her distinct approach to narrative temporality, titling a chapter 'Two Tunes: Past and Present.' As the biography moves through Rhys's adult life in Europe, it continually attends to her alienation as white Creole and as a woman without economic means, an unhomeliness captured by its title. 'The sense of not belonging,' Seymour writes, 'was born in the cruel, caste-conscious little world of Roseau' (19). Particular attention is given to Rhys's brief return to Dominica in 1936 in the chapter '*a la recherche, or Temps Perdi*' and, also, Rhys's return to the Caribbean and Creoleness as a subject matter in her literary output. Even as early as 1938 Rhys began provisional writing of the simply named story 'Creole,' some of which would find its way into *Wide Sargasso Sea* (177-179).

Throughout her adult life, Rhys led a more sociable, connected life than her myth suggests. Dispelling the image of a socially isolated, uninvolved Rhys, Seymour takes care to compile evidence showing

her movement within many social spheres, ranging from involvement in artists' coteries in Chelsea and Paris, her time frequenting The Crabtree, working with the domestic war response, and more. Above all, Rhys is shown to have countless dedicated friends, such as Germaine Richelot, many of whom endured past quarrels and periods of no contact. For instance, even after their separation and divorce, Jean Lenglet and Rhys remained in active correspondence. Touchingly, Seymour asserts that the first two ardent fans of *Good Morning, Midnight* were her first and second husbands, Lenglet and Leslie Tilden Smith. According to Seymour it is Rhys's preference for 'a maddening discretion' and an aversion to name dropping that leads to her isolated image (100). When isolation hit, it was not uniform or forever.

The more infamous relationships in Rhys's life, such as those with Selma Vaz Diaz and Ford Madox Ford, are also redressed. Seymour traces *L'affaire Ford* with a steady progression of facts interwoven with comparisons to the way Rhys reworked life events into fiction in *Quartet* and various short stories including 'La Grosse Fifi' and 'At the Villa d'Or'. Seymour does not cast anyone as the villain in this complicated, 'exhausting and sometimes alarming love affair,' rather she identifies four different human responses (111). Recounting Rhys's sense of betrayal when her translation of *Perversité* was published under Ford's name, Seymour makes sure the reader knows that he protested this 'unscrupulous' act made by the publisher and that Rhys probably did not know Ford raised any objection (118, 121-123). However, Seymour's coverage of Ford is

sometimes humorously scathing. Critiquing his introduction to *The Left Bank*, she remarks: 'A braver editor might have told Ford to quit writing about himself' (119).

Seymour's depiction of the artistic milieu surrounding Rhys is accessible to those who are not studied in literary history. She provides broad context as well as minutiae, especially in the final third of the biography which shifts more towards a careful and excited history of literary editing and publishing with Rhys as its focal point. The dedicated labor of Diana Athill and Francis Wyndham, as well as that of many other friends and supporters, enters Rhys's later life in whirlwind fashion. Their maneuverings behind Rhys's sharply rising literary stardom are described in immense detail, as the biography begins to note each new publication and the labor that went into them. Simultaneously, Seymour continues to provide accounts of Rhys's friendships and relationship with her daughter, her connection to her final home in Cheriton Fitzpaine, her alcoholism and deteriorating health, and her continued writing up until the end of her life. Even after pain made writing by hand impossible Rhys had an astonishing 'capacity to dictate and revise aloud for hours on end' (331).

Rhys's own reading and writing habits are one of the main through-lines of the biography. From the first chapter to the last, Seymour notes what Rhys was reading, how she found her reading material, and how her personal library shaped her writing. Almost every chapter also connects the events of life to the ways in which they were reworked and fic-

tionalized in her oeuvre. Seymour describes Rhys's 'layering and game-playing' of references, literary debts, and snippets of names, places, aspects of people and events that are worked into her fiction (132). Aware of Rhys scholarship, Seymour works to extract fact from fiction, making sure to dispel or renounce readings of Rhys's fiction as merely autobiographical while simultaneously devoting much effort to finding and placing the inspirations Rhys drew from her life. In this matter Seymour may promise more than she achieves. Attempting to balance her intrigue with biographical connections in fiction against the bane of 'The Rhys Woman', Seymour writes: '[Rhys] was, and still too often is, judged by the fictitious alter egos whom she created, but only in part resembled' (137). Though not always successful, Seymour does endeavor to alert the reader when she makes conjectures based on fiction and rarely seeks to explain Rhys's psyche. However, Seymour often identifies Rhys's protagonists as 'alter egos', 'avatars', and even as 'ideal surrogate[s]'—a dangerous slippage (137, 169, 173).

Overall, *I Used to Live Here Once* is a much-needed new biography that is both useful to critics and accessible to students and readers outside of the academy. Rich in detail from archival research and critical new interviews, Seymour's final words affirm her respect for Rhys's own story of her life. What autobiographical work Rhys did write, such as her uncompleted autobiography *Smile Please*, is treated by Seymour as the most important source above all others. Crystallized on the final page, Seymour's respect for Rhys feels genuine: 'Rhys demands, and deserves, to stand alone' (366).

Isabelle Brasme, *Writers at War: Exploring the Prose of Ford Madox Ford, May Sinclair, Siegfried Sassoon and Mary Borden*

(New York and London: Routledge, 2023) ISBN: 978-1-032-21993-6 (paperback)

Reviewed by Rebecca Bowler

Isabelle Brasme's intention in this volume is to examine what she calls 'the most immediate representations of the First World War' by her four writers: Ford Madox Ford, May Sinclair, Siegfried Sassoon and Mary Borden. Her focus is then not on the more renowned works by these writers—*The Good Soldier*, *Parade's End*; Sassoon's war poetry; Sinclair's 1920s war novels—but on the writers' diaries, memoirs, essays, letters and literary fragments written 'as they were living through' the war (1). She thus examines Ford's essays and letters between 1915 and 1918, while he was in service, and Sinclair's impressionist memoir, published less than a year after she returned from Belgium, in 1915. She has a chapter on Sassoon's war diaries, written on the spot between 1915 and 1918, and another on the sections of Borden's *A Forbidden Zone* written while she was a war nurse, also between 1915 and 1918. She is interested in proximity and the struggle of process: 'the paradox' of 'the simultaneous exhilaration of going through momentous events and the overwhelming sense of horror that is unfolding' (7), affect and the ethics of representation, faulty perceptions and their narrativization and contradictory impressions.

As Brasme says, her material is in many ways 'heterogeneous', not only from writer to writer, but within

the oeuvre of each individual: Ford's essays were not necessarily meant to be collected and read together; Sinclair's *A Journal of Impressions in Belgium* exists in several forms and not one of them is wholly coherent in itself; Sassoon's diary entries vary wildly in style, tone and content; Borden's memoir is a very modernist collection of fragments (2). But there are also marked similarities in the way each writer approached the task of making the visceral horror of war communicable, and each did this, in part, by rendering the problem itself *as* problem: 'making the failures of representation manifest is an integral part [for each writer] in their project of signalling the subject's disarray in the face of war, and of recreating in the reader an impression of this breakdown' (4).

Sinclair's narratives dramatise the 'limits of representation' towards a 'precarious literary experiment in impressionist narrative' (90). Borden's 'resistance to the conventional form of the war memoir' enables her to 'emancipate her writing from the imperatives of chronology and of a stable narrative instance that should be consistently authorial' (142). Sassoon experiments with defamiliarisation and estrangement, 'recording his perception—and not his emotions—as faithfully as possible' (108). Ford rehearses and recommits to the literary impression: 'truth lies in impressions: conversely, the most factual report will prove the least effective in rendering life'. Before he does this though, he first has to overcome a crisis of faith. This crisis is best exemplified in a quotation, cited by Brasme, from his reflections only four days after war broke out:

What is the good of writing about literature—the ‘edler Beruf’, the noble calling? There will not be a soul that will want to read about literature for years and years. We go out. We writers go out. And when the world again has leisure to think about letters the whole world will have changed. It will have changed in morality, in manners, in all human relationships, in all views of life, possibly even in language, certainly in its estimates of literature. What then is the good of it all? I don’t know. (28)

Brasme shows the development of Ford’s attitude to writing through and about the war as a kind of progressive loop. At first, he is in despair about ‘the future of literature’; ‘the psychological consequences of mass combat and the future of humanity’, when what he can see around him is ‘technological progress [...] used towards the systematic destruction of human beings, against the Enlightenment ideal of a humanity bent on learning in order to continually improve itself and its condition’ (20). Then he is in ethical crisis. How write about a war so overwhelmingly destructive and so senseless? He could not write about it in neat literary phrases: ‘To him, generalising and theorising on the war is cognitively impossible as well as ethically unacceptable’ (35). Then, finally, he finds a way to return to his original passion for literature’s ability to make one see; to make available complex truths, as a ‘reinvestment of literary impressionism’ (38). He does so through perspectival multiplicity: he shows the individual and the fragment, and then another and then another; he writes out the difficulties of perceiving and

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registering impressions in the moment and then narrates the distancing effect of memory and re-presentation; he pictorialises and distances himself from the narration:

This development in fact heightened literary impressionism: it strengthened the validity of its methods against the test of war; it furthermore enriched it with the ethical dimension of making the impression of the war present and vivid in the civilians' minds and of paying tribute to the individual over the collective. (50)

This is a compelling account. Ford's literary impressionism was tested by war, and the author ultimately came through that ordeal with a renewed conviction of method. Writing about the war was, for Ford, a complex endeavour, entailing the presentation of 'the simultaneousness of detachment and emotion; egotism and ethical investment; immense interest and *ennui*; intense happiness and fear; numbness and sharpness; representational helplessness and aesthetic experimentation' (19). This is literary impression taken to its furthest reaches, an increased density of the 'superimposed emotions [...] like so many views seen through bright glass' that Ford describes in 'On Impressionism' in 1913.

Sinclair struggled with the representation of war in similar ways, and she too experimented with dramatising the discomfort of this struggle. Her war journal, *A Journal of Impressions in Belgium* (1915) is a notoriously slippery account of her weeks in Belgium as a member of an ambulance unit. As Brasme

notes, 'The indeterminacy of the first word [of the title itself], the indefinite "a", suggests that this book is to be read as but one negligible account among countless others' (59).

Sinclair was in Belgium for only eighteen days, from September to October 1914. She made her initial journal entries on the spot, in her 'Day-Book', then wrote up short sketches for publication in *The English Review* in May, June and July 1915 and finally the *Journal* in book form in September 1915. Each version of events is different and partial and sometimes contradictory. Even within *A Journal*, from one page to another, Sinclair's narrator forgets, and narrates her forgetfulness, and then is sure and insists on her sureness; she later recants that surety: 'Her self-professed naivety is set in stark contrast with the events actually unfolding around her, and Sinclair's stance towards herself is judgemental and merciless. The entire narrative is fraught with an undercurrent of self-criticism on the part of Sinclair for her reckless and self-centred behaviour' (64). Her footnotes add another layer of narrative discontinuity as she metatextually questions the 'facts' she has presented in the main narrative. Brasme provides in this chapter some brilliant, detailed close readings of the gaps, fissures, abrupt changes in tone and mode of expression, contradictions and strange representational elusiveness of Sinclair's *Journal*.

Where Brasme's analysis is most original is in her insistence on the simultaneous negativity and comedy of Sinclair's narrative: 'One of the most arresting traits of the *Journal* is indeed its relentless negativity. The word "nothing" occurs no less than 94 times

in this relatively short tome; negative turns equally abound' (61); 'The introduction is framed with a self-deprecatory, negative description of what it is *not*, paired with positive references to other works that *do* recount the story of the field ambulances' (61). And yet:

Besides such straightforward negativity, the *Journal* incorporates indirect yet efficient devices and distancing modes to undermine the reader's expectations of a war journal. One such mode is that of the constant gap between expectation and reality—more precisely, between the impressions that were anticipated by Sinclair on embarking for Belgium, and those that she actually experiences. Sinclair's text is a palimpsest, where her would-be, fantasised narrative of the war is conveyed ironically and superimposed with her more sober account of her experience. (66)

Sinclair's memoir is ironic, and, at times, even 'carnavalesque' (59). She invites the reader to laugh at her own hopeless naivety and at the comic figures she encounters. One example is the eighteen year-old-nurse who is, in tragi-comic mode, threatening to either kill herself or to go home if she is not allowed out where the action is ('She regards the two acts as equivalent'); another is a doctor 'with the head of an enormous cherub' whose 'air of boisterous preparation' makes Sinclair feel as though 'the ambulance were a picnic party and he was responsible for the champagne' (67). The sense of frivolity and festivity here sits uncomfortably with the real

horror that can be glimpsed here and there in these pages. This carnivalesque serves as counterpoint to horror – to the strangeness of events – and the more subtle Sinclairian irony is a distancing effect which (seemingly paradoxically) allows for closeness and for a totalising effect. For Sinclair, as for Ford, piling uncertain impression on uncertain impression aims at totality. Irony works as:

a way for Sinclair to outline her experience; literally, it is used to provide a representational frame to her account that signals the external gaze of the onlooker: that of Sinclair the secretary and reporter looking at others, that of Sinclair the author looking at herself and rewriting the initial “Day-Book” into the *Journal*, and, inevitably, that of the reader of said *Journal*. (73)

Brasme examines Sassoon’s diaries, written in situ, alongside his later published works *Sherston Memoirs* (lightly fictionalised) and his autobiographical memoirs, in order to ‘help realise the difference—or indeed, absence thereof—between immediate records and retrospective memoirs, written at a distance from the war’ (99). She views Sassoon’s diaries not simply as documentary, but as a ‘literary workshop’ space in which Sassoon began to develop his ideas about the war and his poetry; not only that, but as ‘a work of literature in their own right’ (98). They are, Brasme maintains, ‘a writing workshop, a reservoir for Sassoon’s future work’ (99). She cites Phillippe Lejeune, who maintains that diary writing is a ‘*praxis*’, not an ‘*oeuvre*’: ‘the diarist writes a text whose conclusion he does not master’ (114),

although, she maintains, Sassoon's diary is more complex in that at times it exceeds the private form and seems to orient itself towards a potential future reader. Sassoon was aware of the historical significance of some of the events he records. He notes dates and geographical positions as well as recording (sometimes) feelings, sensations, sights and sounds. He is also, clearly, sometimes writing for his future self, as evident when he heads up a section of impressionist notes with the title 'Things to remember' (122). Brasme also notes Sassoon's self-mythologising bent: 'Since he conceived of his life as a novel, and of his own self as a mythical figure, a would-be hero, the traditional, non-teleological nature of the diary is disrupted' (119). There's something in this approach which is very appealing to the scholar who finds themselves negotiating the intersections of lives and letters, manuscript genesis, and (auto) biographical messiness: formative documents can then be valuable as source, as literature in process, and as literature itself. The *writer* is also source, literature in process and literature itself. The diary is often assumed, Brasme notes, to be more direct and unmediated than literary fiction, but if the diary is used as a 'reservoir' for future work, might it better be considered a 'pivot between life and writing' (103)?

Brasme conducts some attentive and compelling close readings of Sassoon's diary entries as modernist and fragmentary; as conflictedly preoccupied with the pastoral. He is detached and yet situated. He rewrites passages and re-relates experiences 'in a variety of modes'; introspectively, in past tense, dispassionately and then formally. He is troubled

by the idea that war is a spectacle, or a show, and then he is both an onlooker and a participant in the performance. He is also concerned that the war is so big and so visually and affectively complex that he cannot render it *all* and cannot render it effectively:

Ford Madox Ford was faced with the same scopical issues [...], like him, Sassoon is indeed deeply aware of the limitations of his own perception of the fighting, notwithstanding his privileged position. The numerous mentions of his stance as onlooker, while emphasising what he *can* see, also adumbrate all that he *cannot* witness. (112)

It is encouraging to see, in this context, a chapter on the 'disjointed sketches' (133) of Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*, 'predominantly written during the war' (132) but published in 1929. Brasme describes this work as having 'a multifaceted and unstable narrative voice, a conspicuous sophistication and a constant navigation between mimetic representation and innovative aesthetics' (133). Borden was a nurse, rather than a combatant, and Brasme points out that nursing memoirs 'held a secondary place in collective memory; narratives of the war produced by carers, especially female, were generally considered as inferior in terms of testimonial value to those produced by the soldiers, who were regarded as the only legitimate actors of the war' (135). This raises issues of legitimacy and authority which Borden confronts, Brasme claims, writing her memoir as an 'act of resistance to the pervasive invisibilising and silencing dynamics of state censorship, public opinion and internalised suppression' (137). Bor-

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den's narrative is not straightforwardly combative, though. She elides and dodges; she presents herself in the third person and she slips between this and an 'I' who is not always herself.

The most striking tone that prevails in Borden's collection is that of detachment. Borden's collection is replete with devices of defamiliarization. Besides their distancing effect, these defamiliarizing devices trigger a process of *différance* as theorised by Jacques Derrida: they generate a cognitive distance that causes a delay in our recognition of what is being described. (154)

Despite this detachment, Borden's war narrative is intensely visual and resonantly sonic. Her 'acoustic representation of the war is achieved through an extremely musical and alliterative prose that recreates—albeit at a considerably and unavoidably dimmed volume—the noises that it depicts' (139). Hers is an evocation of landscapes and soundscapes, but these places and sounds are placed at a distance and made strange: 'The musicality of Borden's text is simultaneously the token of a language petering out, stuttering on the same words before ending abruptly' (163).

Brasme is very good at the conclusive, summative phrase. The writers she discusses are messy and contradictory, often holding several discursive modes in tension with each other; they are for the most part resisting conclusion. But Brasme highlights each of their dialogic and resistant elements and shows them in proportion and says this far they are doing

this; this far they are doing *this*. This book skilfully keeps each of these multiplicities in dialogue, both in terms of each chapter and between the work of each of the four writers. It is a fascinating study of the complexities of representation in the moment, the ethics of narrativising very real horrors, and the dextrous manipulations that are required to do so.

Notes on Contributors

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End (Carcanet, 2011). Recent work includes her critical edition of Evelyn Waugh's *Helena* (OUP, 2020), and articles (published in the *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 2020 and *Literature and Medicine*, 2021, co-authored with Edmund King) on what she has termed 'literary caregiving' during the First World War. Her current focus is *The Collected Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, in 6 volumes, to be published by Oxford University Press as phase 1 of the *Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford*, of which she is Co-General Editor.

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Paul Skinner has edited Ford Madox Ford's *No Enemy*, Carcanet's critical edition of *Last Post*, and the collection *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts*. He is currently editing volume 3 of *The Collected Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, to be published by Oxford University Press. He is General Editor of *Last Post* and blogs at reconstructionarytales.wordpress.com

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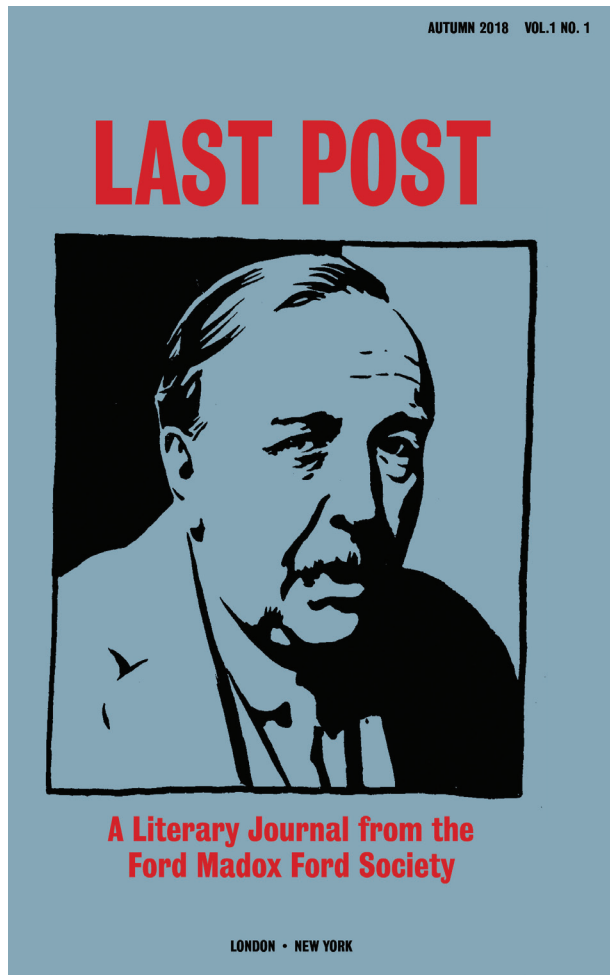
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Ford Madox Ford's Modernity, edited by Robert Hampson and Max Saunders, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003.

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Ford Madox Ford and Visual Culture, edited by Laura Colombino, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

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The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal, edited by Laura Colombino and Max Saunders, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013.

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