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AUTUMN 2018

LAST POST A LITERARY JOURNAL FROM THE FORD MADOX FORD SOCIETY

VOL. 1. NO. 1

LAST POST



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Ford Madox Ford Society**

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One: Autumn 2018

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And my thanks to our anonymous peer reviewers.

Paul Skinner
Editor

Editorial

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Last Post: A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*.

The Ford Madox Ford Society was founded in 1997, under the chairmanship of Max Saunders, who was succeeded after ten years by Sara Haslam, the current Chair. The Society held a number of conferences, both in this country and abroad, and published fifteen annual volumes of essays, generally drawing on papers given by delegates to the conferences. These volumes of *International Ford Madox Ford Studies* comprise an indispensable scholarly resource for continuing research into Ford's work.

The current project seeks to expand the existing constituency, in search of a widening of interests and audiences, acknowledging the fact that conference themes inevitably narrow the range of aspects addressed, while non-academic readers may sometimes feel a little distanced from Ford's work. There is certainly no shortage of possible subjects and perspectives available to our contributors. Ford was novelist, poet, editor, art critic, autobiographer and cultural historian. He published fairy tales, short stories and a huge quantity of literary journalism. He wrote too, with insight, passion and humour, about the places he lived in, the writers he knew, the food he grew, cooked and ate, the gardens he created, the animals he kept. From his country life in the 1890s to his smallholding and ecologically conscious 1930s, Ford consistently valued, and treated seriously, the crafts and skills which many other artists – and critics – have tended to deprecate or ignore.

Then, too, he was closely connected with three generations of writers and artists, a remarkable number of whom have felt the desire or necessity to write about him, to record their impressions, to tell their stories. His own story thus connects with, crosses and becomes entangled with countless others – and in many places, in England, Wales and Scotland; in Paris and Provence; in Germany; in New York and Tennessee.

So *Last Post* is intended to be – desires to be – a meeting-place, a field, in which scholars, experts, new readers, perhaps enthusiasts for quite other writers whose trajectory touches Ford's, can find and offer and share matters of interest, whether the development of women's rights in the twentieth century, the interactions of expatriate lives in Paris, Edwardian politics or versions of rural England.

This first issue offers essays on Ford's last library, his early representation of Anglo-German engagement, the background to *The Good Soldier* (with glances at Dowell's narrative voice – and Graham Greene) and Ford's almost wholly forgotten detective stories, as well as reviews and the initial instalments of columns which we hope will become regular features: on Ford's reading, the view from America and postgraduate Fordian research. We hope you enjoy reading the Journal as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

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

Ford Madox Ford's Last Library: Details, Dedications, and Remaining Mysteries in the Berg Collection, New York¹

Sara Haslam

This account of the books donated by Janice Biala to the New York Public Library extends the one published by the *Times Literary Supplement* (8 June 2018). My editor there encouraged me to find as much information as possible about Biala's rescue of Ford's books and papers from Toulon (and I remain grateful to Jason Andrew and the Estate for assisting my research). Biala was Ford's partner in the last ten years of his life. The story of her dedication to Ford's legacy was one I found deeply impressive and felt privileged to be telling – and her curation of this collection did not end when it was back in the States. Biala never stayed in one place for long and, as she moved over the years she always found a safe place for the metal trunk containing the books, either with the Duvoisins, close family friends, or with family members in the US as she and her husband Alain continued to make a more permanent base in France. Hermine Ford, Biala's niece, wrote to me that 'Biala would often remind [her sister] Helen and I that the trunk was there so that we would always take care of it', and during the last years of Biala's life, it was held in Hermine's loft in lower Manhattan. Hermine also noted that Biala's selection of the New York Public Library as the books' permanent home – the sisters later ensured that her wishes were carried out – was not only due to Ford's American success and reputation but to the 'long and fruitful hours Ford spent there doing his work'.²

The paperwork underpinning Biala's gift (produced by Glenn Horowitz's New York firm) remains the only way to locate the separate titles in the library and bring them together. The 'backlog' of books awaiting formal cataloguing by the Berg's staff runs into several thousand, and Ford's are amongst them, although a few, by William Carlos Williams (*Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, 1920; *White Mule*, 1937) and Ezra Pound (*Pavannes and Divisions*, 1918 – a working copy; *Lustra*, 1917), have been catalogued elsewhere in the Library's collections.



Ford and daughter Julia, outside
the New York Public Library

Courtesy of: Rare Books and Manuscript
Division Collections, Cornell University

The listing mentions Pound's annotations on *Pavannes* (although not, I later discovered, Ford's on *Lustra* or on his own works). The aim of my research trip to the NYPL was to gather all the titles together and to search each one of the 133 texts Biala donated for the bibliographical or biographical stories they might have to tell.³ Gaps remain in what we know about Ford as a reader and as a networked and responsive mentor in the last decade or so of his life and my hope was that these stories would help to fill them. Unable to access the collection on the morning I arrived, I examined the card index entries for Ford's other works and papers held by the Berg and ordered some up. The material includes a holograph and typescript,⁴ a selection of financial information dating from the period of Ford's editorship of the *English Review* in 1908-9 and a few letters from Ford to his agent James Pinker, but what struck me most that morning was the three-page handwritten receipt that fell out of *The Fifth Queen Crowned*. It detailed sales from a bookshop – the Phoenix – at 41 East 49th Street, New York, undated but listing the purchase by a Mr W.T. H. Howe of a total of \$105.75's worth of Ford's

books. Mr Howe bought 23 volumes in all, varying in cost from a copy of the poem 'A House' at \$2 to *Mr Bosphorus and the Muses*, at \$12.50.⁵ These are among Ford's lesser-known works, and while the lack of date was not helpful, the order anecdotally emphasised what Ford scholars already know: that he was widely and appreciatively read in America, and that it has at times been easier to get hold of his books in that city than anywhere else.⁶

By the end of the first day I had begun ordering the texts from the Biala Collection – each of which has a pencil 'BIALA 8/1/97' in the inside back hard cover, low down and at right angles to the spine. As noted above, I was looking primarily for annotation. Janice Biala said after Ford's death that Hemingway gave him inscribed copies of his books. Though she thought many years later she had sold them all after Ford died, perhaps one or two remained.⁷ If so, what might those dedications add to what we know about Hemingway's views of Ford? And were the gifts also an opportunity for Ford to 'write back' against the shadow Hemingway had cast over the last fifteen years of his professional life?⁸ Any 'conversation' of this kind would be of scholarly interest, whether it took place on copies of Hemingway, or on other books by Ford's peers. Ford was likely to have marked the books up. In 1925 he wrote to Monroe Wheeler, asking him to pass on a message to Glenway Wescott about Wescott's (first) novel *The Apple of the Eye* (1924). Ford told Wheeler he admired the book, and, presumably as evidence of this admiration, would have liked to write to him about some passages that he 'marked in it'. He couldn't do so however, because he had either lent the novel out, or someone had 'stolen it' from his shelves.⁹ An active dialogue of this kind was typical of the kind of reader/writer, and mentor, that Ford was. As well as an experienced editor, he had always been a collaborative writer. Ford's engagement with those other writers with whom he had 'grown up' – James Joyce, Ezra Pound – and who were represented in the collection was just as likely to be demonstrated in pencil in the margins of their published works as it was in Wescott's novel.

But I found little evidence of this dialogue in the collection. The vast majority of the texts donated were by Ford himself (including translations of *Romance*, *No More Parades* and *The Good Soldier*)¹⁰ mostly

published after his death in 1939). Of the 32 books by fellow writers, four were published after Ford died. With the exception of *Pluies*, by St. John Perse,¹¹ their authors' connection with Ford's writing/reading life is well-known – thus, perhaps, explaining their inclusion among the titles Biala donated. The two later books by Katherine Anne Porter post-date the copy of *Flowering Judas and Other Stories* (1935) which is also in the collection, and which she presented to Ford from Paris in November 1935 along with the quotation (from Johnson's *Life of Pope*): “An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace”. The fourth title post-dating Ford's death, *Lord Weary's Castle* by Robert Lowell, is a copy presented in 1946 to Biala and her husband Alain. Ford and Lowell had met in 1937, and Lowell acted as Ford's secretary while he was lecturing at Olivet College, Michigan, later that same year. Katherine Anne Porter was also at Olivet in 1937.

Of the remaining 27 titles by other writers (discounting Porter's *Flowering Judas*, already mentioned), I was able to consult all except two, both by Allen Tate and according to the listing both presentation copies, containing significant dedications, one to Ford in 1932 (this in *Poems 1928-1931*) and one jointly to Ford and Biala in 1936 (in *The Mediterranean and Other Poems*). These books were missing from the collection. Further significant (and valuable) presentation copies I did examine include a copy of *Exiles: A Play in Three Acts* by James Joyce ([1918] 1921): “To Ford Madox Hueffer James Joyce 29.x.[1923]” (the collection also contains an unsigned first edition of *A Portrait of the Artist*). Despite careful scrutiny of the other volumes by Tate (first edition presentation copies of *Mr Pope and Other Poems*, 1928, and *Three Poems: Ode to the Confederate Dead...*, 1930); Gilbert White (a second edition of the *Natural History of Selborne*, signed ‘F. Ford’ but otherwise unmarked) and William Carlos Williams, there were no annotations to be found. There were no books by Hemingway. (Biala sold them in New York to private collections and their dedications therefore remain an unsolved literary mystery.) That left Ezra Pound.

The nature and scope of the Berg's holdings in this case provide fascinating evidence of the depth of Ford's writerly relationships. There

are presentation copies of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920): ‘Ford from Ezra’, and *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937): ‘To good ole Fordie still pluggin’ at windmills. E. P. [I Luc XV?].’¹² The collection also includes Pound’s copy of *Pavannes and Divisions* (published by Knopf in 1918), with an embossed endpaper: ‘5, Holland Place Chambers’ (the address for the flat Pound took as his wedding to Dorothy was arranged in 1914), signed in pencil ‘E. Pound’ and containing a few autograph corrections. This collection had not been well-received on publication and had no British publisher. Equally notably, there is an ‘Author’s Proof’ of *A Draft of XVI Cantos for the Beginning of a Poem of Some Length* (1925) – which Pound has dedicated to Ford thus: ‘Cher F. This appears to be your copy which B. [William Bird] has sent here by mistake. He now wants me to inscribe it: here then making it my continued respite from work. Saluti’.¹³

The creative relationship between Pound and Ford was an old and valued one, as many critics have shown.¹⁴ Their relationship began in the era of the *English Review* and, most famously, Pound said Ford’s violent reaction against ‘errors’ in *Canzoni* in 1911 saved him ‘at least’ two years of poetic labour.¹⁵ Charles Olson, in his recorded notes of conversations with Pound in St Elizabeths, has Pound saying this about Ford:

At the same time, saved my literary career. Threw book & accused of not writing Anglese. So I had tried to write my third book in Oxfordese. F rolled on the floor, with his hands over his head, trying to teach me how to speak for myself.¹⁶

Pound’s letters also demonstrate Ford’s impression on his personal life and on his creative life. To Harriet Monroe he expressed his excitement at receiving ‘On Impressionism’ (1913) for *Poetry* (‘it will be the best prose we have had or are likely to get’) and his view that, in 1913, ‘[Ford] and Yeats are the two men in London. And Yeats is already a sort of great dim figure’. (He resituated Ford alongside Joyce and Lewis in a 1918 letter to John Quinn.) After bumping into him in London in September, 1915, when Ford had decided to join up, Pound revealed, to

Monroe again, his understanding that ‘it will be a long time before we get any more of his stuff, worse luck. He is looking twenty years younger and enjoying his work’. He was writing to his parents about Ford too: ‘Dear Dad, [...] Am playing tennis with Hueffer [Ford’s name until he changed it in 1919] in the afternoons’. He told his mother he was staying with Ford in a letter in June, 1913. Much later, in 1937, Pound reflected on this early period, reminding himself of Ford’s influence when he added a note to a letter to Monroe originally sent in January 1915. He was talking in that original letter about the need for ‘easy speech’ of books and poems, and in the note he said ‘it should be realised that Ford Madox Ford had been hammering this point of view into me from the time I first met him (1908 or 1909) and that I owe him everything I don’t owe myself for having saved me from the academic influences then raging in London’.¹⁷

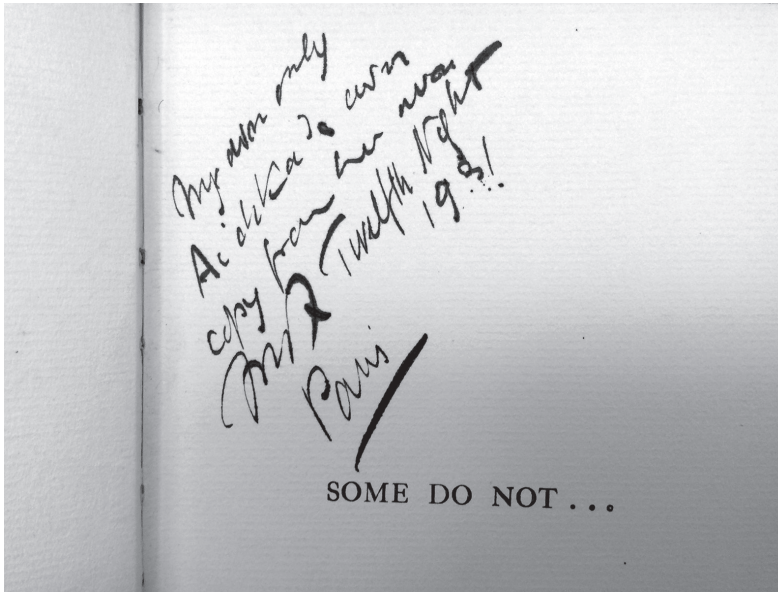
This creative relationship was fully active again by the early 30s as Ford networked to support Pound in advance of the *Cantos* publication. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound: Some Testimonials by Ernest Hemingway, Ford Madox Ford, T. S. Eliot, Hugh Walpole, Archibald MacLeish, James Joyce and Others* was published in 1933 and a copy is in the Berg. It was further demonstrated in the annotations Ford made on Pound’s books that he owned.

Aside from those titles already mentioned, the collection boasts copies of *Quia Pauper Amavi* (first edition, N. D., signed ‘Ezra Pound’), *Umbra: the Early Poems* (1920; first edition), *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1933; both the first edition and the first English edition), and single first edition copies of *How to Read* (1931), *ABC of Economics* (1933), *ABC of Reading* (1934), *Make It New: Essays* (1934), and *Eleven New Cantos XXXI-XLI* (1934). There is a first American edition of *Culture* (1938),¹⁸ and, finally, no. 218 out of a first edition (privately printed) run of 250 copies of *Profile: An Anthology Collected in MCMXXXII*. Between them, they demonstrate a collector’s (or a donator’s) bias weighted towards Pound’s work in the 1930s – the time when Ford was busy promoting him again. They were all unmarked. But Ford had annotated eight pages of one of Pound’s earlier volumes, *Lustra, with Earlier Poems* – a book that collected most of the poems and translations Pound

produced between 1912 and 1916.

Ford's editorial comments in 1911 and 1912 did much to shape the poet Pound became. *Lustra* was assembled in 1913, then grew, and was then forcibly shrunk. The collection was published eventually in the UK (by Elkin Mathews in 1916) only after a complex series of negotiations to do with censorship. Knopf agreed to publish an unexpurgated edition the following year, so it grew again, and it is this edition that is in the Biala Collection. Extending this 'see-saw' effect in his critical engagement with the text, autograph corrections in Ford's hand suggest the omission of up to half of the stanzas in Pound's 'translations', 'The River Song' and 'Exile's Letter'. (Critics often use speech marks to convey the radical creativity Pound brought to the process of translating from the Chinese; while Ira Nadel, for example, records the 'outrage of Chinese scholars' in response to his 'inaccuracies and errors' when that process was approached not as a creative but as a literal one.)¹⁹

Ford writes 'omit' in the margin next to sections he wants to see cut and 'this' against those to keep. In 'The River Song', he suggests, for example, cutting the lines between 'Yet Sennin needs' and 'sun and moon' and between 'The Eastern wind' and 'spring singing'. He also recommends an additional revision in the poem, involving an insertion of some earlier text at the end of the poem. In 'Exile's Letter' his notes argue for the omission of the first verse and then the section from 'jewelled mouth organ' to 'And before the end of the day' and from 'sheep's guts' to 'caring enough to pay it' and further lines before 'San palace'. Detailed as they are, and despite the history of Ford's editorial relationship with Pound's work, none of these annotations was translated into a published version of the poems.²⁰ We may never discover why they remained at marginal level, and none of them is recorded in the catalogue listing of the Biala Collection.



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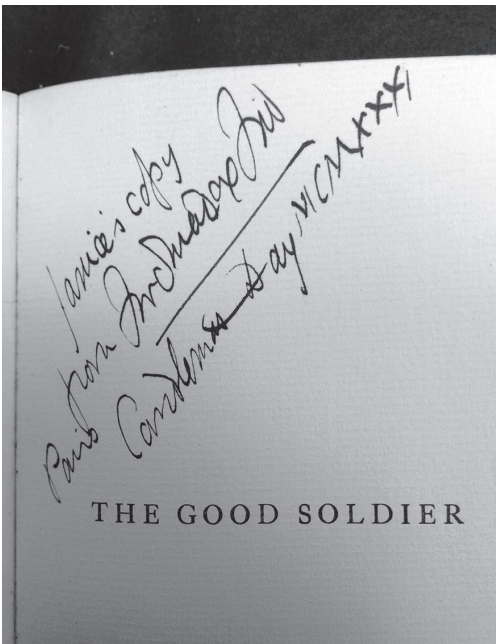
Ford's works in the collection: presentations and revisions

Deprived of the narrative I had hoped to re-create concerning Ford's written responses as a critical reader to those in his circle, I was alive to other stories the Berg's collection may have to tell. One of these is undoubtedly the history of the bequest and what it reveals about Ford's relationship in particular with Janice Biala, but also with other important figures whose names appear on the front endpapers of the copies of his books in the collection: his mother, his partner Stella Bowen, and their daughter Julia. There is a wealth of material to draw on here, provided by the titles that are in the collection, and more particularly the personal, political (and also, perhaps, financial) conversations that take place via Ford's choice of presentation volume and the wording and dating of his dedications – especially when these volumes are then signed by other individuals important to him later in time, and after his death sometimes too. These dedications all need contextualising biographically and with reference to the process of the donation itself (a task I have begun), but the fact that they had caught my attention meant that I chose to examine early on a copy of the first edition of

No More Parades, presented to Biala in April, 1933.

This novel and its three companions, *Some Do Not...*, *A Man Could Stand Up*— and *Last Post*, are together the most numerically significant of Ford's works in the collection. Although I focus for the rest of this article on these novels, particularly *No More Parades*, the collection is remarkable for the fact that it contains at least one copy of over 50 of Ford's (many) titles.²¹ There is a high number of first editions, UK and US, and multiple copies of several works including both first editions; a full list of the titles the collection contains is available at the end of this essay.

The titles that are not represented in the collection date in the main as might be expected from the first half of Ford's career. The most remarkable omission overall is a first edition of what is still his most famous work, *The Good Soldier*, published in 1915 by John Lane. There are two copies of the 1927 'Avignon' edition to which Ford added a dedicatory letter to Stella Bowen. As Wiesenfarth notes, one of these two copies has been presented, in turn, to Biala, as shown in the image below.²²



The collection also has copies of *New English Poems*, edited by Lascelles Abercrombie and published in 1931, in which Ford's 'Buckshee' sequence first appeared in the UK; and copies of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, edited by Harriet Monroe (February and March, 1932), in which 'Buckshee-I-V' and 'Conclusion to "Buckshee"' respectively appeared in the US. As one might expect, its most contemporary volume is a copy of *Parade's End*, the omnibus version of the Tietjens tetralogy that Knopf published in 1950 based on the US first editions of *Some Do Not...* (published in the UK then the US in 1924), *No More Parades* (published in the UK then the US in 1925),²³ *A Man Could Stand Up-* (published in the UK and then the US in 1926), and *Last Post* (published in 1928, probably in the UK first but so close to the US publication that this is hard to be certain about).²⁴ The Berg holds two American first editions of *Some Do Not...* (the fourth printing, published in 1927), as well as a second English edition (the fourth impression, published in 1929); a UK and a US first edition (second printing) of *No More Parades*; two UK firsts and one US first (second printing) of *A Man Could Stand Up-*; and two UK first editions and a second US edition of *Last Post*. The UK firsts were all published by Duckworth in London, and the US firsts by Albert & Charles Boni, in New York.

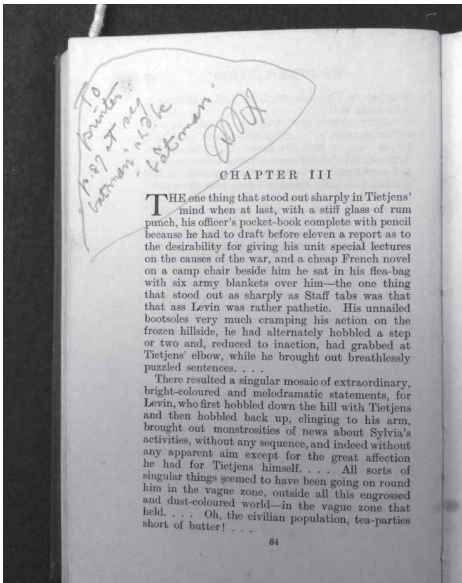
Towards *Parade's End*

The copy of *No More Parades* that I chose to examine particularly carefully was a UK first edition, and contained the intriguing dedication, 'Janice's copy to replace one that disappeared Ford Madox Ford Toulon April '33'. In the case of *A Man Could Stand Up-* and *Last Post*, the collection contains two UK firsts and one US first, while *No More Parades* is represented by only one of each. Could it have been his own copy that he was presenting to Biala to replace the one that she had lost?

It was certainly one of his, and a working copy, more than worthy of close examination. The novel, named, along with its companions, as an exemplar of both modernism and First World War fiction by more than one generation of critics (William Carlos Williams described the novels as 'the English prose masterpiece of their time' in 1951; Malcolm Bradbury deemed them 'exemplary' modernist novels)²⁵ has been substan-

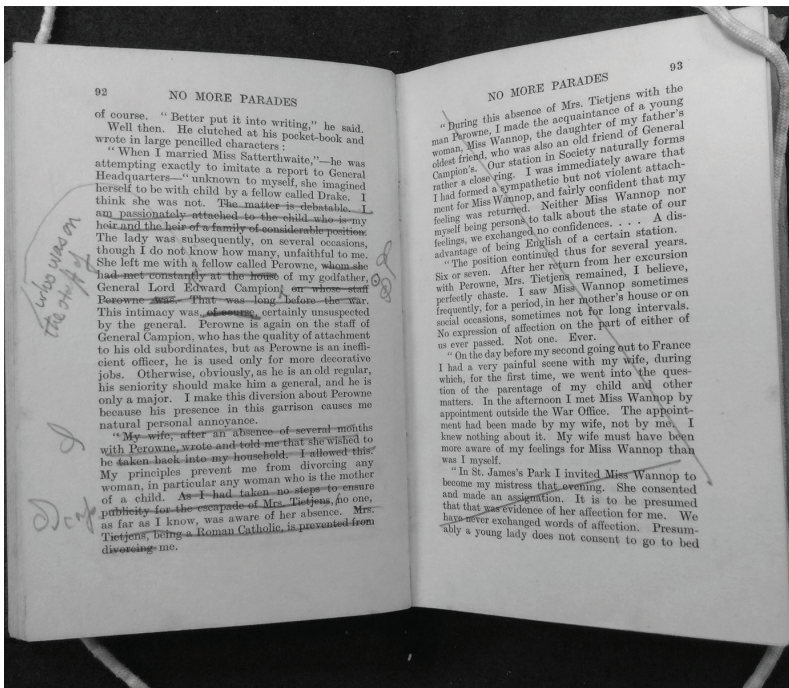
tially revised in a wealth of autograph additions and deletions. None of these is recorded in the listing of the Collection, and I add further details here to the account of the revisions given in the June *TLS* article, as well as some images.

The first revision is clear on p. 11, the opening page of the novel. In the top right corner, a pencilled autograph comment reads ‘To William Bird’ – Bird was the published dedicatee of this novel and the letter to him takes up four and a half pages in the first edition. Further down, a marginal pencil annotation moves the three final words of the first paragraph (‘with animal grunts’) to a position earlier in the sentence (after ‘manifested’). Only a few pages later, revisions indicate different corrections – to improve clarity or style: on p. 16, the sentence ‘They shone down the sun like spun glass’ is altered to ‘The sun shone down [on] them like spun glass’, while at the top of p. 17 ‘To the elder officer’ is changed to ‘To Tietjens’. On p. 23 the first dramatic revision occurs, with a total of 10 lines deleted by striking through. All of these lines relate to description of Sylvia Tietjens, physically or with regard to plot. (Ford’s revisions remove some of the most well-known descriptions of Sylvia, ‘very tall, very fair, extraordinarily fit and clean even’, in



her 'sheath gown of gold tissue'.) Further minor (and unclear) revision takes place on p. 24, and on p. 84 Ford addresses the printer directly in an autograph note which he initials. (Image: previous page.)

That instruction (a nod to the French origin in 'bât', pack-saddle) appeared on the first page of a chapter (3, of Part 1) which is revised on a further 17 pages. These are mostly deletions, sometimes of whole paragraphs and in two instances of a whole page. On p. 91, Ford deletes half a paragraph describing Sylvia's 'ladylike' qualities and their effect on her ability to care for her husband. On the subsequent two pages, as illustrated below, he edits out a large amount of plot information, related to Sylvia's affair with Perowne and the doubt over the paternity of Christopher's son, coupled with the introduction of Valentine Wannop.



© Estate of Janice Biala, New York

On p. 94 five more lines detailing their 'agreement' about the affair are cut and, on the subsequent two pages, Ford edits this storyline back further, deleting a long paragraph (pp. 96-7) in which Tietjens recon-

siders the motivation for his asking Valentine to become his mistress. A further paragraph about the motivation she has provided for his own adulterous feelings is cut from p. 99; p. 100 has some minor alterations, along with pp. 104 and 105 (the last in the chapter) while Ford also heavily annotates p. 103.

This is evidence of significant revision of one of Ford's seminal works. The novels were not only responded to positively by critics (and increasingly so over time); they also sold well. There were at least five US printings of *No More Parades* in 1925-6, for example. Moreover, the tetralogy is one of only two of Ford's works to have received the detailed treatment of a critical edition when it was published in four volumes in 2010-11 edited by Max Saunders, Joseph Wiesenfarth, myself, and Paul Skinner. The annotations and revisions on this edition held at the New York Public Library may not have been discovered in time to be worked into the critical narrative provided by the Carcanet *No More Parades*. However, the textual experience and knowledge embodied in that edition can be brought to bear on the questions they generate – and subsequent critical editions will be able to embed them in the textual history of this novel, completing it by a further stage.²⁶

Conscious of the need to clarify exactly the scope of Ford's revision before considering its purpose, I searched the rest of the novel, but found no further evidence. I turned to the other novels in the series, beginning with *Some Do Not...* As noted above, there was no UK first edition of this novel in the collection. Ford had dedicated one of the two first American editions in the collection to Biala, on *Twelfth Night*, in Paris, 1931. (See image on page 8.)

The third and final copy of the novel in the collection, the second English edition, was also dedicated to Biala, in March 1931, in Toulon (they had moved to the Villa Paul, Cap Brun, the previous year). The US first edition Ford had not dedicated to Biala had one revision: a correction to a misspelling of 'bluejackets' 12 pages from the end of Part II, Chapter II. There were UK first editions of both *A Man Could Stand Up* – and *Last Post*, one of each of which was dedicated to Biala in April 1933, also in Toulon – so in exactly the same month and location as the

annotated copy of *No More Parades*, suggesting they warranted close checking. But the American first editions of *A Man Could Stand Up*— and *Last Post* (*The Last Post* in the US) were presented to Biala too, on dates much more closely matching the dedication of *Some Do Not...*, Christmas Day in the case of the earlier novel, Twelfth Night again in that of the later. There were no further corrections or annotations on these copies. The UK first editions of the later novels, however, had both been (lightly) revised by Ford.

In both cases, the name of the dedicatee (respectively Gerald Duckworth and Isabel Paterson) was added in pencil to the top of the opening page of the text. Copies of all three UK firsts after *Some Do Not...* were therefore dedicated to Biala in the same month (that in *Last Post* – ‘Janice’s copy from Ford Madox Ford 18 April 1933’ – specifies the date), and revised by Ford, extensively in the case of *No More Parades*. As a result, I concluded that a UK1 of *Some Do Not...* had also been in the collection at some point, and dedicated to Biala in April, 1933, but had been excluded from the donated texts, or lost, or sold; and, similarly, that an American first of *No More Parades* had also ‘disappeared’. The more pressing questions, however, concerned the purpose of the revisions, and whether they were ever put into effect. It was an easy check to confirm that the misspelling in one of the US first editions of *Some Do Not...* had been caught and corrected. But none of the extensive revisions Ford made to *No More Parades* or to the opening pages of the later volumes were enacted. In my view, as I argued in the earlier piece, Ford was planning an omnibus of his own, nearly two decades ahead of Knopf’s, but which never transpired.

An omnibus, or no?

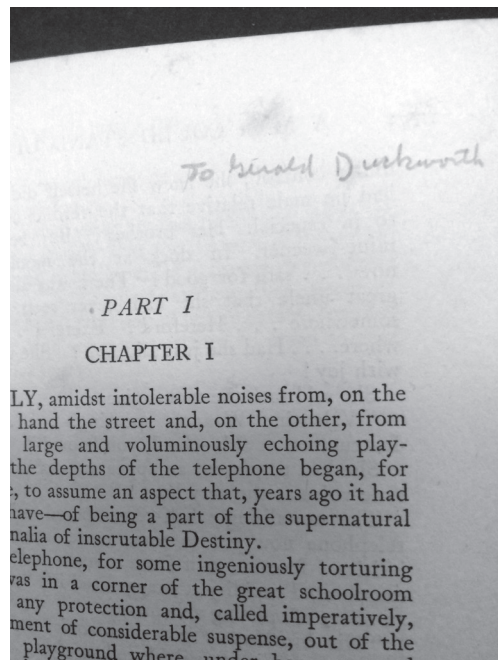
As early as March 1926, when Ford was still writing *A Man Could Stand Up*—, he was discussing with Gerald Duckworth how to profit best from the success of *Some Do Not...* and *No More Parades* in the US. He had achieved very little financial security over his 30-year career, and badly needed some now after the commercial failure of the *transatlantic review*. A letter to Duckworth demonstrates his depression at his poor UK sales (‘I suppose all this will re-act favourably on England: or doesn’t it make

any difference? I suppose not: I suppose nothing ever does')²⁷ and his plans for a US lecture tour to boost further his reputation there. As noted at the beginning of this article, the US was a more fruitful market for Ford in the second half of his career and it was his reception in the US in particular across the twenties that meant a collected edition became, for a time, a very real possibility. While a collected edition – one amounting to more than the fact that Gerald Duckworth was keeping the seventeen of Ford's novels he had published in print despite disappointing sales²⁸ – was definitely a prize that he sought, the four Tietjens novels sat somewhat obliquely to that project, and Ford was concerned more than once that a possible omnibus of the tetralogy might scupper it. (He listed the novels separately in his outline of his proposed edition to his agent in August 1929.)²⁹ In a letter in November 1927, though, written in anticipation of the publication of *Last Post*, Ford talks of it being the 'last of the Tietjens series' in ways that highlights his sense of the relationship between those texts. That relationship, the conception of a series, developed to spur his later revisions of the first editions in his and Biala's library, revisions that took place as the publishing world was still reeling from the effects of the Wall Street Crash.³⁰ Going back to those revisions, as noted, the majority have been undertaken less with matters of style in mind than with plot coverage. Words have mostly been deleted from a chapter whose main job is back story, concerned with the plot history as to Sylvia's affair, Tietjens' resultant doubts about the paternity of his son, and his meeting of Valentine Wannop and his decision to ask her to become his mistress – all covered in Part II of of *Some Do Not....* By far the most words are lost from these sections of the chapter – although an interesting variation comes when a paragraph describing the military 'conference on Tietjens' case', provoked by Sylvia's pernicious presence at the front has been cut from p. 103, reducing the sense of General Campion and Sylvia's joint attempt to humiliate him.

The absence of a first UK edition of *Some Do Not...* (which we might have expected Ford to annotate for the mistakes in the Latin as well as in 'bluejackets'),³¹ means we don't have all the clues needed to make the best guess as to the reasons for Ford's revisions. But the fact that

the vast majority of them relate to back story, coupled with the addition of the dedicatees' names to the opening page – and the implication of the removal of the accompanying dedicatory letters – suggests strongly that they were made with reference to an omnibus edition of the tetralogy, and reveal active authorial engagement with the plan. An omnibus would require less editing of the initial novel, of course, which sets up the story (an untestable proposition in UK1's absence). Similarly, in an omnibus there would be no need for the specific and individual context the dedicatory letters provide. Removing them would both save space and a potential distraction: the letter to Duckworth took up three pages, and the one to Paterson a further four and a half pages – making it the same length as the one to Bird. All in all, the four novels would run together in an omnibus, and the reader would not be troubled by repetitive rehearsals of character description or plot.

We know Ford had bought into the idea of an omnibus, even as he held on to the idea of a collected edition. By August 1930 he is heading a letter to Pinker the 'Tietjens Saga'. He states that he is 'quite in favor' of this publication but wants to reiterate his earlier concern that it 'will



not interfere with ordinary editions intended to figure in my collected works at a later date'. He is also quite clear that he does not like the title 'Tietjens Saga', due to the fact the name 'Tietjens' is 'difficult for purchasers to pronounce'. He suggests another 'general title': *Parades End* (minus the apostrophe).³² Over the next three years, Ford was only ever temporarily solvent, his relations with publishers were strained, and he spent most of his energy negotiating, and eking out a living, on a book-by-book basis. *Parades End* might have helped turn things around.

Whether it was the Wall Street Crash that prevented him testing that hypothesis, or whether he changed his mind about the omnibus, deciding that the collected edition was the greater and competing prize, we still don't know. He certainly gave up the project before he worked in a detailed way very far into the tetralogy. Recovering Ford's own ideas concerning an omnibus, and his related work on these texts, has therefore become the task of later scholars, a task well worth undertaking in this case of four novels seen as increasingly central to the body of literature that emerged from the First World War.

However, Ford does clearly tell us in his annotations that he had returned to his senses about the importance of including *Last Post* in any version of a Tietjens series. (The August 1930 letter to Eric Pinker was also the one in which he said he wanted to 'omit the *Last Post* from the edition'.) I wonder if consulting those annotations would have been enough to persuade Graham Greene that, in fact, 'Ford's own version' of *Parade's End* was one that had returned to full strength?³³

Ford's titles in the Biala Collection

An asterisk in the list below denotes a second edition or later version only. Where there are two first editions, Ford's books were usually, but not always, published in the UK first. ^ denotes that the listed text was published first, or only, in the US.

Poetry: *Songs from London*, 1910; *Collected Poems*, 1913; *On Heaven and Poems Written on Active Service*, 1918; *A House*, 1921

Fairy stories: *The Brown Owl*, 1892; *Christina's Fairy Book*, 1906*

Art criticism: *Rossetti*, 1902*; *Hans Holbein*, 1905

Propaganda: *When Blood is Their Argument*, 1915; *Between St Dennis and St George*, 1915

Literary criticism: *The Critical Attitude*, 1911; *The English Novel*, 1929^; *The March of Literature*, 1938^

Life writing: *Ford Madox Brown*, 1896; *Memories and Impressions: A Study in Atmospheres*, 1911 – published in the UK the same year as *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections*; *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance*, 1924, *Thus to Revisit*, 1921; *No Enemy*, 1929^; *Return to Yesterday*, 1931; *It Was the Nightingale*, 1933^; *Portraits from Life*, 1937^ – published in the UK as *Mightier Than the Sword*, 1938, also in the collection.

Cultural criticism: *The Spirit of the People*, 1907; *Women and Men*, 1923; *New York is Not America*, 1927

Fiction: *The Shifting of the Fire*, 1892; *The Benefactor*, 1905; *The Fifth Queen* trilogy, 1905-7; *An English Girl*, 1907; *Mr Apollo*, 1908; *The 'Half Moon'*, 1909; *The Portrait*, 1910; *A Call*, 1910; *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, 1911; *The Simple Life Limited*, 1911; *The Panel*, 1912 – published as *Ring for Nancy* in the US in 1913 which is also in the collection; *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, 1912; *Mr Fleight*, 1913; *The Good Soldier*, 1927*; *Zeppelin Nights*, 1916; *Some Do Not...*, 1924*; *No More Parades*, 1925; *A Man Could Stand Up*–, 1926; *Last Post*, 1928; *A Little Less Than Gods*, 1928; *When the Wicked Man*, 1932^; *The Rash*

Act, 1933[^]; and *Henry for Hugh*, 1934[^]

Collaborative works: *Romance: A Novel*, 1909*; *The Nature of a Crime*, 1924 – both novels written with Joseph Conrad; *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine*, 1935[^]; *Great Trade Route*, 1937[^] – both illustrated by Biala.

There are four copies of both *The Rash Act* and the earlier *A Little Less than Gods*, but there is no copy of Ford's last completed novel, *Vive le Roy* (1936). *The Feather* (1892) and *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* or a *Short History of Poetry in Britain: Variety Entertainment in Four Acts* (1923) are both listed as belonging to the collection, but could not be found.

NOTES

1 I should like to acknowledge the British Academy's funding of my research, as well as Jason Andrew and the Estate of Janice Biala, and Michael Schmidt and Ford's Estate for permission to reproduce images in this article. Thanks are also due to Max Saunders and Paul Skinner for their comments.

2 My grateful thanks go to Hermine for her communications on the history of the collection.

3 The collection has not been written about in any detail to date. Joseph Wiesenfarth includes a paragraph on Ford's own inscribed books in the collection in his book *Ford Madox Ford and the Regiment of Women: Violet Hunt, Jean Rhys, Stella Bowen, Janice Biala* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 143-144. Paul Lewis's documentary film on Ford, *It Was the Nightingale: The Unreliable Story of Ford Madox Ford* (2017), includes footage of the books.

4 The typescript is complete, the holograph numbers 5 chapters only; both are early states of the memoir *Return to Yesterday* (1931). The notable element of this is Ford's inscription: 'My own corrected typescript from which the English Edition was printed [...]'.
 5 Also bought that day were (listed in the order they appear on the receipt):

Thus to Revisit, New Poems, Between St Dennis and St George, On Heaven, The Spirit of the People, A Mirror to France, Collected Poems, New York is Not America, Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections, The Last Post, No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up—, The Marsden Case, Mr Flight, The Fifth Queen Crowned (perhaps this very copy!), *The Heart of the Country, A Call, The Queen Who Flew, Women and Men, A House, Antwerp, and Songs from London*. This is an astonishingly eclectic mix of Ford's earliest fiction (*The Queen Who Flew*), through early memoir (*Ancient Lights*) and cultural criticism (*The Heart of the Country*) to its later varieties (*New York is Not America*), poetry (*Songs from London*) and his well-known fiction (the *Parade's End* novels).

6 Ford's *A History of Our Own Times* was first published posthumously, in the US, in 1988. The 1989 Carcanet edition reproduces the list of his books in print that Solon Beinfeld and Sondra Stang, its editors, compiled. The US section boasts 37 editions, the UK only 12 (251). This Phoenix Book shop (not the one in Greenwich Village run by Robert O. Wilson in the 1960s) was hard to find digitally. I did find this book listing: 'Rudyard Kipling: A Collection of First Editions Catalogue Number 7 New York Phoenix Book Shop First Edition Soft Cover Good 19 cm tall. 25 p. Catalogue 7 of the Phoenix Book Shop, New York. Contains 133 items. [...] At the time of printing the Phoenix Book Shop was at 41 East 49th Street, New York. Its phone number was Plaza 2116. New York City instituted 2 letters, 5 numbers in 1930. The latest date on a catalogue item is 1928. So this catalogue was likely published between 1928 and 1930.' Accessed at www.ElkhornBooks.com on 29 June, 2016.

7 In January, 1990 Biala wrote about this to Max Saunders, Ford's biographer, and the letter remains in his private collection.

8 On the history of that relationship with reference to the editorship of the *transatlantic review* in Paris in 1924, see Bernard J. Poli, *Ford Madox Ford and the transatlantic review* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967). Max Saunders treats this biographically in *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, 159-160. See also Susan Swartzlander's 'Thus to Revisit or

Thus to Revise-It': Ernest Hemingway, Defiant Disciple' in *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 6*, edited by Paul Skinner (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 189-202.

9 *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 165.

10 Into French, with the exception of a Danish version of *The Good Soldier*, published in 1963 as *Den Gode Soldat*.

11 He left France for the US in 1940 when dismissed from his post in the Foreign Office by Vichy as a known anti-Nazi.

12 It's possible, as Paul Skinner suggested while editing this piece, that this in fact reads 'I Lug.' – and so perhaps is an abbreviation of the Italian 'luglio', for July. And is the 'XV' also evidence of Pound using the Fascist calendar, marking fifteen years since Mussolini had marched on Rome?

13 The listing describes this as 'one of supposed 6 copies labelled "Author's Proof" bound in wrappers for a select group chosen by Pound'.

14 Hugh Kenner, for example, addresses Pound's fundamental appreciation of Ford on numerous occasions. A good place to start would be his 'The Poetics of Speech' in *Ford Madox Ford: Modern Judgements*, edited by Richard A. Cassell (London: Macmillan, 1972), 169-181.

15 In 'Ford Madox Ford: Obit.', published in *Nineteenth Century and After*, CXXVI, 750 (August 1939), 178-181.

16 *Charles Olson and Ezra Pound: An Encounter at St. Elizabeths*, edited by Catherine Seelye (1975; New York: Paragon House, 1991), 107. My thanks to Paul Skinner for this reference.

17 In *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, edited by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), 20, 21, 28, 49, 139.

18 This had been published in London, as some readers may know, as *Guide to Kulchur*, that same year. In 1952 it became *Guide to Kulchur* in the US too.

19 See Hugh Witemeyer, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound: Forms and Renewal 1908-1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 141 and Ira Nadel, *Cathay: Ezra Pound's Orient* (London: Penguin, 2015), 2, 67. Hugh Kenner began arguing in the 1960s ('The Invention of China' was published in *Spectrum* in 1967) that these poems were not translations in the conventional sense; the Chinese originals were source texts for Pound's poetic transformations and experiments in what English poetry could do: see *The Pound Era* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 199.

20 These poems remain unaltered from the earliest editions (London: Elkin Mathews, 1916 and the version published privately in a print run of 60 in New York in 1917), to the collected edition of 1926 (Liveright: New York) and Richard Sieburth's *New Selected Poems and Translations* (New York: New Directions, 2010).

21 Ford published close to 80 works.

22 *Ford Madox Ford and the Regiment of Women*, note 69, 202.

23 But see Joseph Wiesenfarth's Carcanet edition (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011) on the first chapter's appearance in the *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers* (introduction, lvi-lviii).

24 See Paul Skinner's introduction to *Last Post* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011).

25 Williams' review of *Parade's End* was published in the *Sewanee Review*, LIX (Jan.– Mar., 1951) 154-161; Bradbury's description comes in his introduction to his edition for Everyman in 1992.

26 Chapters on *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* as well as 'Editing Ford' in the forthcoming *Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford* provide more detail on the textual history of these novels.

27 *Letters*, 169.

28 Saunders, *A Dual Life*, II, 328.

29 Saunders, *A Dual Life*, II, 362.

30 A letter to Burton Rascoe, editor of *The Bookman: Letters*, 174.

31 See Saunders' notes in the Carcanet edition (Manchester: Carcanet, 2010), 118-119.

32 *Letters*, 196-197.

33 See Greene's introduction to *The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford vol. 3, Parade's End* (London: The Bodley Head, 1963), 5.

A Kind of Haunting: Ford and *The Good Soldier*

Alan Judd

‘I had it hatching within myself for fully another decade. That was because the story is a true story and because I had it from Edward Ashburnham himself and I could not write it till all the others were dead.’ Thus Ford to Stella Bowen in a dedicatory letter to an American edition of *The Good Soldier*. As he wrote the novel in 1913/14, this would (if his dating is accurate) put his hearing the story from Edward in around 1902-4, or earlier. For a significant part of that period he lived in Aldington, Kent, or Winchelsea, across the marsh in Sussex.

Living in Sussex and being familiar with Ford’s rural haunts (his Winchelsea house is currently for sale to anyone with £650,000), I’ve often wondered whether *The Good Soldier* could have local origins. There’s no evidence that it did, of course, but wishes are forever fathering my thoughts and there are two factors that feed this fantasy. One is the passage in *The Spirit of the People* when Ford records his host’s – named only as P – infatuation with his un-named niece. P asks Ford to accompany him and his niece to the station for the start of her journey to Brindisi, where she dies. The infatuated host is so upset by parting and by the pain of self-imposed restraint that he drives off in the dog-cart, leaving Ford at the station.



Ford's residence in
Winchelsea, Sussex

Photo: Paul Lewis

It is impossible not to be reminded by this of Edward's infatuation for Nancy in *The Good Soldier*: his unwonted self-restraint, the pony and trap ride to the station, Nancy's letter from Brindisi, Edward's suicide. For me, it is also impossible not to picture this as happening near Aldington or Winchelsea, not least because Ford sets other pony and trap scenes near the latter – the collision in *Parade's End* and his recollection of the pony's ears emerging from the mist while driving through Udimore (pronounced Youdimore).

The other fantasy-engendering factor is Edward's surname and the description of his family as 'good people' descended from the Ashburnham who accompanied Charles I to the scaffold. Also, Ford's evocation of the Ashburnham family seat, Branshaw Teleragh at Ford-Ingbridge in Hampshire. Well, I live just across the Ashburn, the stream marking the boundary of Ashburnham parish. The village has been dominated, allegedly since the Conquest, by Ashburnham Place, seat of the ancient Ashburnham family whose last direct descendent died in 1953. The estate once comprised 22,000 acres, making it one of the largest in the south of England, and the house – sadly reduced by wartime bomb damage – was easily the grandest in the area. The park and lakes were landscaped by Capability Brown. Although Ford firmly places the Ashburnhams in Hampshire, it is impossible not to imagine Leonora walking with Dowell on that splendid terrace in Sussex (where you can now take tea). Winchelsea is about 15-20 miles away.

Ford was of the metropolitan upper middle class and never of the county or landowning set (whatever impression he might sometimes have given), but he would very likely have been aware of the Ashburnhams when he lived in Winchelsea. In a county of small farms and moderate-sized estates, with aristocracy thin on the ground, they were eminent. Kipling lived nearby and would certainly have known of them. It's possible that Ford met them. And Ashburnham ancestors were Groom of the Bed-chamber and Cofferer to Charles I and Charles II respectively. The extant family know of no *Good Soldier*-type scandal or suicide a century or so ago, but they are an indirect line and such affairs were usually hushed-up. The last person who might have had access to family secrets was the Lady Ashburnham who died in 1953.

But if Ford got the story of *The Good Soldier* from the Ashburnhams, or heard it of them, theirs is surely the last name he'd use. Even if the originals of the story were dead, or even if the story had nothing to do with them, the family could presumably have sued on grounds of sufficient resemblance. It would have been easy enough for Ford to have given Edward another name – Aldington or Winchelsea would have done nicely if, like Anthony Powell, he'd wanted to use place-names.

But contiguity and the family history are sufficient to make it impossible (for me, anyway) not to go on speculating. It could have been coincidence, of course – Ford might have heard the story elsewhere and picked on Ashburnham as an ancient-sounding English name, ignorant of the real family's seat and history. Or he could have known the Ashburnham history and simply grafted it onto his story. He may not even have remembered where he got it. That sounds unlikely but it happens: if I invent something based on knowledge or memory it's not always easy later to distinguish the imagined aspects from the remembered. Both are equally present.

Ford said that when writing about his own past his aim was more to convey what it felt like than what it was. *The Good Soldier* is a novel very much concerned with what the past felt like, constructed by Ford with a few scaffold poles from abandoned building sites of his own past and a few more of his own contriving. That is common enough among novelists and it may be that recreating one's past in fiction helps one assimilate it. In the process, the fictional rendering of an incident or person from your own past can replace memory, without your necessarily being aware. This needn't be surprising because remembering is sometimes an act of historical imagination, adding to the existing scaffold of a partly imagined, partly remembered personal mythology – what we might call making sense of it. Indeed, when you imaginatively recreate something it is often more vivid. Thus, it's possible that when Ford dictated or wrote *The Good Soldier* he merged what he knew of the Ashburnhams with a story gathered elsewhere, in the process losing sight of the fact that by naming Edward he pointed directly at the family.

Of course, it's also possible that he'd never heard of the Ashburnhams, simply plucking the name from the map, giving Edward an ancestry and background that sounded right and placing him in a county that, like Kent and Sussex, he knew. Possible but less appealing. I prefer to imagine him reading the inscriptions on the tombs of those seventeenth century Ashburnhams in the local church and picturing Dowell, Leonora, Edward and Nancy taking a last tea on the terrace of Ashburnham Place, overlooking the wide and tranquil lakes. I think we know which version of history he would have chosen.

This teasing fantasy was not the only literary legacy left me by *The Good Soldier*. There was also a kind of haunting, a possession of my imagination: I couldn't rid myself of the speaking tone of that book, of Dowell's voice.

When I finished the biography I wanted to get back to writing novels but couldn't do anything without trying to write *The Good Soldier*. That mesmerising voice, the merging of those myriad reflections on life with truly dramatic but downplayed accounts of the past, so filled my imagination that I could hear no other voice and, for a while, conceive no other way of writing.

Resolution of this came from something I'd done while researching the biography – talking to Graham Greene about Ford. As we know, they'd met once and Greene was enough of an admirer to conclude his *Spectator* obituary of Ford with the memorable observation that Ford 'had the kind of enemies a man ought to have.' I wrote to Greene, asking if I might talk to him and promising that I wasn't a journalist seeking an interview. He sent me his telephone number and I took the train to Antibes, leaving a note with his concierge explaining that, since Judd was my pen-name, if he rang my hotel he should ask for me in my real name. When I got back to the hotel they told me a M. Brun had called.

He suggested I call round for a drink. It was mostly whisky (or was it vodka?) and lasted five and a half hours, including dinner which he microwaved. We discussed Ford for only about thirty minutes – their sole meeting had been an afternoon's walk in Sussex – and the rest of the time we discussed Greene. He spoke freely about literature,

his writing, his past, his time in MI6, his contacts afterwards with Maurice Oldfield (Chief of MI6) and his thoughts on Philby, the MI6 traitor he had known. After a while I became aware that this wasn't the usual conversational tennis match. He answered virtually everything I asked while asking virtually nothing about me – my books, my opinions, nothing. Why should he, I thought, who am I to him? He was about 85 and age should surely excuse a little self-centeredness. Also, he had been feted for decades, people were always interested in him, he didn't need to be interested in them. It was good of him to see me at all. I was grateful and fascinated.

Yet there was something I didn't like, a coldness, a self-referential reserve. He was happy to entertain, to charm, to perform, but he gave nothing of himself. I normally admire reserve but with Greene it didn't feel like self-discipline or privacy or diffidence; more a deep-seated detachment from others, a lack of sympathy or interest.

I do not like thee Doctor Fell

For why I cannot tell

But this I know full well

I do not love thee Doctor Fell.

On the train the next day I noted everything I could remember (notes subsequently stolen during a burglary in London), while feeling guilty at not liking him better. After all, he was nothing but friendly and helpful and gave me a signed copy of his latest book. It was during that journey that the idea came to me for a novella about a writer who makes a Faustian pact which brings him worldly success in return for emptying his art and life of meaning. Death is his only release but he cannot achieve it until he finds an ambitious young writer to whom to pass on his ghostly curse. This was never intended as a portrait of Greene but it was about someone in his position and he was its inspiration. I didn't sit down to write the book that became *The Devil's Own Work* until I'd finished the biography. From the first sentence, which paraphrases what Ford told Stella Bowen about *The Good Soldier*, it uses the voice of Dowell, the same kind of time-shifts, the same movements between reflections and events. I wrote it during the month of February, exorcising

my imagination of that haunting voice. It was like turning on a tap, very little altered from first draft to published copy, springing from the pen – I write fiction with a pen – .

Greene and I kept in touch by postcard or brief letter. I was going to send him a copy but he died the day it came off the press. Given its theme, a sinister coincidence he would have appreciated. Ford might have chuckled, too.

Ford's Reading

Helen Chambers

This series reveals Ford as a reader, from the perspective of the interdisciplinary research field of the history of reading rather than that of a literary critic. History of reading encompasses not only individual and collective acts of reading, and links this with investigating the types, production and distribution of material texts being read, but also covers the social uses of reading, and the historical and socioeconomic contexts in which reading may take place, historically, now, and in the future. My approach here to Ford's reading will not be the traditional literary 'text-centred' one, based on uncovering his sources and influences and identifying intertextuality and/or direct borrowings with other writers, but is a firmly 'reader-centred' one. Having previously studied Joseph Conrad's reading from this perspective, I will focus on the core questions of the reading historian, first posed just over 30 years ago by Robert Darnton.¹ For Ford, these are the what (genres), when (childhood, adolescent schoolboy, young and mature adult and elderly man, as well as the influence of major life events on his reading practices), where (Ford's spaces of reading at different phases of his life), why (reading as a critic, as a friend, for solace), and how he read (speed, annotations, languages, recurrent re-reading, engagement with material texts, and so on....). To this one can add 'with whom' in order to further explore the concept of Edwardian, wartime, and postwar reading communities. These may be real and virtual and may overlap, as with the shared reading so vividly described by Ford in his 1924 Conrad memoir. Furthermore, the way in which Ford represented readers, reading and material texts in his fiction will be specifically examined.

Even though the reading historian Kate Flint has sensibly cautioned against using representations of reading in fiction as hard evidence of the author's reading,² fictional depictions do offer clues, I suggest, to an author's own reading practices and about the period in which a novel is set. The pieces in this regular column will, over the next few issues introduce, in a specifically Fordian context, those aspects of reading I have just outlined, in order to stimulate future research questions.

A comprehensive catalogue of Ford's (or indeed anyone's) reading is obviously unachievable, since much important influential reading goes unrecorded; however I am currently collecting detailed empirical records of Ford's documented reading into the Reading Experience Database UKRED <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/> in what is an ongoing project, as a teaching and research tool.

I. Black panthers in the coal-cellar: early childhood reading

When approached in 1903 by *T. P.'s Weekly* for a contribution on his childhood reading, Joseph Conrad laconically declared: 'I don't remember any child's book. I don't think I ever read any; the first book I remember distinctly is Hugo's *Travailleurs de la Mer* which I read at the age of seven'. Whether or not the seven-year-old Conrad actually read right through Victor Hugo's long work (over 500 pages) or whether it was another of what Ford called his 'mystifications'³ we can only speculate. Conrad then explained how he had subsequently caught up on children's books by reading 'within the last two years' with his five year old son Borys, and that he shared his tastes 'in prose Grimm and Andersen; in poetry, *Lear*'.⁴ Other contributors that week to the magazine's column (men and women, writers, artists and various public figures) listed, among other works, those of R. M. Ballantyne and Captain Marryat, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Arabian Nights*. Ford at 29 was not then famous enough to have been asked about his childhood reading. However, and unlike Conrad, who left very little direct information about what, when, how and where he read during his lonely childhood of forced exile, recurrent illness, and frequent displacements, Ford, with his enlightened mother, 'advanced' bohemian relatives, and stable home life and schooling, left abundant evidence of his childhood reading.

But what exactly is the genre of 'children's literature'? Conrad's comment neatly highlights the distinction between books written for children and read by adults, and childhood reading of adult books. Since at least the seventeenth century, children would read books intended for adult audiences, including works such as *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-84), *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Conversely, and par-

ticularly in the nineteenth century, literature aimed at children was read with pleasure by adults, and not only in the nineteenth century but also now, for example the Harry Potter books or Tolkien's works or Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials trilogy*.⁵ In the nineteenth century, adventure fiction such as the works of Stevenson, R. M. Ballantyne, Rider Haggard, and G. A. Henty, aimed primarily at boys were also read by adults (and by girls). What Marlow in Conrad's *Chance* (1914) called the 'stories of our childhood' are thus not always the same as 'children's literature', if this is defined generically as literature written for children or with themes and characters that are of interest to children.

It is however only recently that children as readers have been examined, even though the development and marketing of books and periodicals for children has been extensively investigated.⁶ While the bibliometrics of children's book production, sales, distribution and consumption, and the details of children's books as material objects (often with an emphasis on their illustrations) are easy to investigate, recovering children's own records of reading is much more difficult. As with Conrad and Ford, and their much-admired acquaintance W. H. Hudson (who only really started reading at 15 when bedridden on the Argentinian pampa with cardiac complications of rheumatic fever), most records of childhood reading are to be found in memoirs written many decades later. These are always consciously moderated by hindsight or affected by failing memory; only exceptionally are there records (often self-censored) in childhood diaries.

Ford's early childhood reading can be (partially) recovered by gathering up and evaluating all the scattered evidence which is entirely remembered reading, recorded much later in memoirs and essays; we can also examine his fiction for further clues. The richest sources of evidence of reading are the memoirs, notably his reflections of formative reading in *Ancient Lights*, *It was the Nightingale*, *Provence* and particularly and to me unexpectedly, *Great Trade Route*. There are only faint allusions to childhood reading in *Thus to Revisit* and few in *Return to Yesterday*.⁷ *Joseph Conrad*, while rich in memories of Conrad's and Ford's shared adult reading (Mrs Braddon as well as Maupassant, Flaubert and Turgenyev), and featuring an imaginative reconstruction of Conrad's child-

hood reading, does not mention Ford's own childhood reading.

Ford's records of his reading are, like virtually all else in his reminiscences, often impressionistic rather than strictly factual. They are 'not a sort of rounded, annotated record of a set of circumstances—it is the record of the recollection in your mind of a set of circumstances that happened ten years ago—or ten minutes. It might even be the impression of a moment [...] not the corrected chronicle'.⁸ I argue that it is possible (and justified) to approach Ford's early reading, as with almost everything else in his life (cooking, gardening, encounters, conversations, and travel), as records of recollections refracted through an impressionistic prism, rather than the sort of qualifying evidence, the 'corrected chronicle' usually used by historians of reading. In his dedication to *Ancient Lights*, Ford wrote: 'this book in short is full of inaccuracies as to facts but its accuracy as to impressions is absolute' (xv). What then can be a better example than his impressionistic memory of transgressive reading in the coal-cellar at 90 Brook Green, Hammersmith, of 'Penny Dreadfuls' (banned by his father), and particularly of the exploits of the character Ford initially called 'Dick Harkaway' or 'Harkaway Dick' and his tame black panther (or jaguar). He remembered him again in *Provence*, here using the correct name 'Jack Harkaway' (50, 52). In *Ancient Lights* Ford wrote more than once about how 'I used to lock myself in the coal cellar in order to read Dick Harkaway and Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber and other penny-dreadfuls [...] I was reacting—and I am sure healthily—against being trained for the profession of a genius' (AL 228-229).⁹

While he revelled in this banned reading, Ford was also greatly attracted to Greek literature and myth, and this had emerged even earlier. He wrote: 'The first books I ever really noticed were the ones about the Greeks and Romans by Dean Church—with the coloured designs by Flaxman' which his 'tremendous governess' Miss Hall used to read to him (GTR 23-23).¹⁰ However, his mental images of the ships, colours and 'the single limpid blue line of the sea' is unlikely to have derived/ been reconstructed entirely from Flaxman's illustrations which are black, and pale orange-brown (rather like Greek pottery), and thus do not match this memory. Rather I suggest that they are a recollection

of seeing the Burne-Jones' painting (1863-1869) of Circe with her two black leopards/panthers and a clear Mediterranean view. It was to celebrate this painting that Ford's maternal uncle Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote his sonnet 'The Wine of Circe' (1870).¹¹ Ford is thus very likely to have seen at least a reproduction of this painting at a very young age. He also recalls this painting (and his uncle's sonnet) when he writes, remembering the sirocco of a hot Mediterranean summer, 'your cat is a black leopard of the breed of Circe' (IWN 212).

Ford's father Francis Hueffer (unsuccessfully) discouraged Ford from reading Dickens, whom he judged 'vulgar', while Stevenson he apparently thought 'meretricious'.¹² Francis Hueffer however strongly influenced the young Ford directly via his own writings on the troubadours. In *Provence*, Ford noted that after the age of twelve he never again read his father's book on Guillem de Cabestanh, whose poem 'Li dous cos-sire' Ford had once judged 'the most beautiful poem in the world' (Pr 52-53). In fact the age of twelve seems to have been a watershed in Ford's reading. Max Saunders noted Ford's memory from the first of his two schools, Pretoria House, Folkestone, of a Dr David Watson with whom Ford claims to have read, before the age of twelve, an impressively long list of books. These included 'the *Artaxerxes* of Madame de Scudéry and *Les enfants du Capitaine Grant* by Jules Verne, [...] all of the *Inferno*, the greater part of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Don Quixote* in the original.'¹³ While Ford also claimed to have read the Spanish picaresque works in the original (unlikely as he did not at that stage read Spanish) he had in fact inherited many translated volumes of this genre from his uncle Oliver Madox Brown, who died in 1874 (EN 109). Ford's adolescent reading tastes, attributable not only to his two schools, Pretoria House, and later University College School, Gower Street, Bloomsbury, but to his mother Cathy Hueffer and his Madox Brown and Rossetti relatives, (rather than to his father who died in 1889 when Ford was 15) are the subject of the next column.

NOTES

1 Robert Darnton, 'First Steps Towards a History of Reading', in *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (London: Faber &

Faber, 1990), 5-30.

2 Kate Flint, 'Women, Men and the Reading of *Vanity Fair*', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, edited by James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 246.

3 Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), 93.

4 See 'Books of my Childhood' *T. P.'s Weekly* 9 January 1903. Conrad First <http://conradfirst.net/view/image?id=27790>

5 For example, Colin Burrow, 'His Dark Example', *London Review of Books* (4 January 2018), 7-8.

6 For a survey see Alderson, Brian, and Andrea Immel, 'Mass Markets: Children's Books', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume VI, 1830-1914*, edited by David McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 382. Matthew Grenby's comprehensive evidence-based study *The Child Reader, 1700-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) covers genres read, the children's book market, the uses of books, and the children's recorded responses and attitudes.

7 Abbreviations and pagination from memoirs cited subsequently are as follows: AL (*Ancient Lights*: Chapman and Hall, 1911); IWN (*It Was the Nightingale*: Heinemann, 1934); GTR (*Great Trade Route*: George Allen and Unwin, 1937); Pr (*Provence*, Manchester: Carcanet 2009).

8 'On Impressionism' in *The Good Soldier*, edited by Martin Stannard (Norton: New York, 2012), 277.

9 See also AL 41, when he recalled these as 'the happiest times of my childhood'.

10 Presumably Rev. Alfred J. Church, *Stories from Homer* (1878).

11 See <www.rossettiarchive.org>.

12 Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel: from the earliest days to the death of Joseph Conrad* (London: Constable, 1930), 108-109, subsequently EN.

13 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 33, citing *The March of Literature* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1939), 717, and *Provence*: see Pr 208-209.



Ford at the Front

Photo courtesy of: The Ford Madox Ford Collection, #4605, Division of Rare Books and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

Anglo-German Entanglements, the Fear of Invasion, and an Unpublished Ford Manuscript

Lucinda Borkett-Jones

In 1934 Ford wrote that ‘nationality’ is ‘the thing I hate most’.¹ His experience of the First World War would justify this view, but his concerns about the effects of nationalism are discernible much earlier in his career. ‘A Romance of the Times Before Us’ is an unpublished short story Ford wrote in about 1897.² The story is set in Mussington, a fictional, sleepy village in Kent, on the south coast, that witnesses a German invasion and a local civil uprising. The invasion is short-lived, and London is not overtaken by the Germans as feared, although the inhabitants of Mussington believe the war continues beyond its borders. The peace is further disturbed when a local food shortage sparks a violent riot.

More complex than a typical invasion narrative, Ford fuses two plotlines that both speak to the political circumstances of his day, with a title which could mean the times preceding his own, or, more likely, the times ahead. Despite the seemingly weighty themes, Ford handles his subject lightly, with characteristic humour, particularly ironizing the Anglo-German relationship. Given his parentage, it is not surprising that Ford’s early thoughts about nationalism are centred on Britain and Germany. This early work, rarely considered in criticism,³ offers insights into Ford’s interpretation of international politics and his negotiation of his cultural heritage, foreshadowing the dilemma he faced at the outbreak of the First World War.

There are three incomplete manuscripts of the story, from which it is possible to discern an almost complete narrative. The manuscripts are undated, but the cover page of one (a) includes Ford’s address at Pent Farm, where he lived between 1896 and 1898. Ford’s attempt to redraft the story suggests some effort to prepare it for consideration by a publisher. Version ‘c’ is a copy of ‘b’, thought to be in his wife, Elsie’s, hand, with Ford’s corrections.⁴ The gaps in the extant manuscripts may have been lost when pages were edited; the story was not left unfinished,

but pages are absent from the middle of the manuscripts. The reason it remained unpublished is unclear, and among Ford's published letters there is no mention of the text. Its literary merit may be one factor; it is also possible that it was felt to be slightly out of sync with current trends. At the time, Ford was not an established author of fiction. By the mid-1890s he had published his first novel, *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892), three fairy tales, a book of poetry, and the biography of his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, but this story is among a few early fiction manuscripts that remained unpublished. Although not comparable with his most successful work, the satirical tone is intriguing and there are moments of nuance; the Germans in Ford's story are multifaceted at a time when German characters in British fiction were often reduced to stereotypes.

'A Romance of the Times Before Us' is a comic twist on the popular invasion narrative form, which became prominent in Britain after the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War. George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) was the first of its kind, depicting a German invasion of Britain, in which German forces arrive at Britain's unsuspecting shores, with a climactic battle in the suburban town. By the 1890s, stories about French and Russian invasions were more common, particularly after the proposals for the building of a Channel Tunnel in 1882, and the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894.⁵ The sense of threat was serious enough that in 1888 the British government launched an enquiry into London's vulnerability to invasion, particularly from France.⁶ There was a resurgence of interest in stories about German invasions following the passage of the German First Navy Law in 1898.⁷ Ford therefore anticipates the renewed concerns about an Anglo-German conflict around the turn of the century.

Invasion stories draw upon a range of different genres, including spy fiction, science fiction and nineteenth-century adventure stories, but the tales of future war after Chesney often share common features. The emphasis is usually on the nation and its people, rather than noblemen and courtiers, as had been the case in the eighteenth century.⁸ And there is often a political message – whether campaigning for compulsory military service, protecting the strength of the British

fleet, or promoting national self-sufficiency. I. F. Clarke comments that:

Chesney [...] helped to launch a new type of purposive fiction in which the whole aim was either to terrify the reader by a clear and merciless demonstration of the consequences to be expected from a country's shortcomings, or to prove the rightness of national policy by describing the course of a victorious war in the near future.⁹

'A Romance of the Times Before Us' engages with contemporary concerns, but also deviates from Chesney's model. Many such stories emphasise how unprepared Britain was for attack, in line with their political goal. In Ford's tale, British soldiers visit Mussington before the declaration of war, to gather food stores in expectation of a German attack, and early in the story, a newspaper article voices concerns about 'German unscrupulousness' (RTBUc). Ford may have been influenced by his surroundings near Romney Marsh and the Kent coastline, known as the 'invasion shore', where the remains of Martello Towers would have been a reminder of Britain's preparations for a French invasion during the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁰ Even so, it seems the British are not prepared enough: Ford writes that they had 'as a matter of course been taken by surprise' with 'no ammunition in the country' (RTBUc).

Despite this failure, Ford's message is rather different from the rueful tone of Chesney's story, in which the British have not learnt from the experience of the French in 1870. The attack on the south-east, the food crisis, and the popular uprising are all characteristic of the genre, but where some of these stories describe mass movements of men, Ford's narrative centres on a small village, and an even smaller group of closely drawn portraits. By focusing on a few characters, Ford concentrates on individual impressions, which include a jumbled experience of crossed ties and mixed emotions, through which he demonstrates the blindness of localism and nationalism.

The story's central character is the intelligent, spirited Dorothy 'Dolly' Fraser, reminiscent of the romantic heroines in Ford's fairy tales from this period, as well as a possible model for the later suffragette, Valentine Wannop, in *Parade's End* (1924-28). Dorothy dresses in 'mediaeval garb', which Ford describes as 'a symphony of the most glorious

mediaeval green and fashioned to fall in beautiful lines about her noble limbs' (RTBUb). The description invites comparison with Elsie, who Olive Garnett once described as 'dressed in an art shade of bright green velvet in the aesthetic style'.¹¹ But Dorothy's dress is also suggestive of Pre-Raphaelite medievalism, and is used as an indicator of her ideological stance, which betrays strong inflections of the moral and aesthetic philosophy of William Morris. Dorothy has a high-minded social conscience, inclines towards socialism, and her dress is intended to serve a social purpose:

she tried to think that by wearing her glowing garments and showing the sunshine of her face in the cottages round about she was propagandizing – spreading the taste for the beautiful amongst the proletariat. At the same time she was uneasily conscious that her garb inspired the utmost antagonism amongst the cottagers and that, thus, perhaps, the social and aesthetic millennium was retarded rather than helped. (RTBUb)

Ford depicts the paradox that amid the medievalism Morris's social ideology aimed at progress. The social function somewhat qualifies the otherwise glowing portrait of Dorothy. Ford suggests that her good intentions go awry, leading to greater social disparity rather than cohesion. To the peasants in Mussington her costume is 'foreign', 'connected with the college of Girton, "somewhere's [sic] abroad"' (RTBUb). In a story ostensibly about Anglo-German conflict, the antagonism is instead directed towards a fellow Englishwoman.

Ford stops short of imagining a nationwide German invasion; in fact, war with Germany is rather inconsequential in his invasion story. The report of the war at large is deliberately underwhelming in comparison with the villagers' fears and rumours:

It was said that there were any number from ten to two [?] hundred thousand troops between Dymchurch and Orpington. [...] As a matter of fact the German line of communication failed dismally on the sea – and provisions failed them too. There was nothing to be seen in Dungeness bay but two gun boats that steamed to and fro. – They were British ships. On the horizon once or twice enormous vessels

had reared their sides – but they bore no roth-weiss-schwarz [sic] flag. (RTBUc)

The German mission is a failure, but the emphasis on the war at sea reflects British fears about the prospect of improved German naval capability. Ford juxtaposes the anticipated German warships with two British ships cruising in a seemingly peaceful bay, making light of the British sense of peril. After a swift defeat, Ford describes the German response to surrender:

The oaths that went up from among those twenty thousand Teutons – they had been lying for ten days with that traditional – that millennial ‘plunder’, London almost within their grasp. Their stomachs had never been full once during all those ten days – they had been terribly seasick on the crossing of the Channel which it might now be necessary to recross. [...] The whole affair was rated a ‘Gemeiner Schwindel’ [damned fraud] after which they set to work to fraternise with their victors. (RTBUc)

Unlike the stereotype of the efficient, organised German army, the invading forces experience weakness and embarrassment. It is not entirely clear who has deceived them, and whether their frustration is directed at their German leaders or the British. In either case, as soon as they have admitted defeat, they begin to rebuild positive relations with the British, suggesting that the antagonism that fuels the war is rather superficial. Instead of issuing a critique of Britain’s naval or military defences, and a lack of attention to the German threat, Ford seems to argue the reverse – that while Britain considers the threat from abroad, there are domestic concerns that are being overlooked. In the opening chapter, an article about Dorothy’s brother, James McDiarmid Fraser, a Cabinet Minister, is read out from the local newspaper by one of the villagers. The article relates:

gloomy forebodings about foreign complications and German unscrupulousness, and hinted that the Whig leaders would be more than half-pleased with a war, since the jingoism that it would evoke would be likely to detract from the popularity of the only too popular Mr Fraser and would help them to shake off the tyranny of his

yoke. (RTBUc)

Once again Ford portrays internal conflict against a background of international uncertainty. Within the context of the story, Ford suggests that there are politicians in England who seek to gain from a war with Germany, and there are those in the press willing to help them. Rather than amplifying the German threat, Ford highlights the sense of difference and ‘foreignness’ between the classes, which ultimately leads to the chaos and confusion of the civil uprising. Ford returns to critique fears of a German invasion in a 1909 article in the *English Review*, by which time British fears have intensified. He suggests that Britain’s politicians, namely Asquith and Balfour, may be manufacturing the threat for their own ends, to garner support for financing more Dreadnoughts.¹² So, in Ford’s unpublished story written about a decade earlier, we are given a glimpse of his ongoing concerns about the manipulation of international relations for domestic political advantage.

In ‘A Romance of the Times Before Us’, Ford makes the fear of international war secondary to interpersonal relationships. This may be owing to a greater emphasis on character development than plot, but it results in a series of cosmopolitan entanglements. Dorothy has an ambiguous relationship with a German professor, sixteen years her senior, paradoxically described as ‘her first, indeed, her only love – but her passion had been strictly platonic’ (RTBUb). A schoolgirl fancy for her teacher has grown into a long-term relationship of admiration and respect for Professor Rittenhouse, whose anglicised name is reminiscent of Ford’s father, Francis Hueffer. Rittenhouse is described as having an ‘encyclopaedic character’ (another trait shared by Hueffer, and, in fiction, by Christopher Tietjens in *Parade’s End*), which ‘cast a halo round him still in the eyes of Miss Fraser’ (RTBUb). Even so, Dorothy returns from university to find he has ‘lost much of his charm’; she sees that he is ‘mean-sighted’ but ‘almost unbearably mild’ (RTBUb). He remains a refreshingly complex German character within the genre. Rittenhouse is also notable as a surprisingly positive depiction of a German professor, a figure that usually fares badly in Ford’s memoirs and journalism; in wartime, he declares that ‘Lennemi c’est le professeur!’.¹³ Despite his ‘mean-sightedness’ Rittenhouse is kind, wise, and cunning. His fore-

sight provides Dorothy – and consequently the whole village – with food to help survive the crisis.

Rittenhouse speaks English with a thick German accent, and, rather curiously, speaks German with an English accent. While descriptions of military engagements are only brief, Ford sketches the professor's character and physical attributes in detail:

His attractions lay in his mildness, his pleasant smile, the gleam of his spectacles, his tawny mane and beard, his great presence, broad chest, slow movements, manners, deportment, and above all perhaps in the miraculously sweet way in which he 'sphoge ze Engleesh lankwech'. The charm is difficult to convey to eyes used to a different phonography – to the ear it was delicious. His syntax, grammar, expression, were perfect. (RTBUb)

The enjoyment of language here is worth noting; the intermingling of the two languages represents interwoven nations and cultures. In the manuscript (RTBUc), Ford continues to write all the professor's direct speech in his accent, despite the obvious difficulty of doing so. In one lengthy section, he writes in standard English, and leaves a note indicating that it will be written with the appropriate accent later. The attention to language as a cultural indicator is something we see emphasised in Ford's propaganda, where he comments that 'the relative values of civilisations come down always to being matters of scrupulosity of language'.¹⁴ In Rittenhouse we find a German who is scrupulous in his attention to English grammar. This description of the professor also suggests a further similarity with Ford's father, who Ford describes as having 'slightly cumbrous Germanic English'.¹⁵ Despite having lived in England for decades, Rittenhouse retains a sense of difference, and Ford uses this indicator of otherness as an essential part of his charm, at least in Dorothy's mind. She finds the professor's accent 'tantalizing', and she is keen to practise her own German though anxious that she might offend him (RTBUb). There is a desire for cross-cultural exchange, but a telling hesitation. The seemingly seductive quality of his language adds to their curious platonic 'passion'. This is more surprising when we consider that Ford mentions repeatedly, even before the First

World War, that he dislikes the German language (*Ancient Lights*, 77).

Shortly after the fictional invasion, Ford depicts a meeting between German and British officers as a gentlemanly exchange, in which a German colonel tells a British lieutenant he is taking him prisoner, and going about '[t]he usual business of an invading army' (RTBUc). It is careful, gallant, and bloodless – all things that an actual battle is not. This may not reflect Ford's ignorance so much as his chivalric notions of what war ought to be. It also suggests his greater interest in conversational exchange, than an exchange of blows. Dorothy, who looks on, is described as:

quivering with suppressed excitement [...]. She was hating the colonel with all her might – with a kind of unwilling patriotism she compared his swollen features and sunken twinkling eyes with the clean, healthy face of the [British] officer who had seemed so stupid in his ball-room conversation. (RTBUc)

Ford mocks the polarising nationalism of wartime by the swift, non-sensical reversal of Dorothy's views. The context of a war barely announced shifts her perception of the German, which contrasts with the earlier description of the professor. Her patriotism is apparently simultaneously a natural, involuntary reaction, and yet unwilling and requiring great effort.

Despite her sudden wartime patriotism, and unlike her long, ambiguous relationship with the professor, Dorothy falls in love almost instantly with a German soldier whom she rescues first from battle, and later from the riot, and who, incidentally, speaks English perfectly. She is distracted by thoughts of him, even though she acknowledges his ideological faults. To her, his battle wound makes him more attractive, since 'a great deal of his materialism, a great deal of his schneidigkeit, his military cynicism, had been let out of him through the hole that the small cylindrical bullet had made' (RTBUc). Ford's punctuation implies that he translates 'schneidigkeit' as 'military cynicism', although the adjectival root 'schneidig' means 'dashing', and it may therefore be an error. Although framed in romantic terms, Dorothy's regard is based on his temporary state of weakness, and her momentary power over

him. Her pragmatism undermines any development of romantic feeling. It seems to be a rather pointed suggestion that the German nation or Germanic disposition perhaps would be improved by wounds from the British.

The lovers are oddly opposed to one another – each vying for dominance over the mental life of the other, reflecting something of the struggle between admiration and rivalry in the relationship between Britain and Germany.¹⁶ Dorothy's hopes for the moral improvement of her German soldier prove to be unfounded, and his thoughts of her are equally self-gratifying:

So noble a creature he had never seen – nor one so glowing with life and the glory of Spring – *Lebens-glückselig-keit* – as he might have said if he had been at all well-read. [...] But that wonderful double-mindedness which is the property of the Teuton – allowed him to reason on the other side of the matter and that quite calmly after a very paroxysm of adoration.

He was not quite certain whether her station in life rendered her marriageable. He was not at all uncertain about her ideas – they would certainly make her out of the question. [...] But as to such small matters as ideas, he considered that the fair Dolly was quite convertible – just as he would have considered that the ideas of everyone in the world – except perhaps his colonel – must yield before his own invincible reasoning and common sense. (RTBUc)

There are elements of Ford's later critique of German culture in his description of the young soldier's thoughts. His 'double-mindedness' could be an early reference to the 'homo duplex' of Ford's later Impressionism, but given that this is explicitly 'Teutonic' in character, it may refer to the contemporary German philosophical interest in the 'double ego' or 'dipsychism', developed and popularised by Max Dessoir.¹⁷ The English authorial voice intervenes to provide his character with a German word, '*Lebens-glückselig-keit*'. In Ford's mind, the 'instructed' Prussian is not the well-rounded culturally educated English gentleman. It betrays Ford's long-held antipathy towards the Prussians, but relies on Ford's own fluency in German – a paradox

we see repeated in his wartime propaganda.¹⁸ The style of this intervention is not the skilled interior narrative of Ford's later fiction, but it hovers between omniscience and free indirect style. The critical voice of the German 'Herzog' (which Dorothy interprets as 'duke') undercuts the overblown 'paroxysm of adoration'. The soldier also seeks to usurp influence – wrongly assuming he can bend Dorothy's ideas to his own will. Her ultimate refusal of his proposal is another indication of a British victory over an attempted German invasion, but in both instances, victory is handled rather politely, and friendly relations resume quickly.

The main German characters in the story, the professor and the Prussian soldier, are perhaps the two most prominent British stereotypes of Germany of the period, but by focusing on individuals, Ford subverts expectations. The professor saves the day, and the maimed soldier is twice rescued by a woman. This interest in character while experimenting with the tropes of the genre aligns with Ford's message in the story, resisting the homogenising influences of nationalism. The focus on the individual is also one of the ways Ford negotiates the difficulty of taking sides at the outbreak of war in 1914.¹⁹ Even amid his propaganda he acknowledges that Bismarck was a 'very great, very human and quite amiable figure', and that Nietzsche was an 'imaginative genius'.²⁰ In wartime, Ford's remarks on these figures of hate offers a balance to his otherwise polarised narrative, but in 'A Romance of the Times Before Us' he is free to create more ambivalent characters. Ford returns to invasion fiction in his short story 'The Scaremonger', first published in *The Bystander* in November 1914. Even after the outbreak of war, Ford makes the threat of invasion seem ridiculous. At the centre of the later invasion story is the threat felt by the Squire of Bleakham from his personal enemy, 'his once most intimate friend, Professor Eitel-Scharnhorst of the University of Berlin'.²¹ It seems that Ford cannot write about the German threat without emphasising the personal ties between the Germans and the British. In this case, though the invasion threat is real, it remains absurd, and the German attempt is quelled by the Mid-Kent Cyclist Corps before the Prussians can inflict much damage from their submarine. Ford's treatment of invasion fiction may be influenced

by his reading of the composition of England: ‘not a nation, not the home of race, but a small epitome of the whole world, attracted to a fertile island by the hope of great gain’.²² He does not ignore the prospect of invasion, but does not fear it to the extent of his contemporaries. He is, after all, the son of a single German ‘invader’.

Invasion fiction is known for communicating political messages. If ‘A Romance of the Times Before Us’ has a purpose, it is to downplay the threat of invasion and counter the influence of nationalism using humour. In it we see the developing voice of the cosmopolitan Ford: alert to cultural differences, gently mocking national stereotypes, and highlighting tensions at home. Ford wrote most about Germany between 1914 and 1915, when his personal relationships with German relatives and friends were most strained. This story provides us with a glimpse into Ford’s approach to the relationship between these two nations in peacetime. In the story, there is something both inevitable and absurd about a conflict between Britain and Germany. Most of the individual Anglo-German relationships portrayed have elements of attraction and repulsion. These signs of rivalry and friendship are not isolated instances; Ford’s depiction corresponds with the broader ambivalence of Anglo-German relations before 1914. His nuanced style celebrates the complexity of the relationship and foregrounds the interpersonal connections which make the prospect of war so difficult for Ford and his fellow cosmopolitans. At the end of the nineteenth century Ford seems to tread the line between ridiculing the notion of a war altogether, and still willing a British victory.

NOTES

1 Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (London: Heinemann, 1934), 318.

2 The title on one manuscript is ‘Times Before Us: A Romance of Peasant Uprising’. Carl A. Kroch Library, Ithaca, ‘A Romance of the Times Before Us’ (MS 4605/20.008a-c). All subsequent references in the text will be referred to as RTBUa-c.

3 Max Saunders's biography is an exception: *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), I, 106-108.

4 D. D. Harvey suggests Elsie may have collaborated with Ford on the story. David Dow Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford 1873-1939: A Bibliography of Works and Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 117.

5 I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War, 1763-1984* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 109, 137.

6 David G. Morgan-Owen, *The Fear of Invasion: Strategy, Politics and British War Planning 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 21.

7 Clarke, *Voices*, 138-39.

8 I. F. Clarke, 'Introduction: *The Paper Warriors and Their Flights of Fancy*', in I. F. Clarke, editor, *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914: Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-To-Come* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 1-26 (8).

9 Clarke, *Voices*, 38.

10 On the threat of invasion in Romney Marsh and Winchelsea at the beginning of the nineteenth century see Malcolm Pratt, *Winchelsea: A Port of Stranded Pride* (Hadlow Down: Authors' Publishing Guild, 1998), 20-25; Margaret Brentnall, *The Cinque Ports and Romney Marsh* (London: Gifford, 1972), 31-38. Ford also describes the long history of invasion in this part of the country in *The Cinque Ports* (1900).

11 Quoted in Saunders, *Dual Life*, I, 57.

12 Ford Madox Ford, 'Blue Water and the Thin Red Line', *English Review*, 2 (April 1909), 135-144 (135).

13 Ford Madox Ford, 'Literary Portraits—LVI. Germania', *Outlook*, 34 (3 October 1914), 430-431 (431).

14 Ford Madox Ford, *Between St. Dennis and St. George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 67. On the emphasis on language in Ford's propaganda see Emily Hayman, "Under Four Eyes" (Unter Vier Augen): Ford Madox Ford, Propaganda and the Politics of Translation', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 62 (2016), 25-52.

15 Ford Madox Ford, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1911), 86.

16 On the ambivalence of this relationship, see Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism and Ambivalence, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

17 Max Dessoir's popular book *Das Dopple-Ich* (1890) developed a theory of two levels of consciousness, upper and lower. Peter Watson, *The German Genius: Europe's Third Renaissance, the Second Scientific Revolution, and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper, 2010), 395.

18 Hayman, "Under Four Eyes", 31.

19 Benjamin Doty, "As a Mass, a Phenomenon so Hideous": Crowd Psychology, Impressionism, and Ford Madox Ford's Propaganda', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 6 (2013), 169-82 (175-76).

20 Ford Madox Ford, *When Blood is their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 77, 129.

21 Ford Madox Ford, 'The Scaremonger' (1914), in Max Saunders, editor, *War Prose* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 142-148 (144).

22 Ford Madox Ford, *The Spirit of the People*, in Sara Haslam, editor, *England and the English* (1907; Manchester: Carcanet, 2003), 229-326 (278).

*Special thanks to Michael Schmidt and the Ford Madox Ford Estate for permission to use unpublished material.



Ford Madox Ford and Janice Biala

Photo courtesy of: The Ford Madox Ford Collection, #4605 Division of Rare Books and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University

Journal of a PhD Student: Playing with Numbers and Novels

Gillian Gustar

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to contribute a regular column on my experience as a research student of Ford to this Journal. I hope to offer readers an insight into some of the challenges and rewards of researching Ford, and perhaps to tempt others to take a PhD journey of their own.

When I was accepted as a student, at King's College London in 2015, I was given some invaluable advice. It was to keep a research journal as I progressed through my work. This column is not literally that journal but is based on it. Without it I would not remember so clearly how the early steps felt, and where my energy was focused.

In each column I shall describe the process of pursuing Ford through research. I choose the word 'pursuing' deliberately. Ford can sometimes feel very accessible, largely due to the work already done by Ford scholars, and sometimes very elusive, as I try to pin down new facts or insights. In this first column I detail my reactions to the process of beginning PhD study, my first steps and the insights emerging from these.

Starting out as a PhD student felt deceptively easy. The structure of induction meetings, 'getting to know you' drinks with departmental representatives, first meetings with my supervisor and seminars to encourage sharing between students made it feel like the start of any academic term. I felt I knew how to do that. I'd been there lots of times before. Very quickly, though, reality hit. There was no set reading list, or syllabus, beyond the research question I had persuaded the University it was worth exploring. At this point, I realised the value of the detailed research proposal I'd been asked to submit as part of the application process. It had forced me to think about how I might address my questions and created the attractive illusion that I knew what I was doing.

My research is concerned with how Ford represents madness in his

novels. Specifically madness, not mental illness. I want to hold open the broadest definition of madness, a term not necessarily associated with illness when Ford was writing. I was confident that there was a theme to follow, because of my previous work on *Parade's End* and because Max Saunders identifies it as one running throughout Ford's work.¹ I came to this research with degrees in both Psychology and Literature, and a professional background of applying psychological concepts to the management and development of people in organisations. Unsurprisingly, my initial approaches reflect this hybridity.

My research proposal had envisaged an initial reading of Ford's novels to identify representations of madness and to group them into categories. Seeking to categorise or classify data is common practice in the social sciences. It allows you to spot patterns in large amounts of data and facilitates the organisation and subsequent analysis of the material. Such an approach has already informed interdisciplinary studies such as *Madness in Post-1945 British and American Fiction*, a book exploring 'problems associated with diagnostic readings of fiction' and 'how individual authors deconstruct and subvert classificatory systems in their work.'² I should perhaps have paid attention to the claim that authors might subvert classification systems.

However, I stuck to my plan and identified categories of madness which recur in Ford's novels. Of course, I soon discovered that categories were unlikely to be mutually exclusive. Still, some way of putting a shape on things seemed better than none so I persisted. This had the unanticipated benefit of alerting me to Ford's use of language in relation to madness. As someone schooled in the Social Sciences, I was always likely to ask a 'how much' question. It would be tenuous to argue for pervasiveness of the theme if Ford's language did not reflect a discourse of madness. I shared this thought with my supervisor, who discussed Moretti's work on distant learning with me. As my husband had completed a doctorate applying quantitative methods to musicology, I had reason to believe in the potential for arts researchers.

So I read Moretti's argument for the practice of adopting a larger field of data to unearth both rapid, major changes and frequent, smaller

changes in literary history.³ The challenge of examining the theme of madness in Ford's thirty-one novels is on a completely different scale, of course, to Moretti's analysis of 7000 novel titles over a hundred-year period. The idea that patterns emerge from quantitative data and provide insights inaccessible to close reading was persuasive, however, so I decided to experiment. I selected three key words: madness, mad and insanity. Using the software programme *antconc* and the *Delphi Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford* (2013, Version 2), I could easily count the number of occurrences and their location in each novel. The results were encouraging. The word 'mad' occurs over 450 times and 'madness' occurs over 100 times. Though the word 'insanity' occurs infrequently, it only occurs in novels where 'madness' is also used, suggesting they may be interchangeable. No novels omitted a reference to 'mad' or 'madness.'

At a simplistic level, this finding was heartening. It indicated sufficient material across the novels to support ongoing research, but I wanted more of the insights promised by Moretti. Given that my classifications had already provided me with Ford's 'language of madness', I continued searching and finding where specific words were used and to what extent. It is beyond the scope of this column to share the results of this analysis, but I hope that my learning about what the approach offers may be useful.

Firstly, it proved a more complex task than it had initially seemed, because Ford's own language needed to be supplemented with slang, synonyms, and words in common use at the time, including medical terminology. I doubt that any quantitative researcher would accept my approach as systematic or reliable.⁴ However, the data produced was sufficient for my purposes. It indicated which novels might be richest in terms of material. It showed unexpected use of the language, such as in *Romance*, which has ostensibly different subject matter. It illustrated when words start to appear or cease to be used. It alerted me to nuances in what might be considered contemporary language. For instance, does the language of madness used in *The Fifth Queen* trilogy reflect the time in which it is set, or the time in which it was written? It raised questions about whether the language was particular to Ford.

As might be obvious from this brief account, there are pitfalls for those of us who love words. It is easy to become obsessed with individual words, their derivation, the way they were understood and from where Ford acquired them. Fascinating as this exploration is, it is time hungry and little of it directly informs a reading of Ford's representations of madness. It is too abstract and lacks contextualisation within a novel.

Secondly, it quickly became evident that more rigorous analysis would require specialised software and a sophisticated understanding of statistics. These factors created a decision point on future direction. Ultimately, I was unpersuaded that deeper quantitative analysis would provide more than the 'so what' conclusion Moretti acknowledges as a risk. Apart from the fact that my statistical skills are unequal to the task, it would have changed the nature of my research question to one which interested me less. It was far from a wasted effort though. I gained clarity on where to focus and questions by which to interrogate my thematic analysis of the novels. It helped me to see how the novels might cluster into groups which are not simply chronological, and it provided a basis for further exploration within individual novels.

All this happened in tandem with a series of supervisory meetings at which searching questions helped to illuminate gaps, risks, opportunities, and my own aspirations. All I had read before commencing PhD research emphasised the relative isolation, 'right ways' to go about literary research, and the potential need for mature students to 'unlearn' some things. Perhaps I have been lucky, but my experience so far has not matched that narrative. If anything, it has shown me that as researchers, we are not islands. Our questions and approaches are influenced by who we are, by our prior learning and by those to whom we talk. I find this exciting.

In this first column I have focused on a paper trail pursuit of Ford. Place offers an alternative focus research. As one of my undergraduate lecturers said, 'part of the fun of studying literature is that it gives you the excuse to go to places you might not otherwise have visited.' In my next column I will recount the joys and frustrations of following in some of Ford's footsteps across Germany.

NOTES

1 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 105.

2 Charley Baker, Paul Crawford, Brian Brown, Maurice Lipsedge and Ronald Carter, *Madness in Post-1945 British and American Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

3 Franco Moretti, 'Style, Inc.: Reflections on 7,000 Titles (British Novels, 1740-1850)', in *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013), 192.

4 For example, it would probably fail a test of replication. Ideally, two researchers would conduct the same exercise simultaneously and show comparable results.

Letter From America: Thoughts on a MAGA Hat

Meghan Hammond

About a year ago, I was at an ice cream shop in a small Michigan town with my husband and young son. Nearly everybody else in the shop was wearing clothing with an American flag design. We don't see a lot of American flag gear in our Chicago neighborhood. We're more likely to see a faded 'Billionaires Can't Buy Bernie' bumper sticker or a flyer for a socialist book club.

As we ate our ice cream cones, a family of five walked into the shop—father, mother, and three teenagers. The youngest, a boy of about fourteen, was wearing a red MAGA hat. For those among you lucky enough to be unfamiliar with the acronym, MAGA is the nausea-inducing slogan of our current U.S. president: Make America Great Again. The most upsetting thing about the hat, my husband and I later agreed, was the fact that it was not official campaign paraphernalia. It was an off-brand hat with an imitation font and design. It had an earnest, even DIY, vibe that was pathetic in the truest sense of the word.

My husband, a man whom I had until that point never heard to utter a violent word, leaned across the table and said, 'I feel like I have to fight them. Physically.' I recognized in his face a kind of madness that I've been feeling every day for the last two years. During our drive through Indiana back to Chicago, I thought about a passage in Ford's 1927 book *New York is Not America*. Ford tells us that a gentleman from Indiana told him 'that if New York did not bend to the will of the American citizens of his township—in such matters as Prohibition and the religion of its governor—New York would have eventually to be controlled, if necessary, by force of arms' (237-238). The governor alluded to is Manhattan native Al Smith, the anti-Prohibition Catholic governor of New York.

I always assumed that this anecdote, and another in which an earnest woman from Boston tells Ford that the United States will soon force Prohibition on England (246), were exaggerated for comic effect. Not anymore. Right now, it feels possible that we are heading towards



some form of civil or international war because we cannot agree on what kind of social contract we want to be in.

Ford understood the tensions he found in America to be a part of ‘the eternal cleavage that has always existed between agricultural and civic interests’ (258). Despite what a glance at the U.S. electoral map might tell you, our states are neither red nor blue. The rural-urban divide that Ford was considering, now complicated by the massive growth of suburban rings, feels far more real than any divide between states.

Ford says he had never met a Prohibitionist before he ended up next to the earnest woman on the train. His American life was until then centered on Al Smith’s New York. Similarly, my life in Chicago is arranged such that I simply do not come across people who wear MAGA hats.

In my city of 2.7 million people, only 133,000 went to their polling station in November 2016 and voted to Make America Great Again. I always knew that the people who now wear MAGA hats were out there in the suburbs and towns beyond New York and Chicago—the cities where I have lived as an adult—but my life was privileged enough

that I could ignore their existence. Before 2016, if I ventured into a town where people wore American flags on their clothes, I felt nothing but a snide sense of superiority. I'm sure they knew that. And I'm sure it didn't endear me and my cities to them.

But for all that, I think it is time to disinvest in the notion of the rural-urban divide. More than half of Americans today live in suburbs. The widespread idea that working-class rural people won the election for Donald Trump is false. Middle-class white people in the suburbs won the election for Donald Trump. We are no longer in the country Ford saw, a country in which 'the farmer of the great plains' faced off against 'the inhabitants of the great cities and ports' (259).

In all likelihood, the teenager in the MAGA hat wasn't a small town kid. His family was probably, like my family, on a short vacation. Most likely, he lives in a suburb of Chicago or Detroit. He doesn't know the great plains or the great cities. He doesn't know that for every moment of American greatness, we've perpetrated some atrocity or another. He doesn't know the cost of supposed greatness. He doesn't know the people who will pay for it.

“What’s the Silly Story?”: Fathead, Ford’s Forgotten Detective

Venetia Abdalla

It is a case of the wrong book . . . In Biala’s 1932 portrait of Ford sprawled in a chair, he is reading a book titled *Cezanne*, possibly because, as Joseph Wiesenfarth suggests, Biala desired to show Ford ‘not only interested in Cezanne, but also gaining inspiration from him.’¹ Whatever the reason, I would suggest that Ford is reading the wrong book. In those rare moments when he took a break from writing, pot washing or cooking (Ford was proud of his domestic skills), what he most wanted to read was ‘a really ingenious detective story’,² something by Georges Simenon perhaps, a writer whose taut prose style was admired by Ford and many of his contemporaries, including Hemingway and T. S. Eliot.³ Only Ford, of course, went so far as to compare Simenon’s work with that of Dostoevsky (‘the greatest single influence on the world of today’) – ‘it is Dostoevsky . . . and Dostoevsky, corsé, constructed, economized and filled with the poetry of pity’.⁴ Oliver Onions’ *In Accordance With the Evidence* (1910), Dashiell Hammett’s *The Glass Key* (1931) and Philip Macdonald’s *The Maze* (1932) were other Fordian favourites. With a pile of such volumes to hand, he happily spent the rest of the day in a deckchair, ‘thankful and filled with admiration for the technique of the writers’, which, as he went on to explain with characteristic modesty, ‘is identical with that of all modern novelists, or of myself. . . . Or Proust.’⁵

At a time when the detective story enjoyed unprecedented popularity and the reading public was in the grip of an addiction ‘like alcohol or tobacco’,⁶ it seemed as though everybody was attempting the genre or suggesting how it should be approached. Ronald Knox was adamant – ‘No Chinaman must figure in the story’⁷ – and Dorothy L. Sayers warned against improbability – ‘It irritates the reader to find himself asking: “But why did Algernon behave like a boob?”’⁸ Ford’s equally forthright views on the detective story dominated his later literary criticism in which he celebrated evolution in the book world, the death of the novel in the face of ‘the romance of crime’ (ML 758). The latter deserved to

survive because it relied on those essential techniques of the impressionist novelist, the time shift and the art of apparent digression, with the result that ‘a startling ray from the past illuminates not only the past murder with which the story began, but every subsequent episode of the story proper – of a past which was once the present’ (ML 772). Apart from anything else this was reassuring proof that ‘the public had done for good with the slipshod methods of amateur literary hacks like Scott’ (ML 649). Encouraged by this turn of events, and hoping that a detective novel by that ‘clever’ novelist Ford Madox Ford might finally be the ‘best seller’ he had never managed to produce, Ford wrote that ‘silly novel’ *When The Wicked Man* (1932),⁹ in which ominous doubles, vituperative attacks on Jean Rhys and tirades against commercial publishers are glossed with the gun-toting glamour of gangster fiction. A contemporary critic complained that ‘the denouement is foreseen as in an amateurishly contrived detective story’,¹⁰ and although sensational, the novel was never a sensation, ‘only a good seller’.¹¹ Ford never wrote the kind of ‘money pig’ that Walter Leroy is reading in *Vive Le Roy* (1937), Simenon’s *La Tête d’Un Homme*, which contains a secret stash of \$20,000, but he created his own version of Maigret, ‘the bulky, tremendously muscular form’ of ex-Chief Inspector Penkethman, ‘a large-bowled pipe hanging from his lips’.¹²

These are the facts of the case but a key character is missing. Penkethman, ‘a great, fat, enormous, clumsy, active, obtuse, sympathetic, stupid, diabolically penetrating lump of flesh and intellect’ (VLR 149), had an equally imposing predecessor who wore an opulent coat trimmed with beaver fur and drove a tonneau. Ford’s private detective, Fathead, was introduced in 1910 and featured in three short stories, ‘The Great Gadsby Fraud’, ‘The Bride’s Tragedy’ and ‘The Waistcoat at the Wash’.¹³ I intend to focus on these forgotten tales and show how integral they were to the composition of Ford’s later work. They deal with identical themes of doubleness and deception and show Ford trying his hand at detective stories long before the genre became really popular in the interwar years. Although they contain elements of the traditional detective story, a corpse, a locked room, a jewellery theft, and, on first reading, appear very dated, peopled with rouged undertakers and

giggling laundry maids, they anticipate questions similar to those posed by the metaphysical detective story focussed on ‘narrative, interpretation, subjectivity, the nature of reality, and the limits of knowledge’¹⁴

The first question posed by the Fathead stories concerns the date of their composition. In 1908, Ford sent ‘another detective story’ to his agent, Pinker, and boasted that he could write ‘ten to a dozen of these’ (DDH 166). In support of this date, there is Fathead’s announcement, ‘I am in a position to employ genius’ (‘Bride’ 217) – one can only speculate how often these words (or some very similar phrase) arose from the bathtub and echoed round the office of the *English Review*. The stories were not published until 1910 and, in the intervening period, Ford helped Violet Hunt with her novel *The Wife of Altamont* (1910), which featured Inspector Whortleberry, ‘dutiful, patient, *routinier* as usual, without curiosity, imagination, or perspicacity’.¹⁵ Advertised as ‘a remarkable series of detective tales’, the Fathead stories appeared in Douglas Goldring’s short-lived periodical, *The Tramp: An Open Air Magazine*.¹⁶ This was an experimental venture, as its enthusiastic editor explained, ‘a periodical dealing with travel and open-air life, whose literary ideals should be correspondingly fresh and unfettered’.¹⁷ On paper, this meant that advice on how to live the gipsy life jostled with advertisements for fast cars and the Ostrich Feather Emporium in Holborn. Yet the fact that *The Tramp* was such a capricious and contradictory oddity made it the perfect setting for a trilogy of Fordian whimsy.

Perhaps the most ‘remarkable’ thing about the Fathead stories is that they initially appear instantly forgettable. A man impersonates his twin brother and announces his death for insurance purposes, a vain husband drops his bottle of hair dye and shuts himself up in his study, a young girl overhears that a man faces financial ruin and slips a diamond into his pocket so that he can purchase forty trainloads of chocolate creams. Even the most enthusiastic reader of Ford will surely sympathise with George Winston and ask: ‘What’s the silly story?’ (‘Wash’ 318)

The three silly stories are, of course, three ‘affairs’. Fathead instructs George Winston to ‘draw up an account of this affair’ (‘Gadsby’ 114), ‘What an affair!’ (‘Bride’ 221), ‘the affair of my distinguished dramatic

friend and his hair dye' ('Wash' 315). Predominantly light-hearted, they are very different in tone to the political pandemonium of *Vive Le Roy*, 'a very dark affair – with the only possible solution so improbable that you could hardly believe in it' (VLR 197). Yet that last phrase suggests a similarity between the short stories and the later novel, both of which explore the kind of unreality that was Ford's reality. Ford's version of the truth was always very flexible and resembled a 'solution' by Fathead:

We have been unable to trace definitely the explanation. But we hazard the guess that you broke a bottle of your hair-dye. This seems probably to be the case, but, even if it is not true, it would seem to meet all objections likely to be offered by Mrs Peacock and we should suggest that . . . you should tell her that such is the case. ('Bride' 223)

The Fordian detective does not deal in facts – Sherlock Holmes was not a detective Ford admired¹⁸ – and Penkethman's sad experience permits Ford to ridicule Holmes' methodology: 'He had years ago done things with cigarette ash, finger-prints, analyses of blood, microscopic enlargement of hairs. That had made his superiors think him mad' (VLR 36). The fact that the Fathead stories form a recognisable sequence and can be read as a long-short story, facilitates the exploration of a mystery which is not one of Fathead's cases, the identity of the lady with 'a mocking smile' on her lips ('Bride' 217). Her appearance in Fathead's office captivates George Winston in much the same way as the eponymous protagonist of *The Young Lovell* (1913) is spellbound by the 'mocking eyes'¹⁹ of the fairy lady. Yet her identity as Fathead's sister-in-law, Miss Lee, is not revealed until the close of the final story where it provides the firework-like 'pop', the coup de canon ending, favoured by Ford and the French short story writers of the nineties he admired.²⁰ It is arguably the most exciting revelation in the trilogy and demonstrates how Ford has managed to move beyond the formulaic idea of the detective story and enlarge the narrative into an extended investigation. It is also obvious that, rather than watch 'criminals', Ford's sleuths prefer to watch each other. Having heard the mysterious lady mention an address in Shrewton Street, George Winston rents rooms there. He makes much of the fact that, unlike himself (and

Ford, that inveterate watcher behind the window, who always hoped to witness a murder and never did but wrote a rather good short story, 'The Case Of James Lurgan' (1911) by way of compensation), his landlady has no curiosity: 'to know nothing whatever of persons in the house immediately opposite to you – such ignorance seemed to me. . . a spirit of self-engrossed selfishness' ('Wash' 316). He finds himself living opposite 'the greatest detective in London' ('Wash' 318) and has to justify his actions – 'Do you suppose I want to spy on you?' he enquires of Fathead in injured tones ('Wash' 321). Of course he does, because everything about his old schoolboy acquaintance interests him, from his elegant office – 'where the deuce does Fathead get the taste to furnish his rooms like this?' ('Bride' 217) – to his private life – 'making a deduction – I was proud of my deductions – I arrived at the fact that the fair and maliciously smiling little lady must be Bulteel's fiancée' ('Wash' 220). But there are also questions to be asked about penniless George Winston, who is constantly forced to defend his shady theatrical past: 'I've told you fifty times I wasn't drunk at the St. Martin's Theatre' ('Wash' 316).²¹

Whereas Ford shared the Modernists' preoccupation with 'uncovering, revealing, decoding, sleuthing',²² he differed from other writers in that these obsessions originated from events in his own life. He had a troubled relationship with the law and had gained a glimpse of Fathead's seedy world when his father-in-law, anxious about his under-age daughter, hired private detectives to follow him. Accused of contempt of court in 1894, at the behest of Dr Martindale again, he received a criminal identity when it was reported in the Press that 'Undoubtedly the greatest offender was Mr Hueffer'²³ and later, in 1910, when Elsie took him to court for restitution of conjugal rights, he spent eight days in Brixton prison. Violet Hunt commented: 'I secretly believe that he longed for the experience, and felt that buoyed up by hope and greed of copy he would be none the worse for prison fare and plank bed'.²⁴ But what poor old Ford probably wanted most was respite from the monstrous regiment of women who relentlessly pursued him, Violet in particular. Undaunted (possibly excited at the thought of adding a gaolbird to her tally of lovers), she visited him and viewed his 'queer,

grimacing figure' through a window 'with a pane not of glass but such stuff as meat-safes are made of' (FY 99). Before Ford joined the criminal classes he had problems, real or imagined, with the police whom his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, believed to be infinitely worse than those damned Royal Academicians. Together with other authority figures, Ford's parents, nurse, and schoolteacher, the police constituted the dreaded 'They', and he recalled 'awful entities in blue who hung about in the streets and diminished seriously the enjoyment of life'.²⁵ He lobbed a piece of whitening at a policeman's helmet but his most effective attacks on the police occur in his writing, peopled with comic caricatures of policemen.

Even the saintly Tietjens flings his golf clubs at a policeman lumbering after suffragettes, 'his face scarlet like a lobster just boiled'.²⁶ And so the stage is set for the arrival of the private detective, a figure which was to become increasingly common in late nineteenth and twentieth century literature. In the face of police incompetence, increasingly under the spotlight since the Ripper murders, he offered the only real hope in the fight against crime. Mrs Belloc Lowndes' novel *The Lodger* (1913) comments on this situation in a newspaper report: 'The detection of crime in London now resembles a game of blind man's buff in which the detective has his hands tied and his eyes bandaged', and was a book admired by Ford – 'our authoress gets up an illusion of dread, of appalled listening, of fog, of the closing of distant doors.'²⁷

The 'huge, furry bulk' that is Ford's private detective, Fathead, is a curiously familiar figure, with his 'enormous asthmatic face' ('Wash' 317) and 'entirely imbecile expression' ('Gadsby' 109). (We are not told whether or not his mouth hangs open). On a windswept promenade in Folkestone, an encounter takes place between George Huyt Wilson whose schoolboy name was 'Too Clever By Half', and who is now an actor with the stage name Leonard Glazebrook and Arthur Bolsover Bulteel, 'The stupidest boy at Thornbury's' ('Gadsby' 108), now known as Fathead.²⁸ This is an early example of the kind of confused identity imbroglio which would dominate Ford's fiction with the possibility of an additional and complex significance because Fathead, 'very stupid and unreal' ('Bride' 216) is a larger than life version of that 'patient, but

exceedingly stupid donkey' (AL 42) Ford, and the failed actor, George Winston, bears a strong resemblance to his brother, Oliver.

Theirs was a troubled relationship. Disorganised Oliver, with his cherubic charm, was 'the sparkling jewel of the family', while Ford, quieter and more awkward was 'the ugly duckling' (IWN 249). Yet, in spite of this discrepancy, the brothers appeared interchangeable with each other – in 1894, Ford attended a Court hearing concerning his elopement and marriage in Oliver's clothes and, on another occasion, Oliver announced to the Press that Ford was to play Tybalt in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Their doubling was more than cosmetic – there was an almost telepathic connection between them which meant that they often spoke with one voice: 'whenever we were together [. . .] when one of us broke the silence it was to say exactly what the other had been about to bring out' (IWN 254-255). Their writing relationship was also a curiously complementary one: 'sometimes he would deliberately take one of my own subjects to show that he was more brilliant than I', Ford wrote, resigned to the fact that the Press preferred Oliver's 'lightness of touch' to his own 'Teutonic stolidity' (IWN 252)²⁹ Both wrote detective stories – Ford created Fathead and Penkethman while Oliver, who wrote about a confidence trickster, Monsieur Letruc, and claimed that his escapades were based on 'unexaggerated transcripts from real life',³⁰ also wrote 'The Story Of A Crime', a comically dreadful version of Poe's 'The Murders In the Rue Morgue'.³¹ It is also possible that one of Oliver's most successful books, *The Lord Of Latimer Street* (1907), written under the pseudonym 'Jane Wardle', in which an outraged Mr Reeves explains the circumstances of Dick Burton being dismissed from his job – 'It's 'is white hair what's done 'im'" – provided Ford with the plot of 'The Bride's Tragedy'.³²

Sibling rivalry is a key theme in 'The Great Gadsby Fraud', highlighted by Fathead's deceptively negligent question, 'What about the brother?' 'Gadsby told me he had a ne'er do well brother...a precious scamp by all accounts' ('Gadsby' 113). In this 'silly story', Thomas Gadsby's sick brother returns from Australia so Thomas Gadsby, who is in financial trouble, presents himself for insurance and claims the money on the strength of his brother's death. There is a lot of confusing doubling here

– Oliver was ‘a precious scamp’, of course (Timothy Gadsby), constantly in financial or romantic trouble but he was also exactly the sort of person who became involved in dubious financial schemes (Thomas Gadsby). To add to it all, George Winston, whose character appears to owe much to Oliver’s, expresses sentiments which hint at Ford’s persistent posturing (all those different guises he assumed, the agricultural expert who kept ducks in a hip-bath, the drawling gentleman of letters) when he tells Fathead: ‘I suppose I accept your greatness...you are just the sort of impostor to make people think you wise. And I’ve always – always – been too clever’ (‘Gadsby’ 108).

Ford constantly re-invented himself in his life and fiction, just as Oliver did with all his different careers, including those of stockbroker and valise manufacturer. Their behaviour is justified by Hugh Monckton’s observation in *Henry For Hugh*, ‘Every human being at one time has wished to be someone else’,³³ words suggestive of Chesterton’s description of the detective story: ‘a drama of masks and not of faces. It depends on men’s false characters rather than their real characters. It is a masquerade ball in which everybody is disguised as everybody else’.³⁴ Some of Ford’s readers may wish that he had followed another of Ronald Knox’s ‘Ten Commandments’: ‘Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them’ (Haycraft, 256). Somebody else that both Ford and Oliver desired to be was a German aristocrat, the Baron, the precedent being Uncle William, who lived in Rome and was known as Barone Huffer. Oliver was called ‘The Baron’ at school and Ford wrote a story with this title in 1898.³⁵ George Winston’s proud explanation of his stage persona—‘I’ve got two parts. I duplicate. I’m the Baron and Harlequin!’ (‘Gadsby’ 108)—is a celebration of Fordian duality and an early glimpse of the pantomime vision of *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* (1923) with its Harlequinade, After-Harlequinade and undertaker, Michael Poore, father of the poet Bosphorus.³⁶ George is appearing in a pantomime when he meets Fathead in Folkestone and when asked to accompany him on an investigation he feels as if he has been asked to witness ‘a wild comedy by grotesque amateurs’ (‘Gadsby’ 108). He gets into costume, fur robe, cap and glasses, for a meeting with Mr Wharton, who is really Thomas

Gadsby, ‘the king of undertakers’ in disguise, ‘his face was pallid and lined, but high-coloured over the cheek–bones as if he had rouged. . . I was certain now he had “made up”’ (‘Gadsby’ 114, 112). The melodramatic title ‘The Bride’s Tragedy’ could be that of a stage performance, and the farcical turn of events in the ‘The Waistcoat in the Wash’, with its flirtatious laundry maids is, as Tommy Salcombe comments, ‘More like a pantomime’ (‘Waist’ 322).

George Winston’s ability to switch roles, to move effortlessly between the trickster Harlequin and the Baron, reinforces Rob Spence’s view of Ford as a writer immersed in popular culture, ‘whose vision was not bounded by the high cultural sensibilities of the world in which he moved’³⁷ There are farcical moments of exaggerated performance in the Fathead stories, each of which has something of a music hall turn about it. The obsequious little undertaker falters before Fathead’s bulk: “‘Mr Gadsby,’ he said, “Mr Gadsby died last Monday, sir. We’re, sir, screwing him up, sir, now, sir”” (Gadsby, 109) and, at the same time, his halting explanation of events anticipates Ford’s later views on short story writing. Ford plays with Henry James’s phrase which expresses the art of short-story writing as ‘the turn of the screw’ – ‘the real short story writer must be at it with the screw-driver all the time; he must turn and turn, and turn until the bitter end – until the last revolution of the screw does the trick’.³⁸ The Gadsby fraud, the trick, is revealed when the coffin is unscrewed! – Fathead is alerted to the corpse’s substitution when he sees its two hands: ‘That is not Thomas Gadsby. Thomas Gadsby had a mutilated left hand,³⁹ as if he had six fingers on the left hand’. Undone, it is left for Mr Wharton, alias Thomas Gadsby, to reel back against the coffin so that the lid crashes to the floor. Similarly, the ‘tragedy’ in the second story relating to Mr Peacock’s seclusion in his study collapses into comic bathos when Mrs Peacock becomes hysterical: ““But what was it?”” she sobbed ““What was it? Oh, tell me...”” ““My dear, he said, and his voice was dry and seductive: I dropped my bottle of hair dye! That was all.”” (‘Bride’ 222) And it is all, of course, because this is a harmless bottle unlike that little bottle found in poor Florence’s hand.⁴⁰

‘The Waistcoat at the Wash’ contains several exaggerated grotesques,

including Tommy Salcombe's hideous housekeeper—'she insisted that her two assistants in the house should be as ugly and incompetent as herself' ('Wash' 321)—but the real joke, of course, is that Miss Lee saw that peculiar child Gertrude put something into Tommy's pocket which she thought was a glass marble and it was the priceless diamond. The solution to the silly mystery has a serious side, a significance hinted at earlier in the story when George Winston occupies his new lodgings: 'I was standing at my window, looking out, contented upon the whole, yet not absolutely in paradise' ('Wash' 316). A dingy room smelling of cabbages is a world away from the Elysian Fields but the real significance of this moment, apart from the fact that he sees the lovely lady going into the house opposite, is that he is looking through the reflective surface in front of him to find the truth. This is the key moment in Fordian impressionism and one that Henry Martin demonstrates as he recalls George Herbert's lines: 'A man that looks on glass on it may rest the eye/ Or if he pleases through it pass and so the heavens espy!...' (HH 156).

So where does this leave the Fathead stories? Are they merely 'silly stories' like that worthless glass marble or are they of any real value? They are not representative of Ford's best writing, as the text itself suggests: 'And you mean to say, ' I said, with rising heat, 'that Tommy Salcombe's future is to be blasted, and that idiotic detectives have been called in, and that there's all sorts of scandal because of such a fooling thing as this...let the silly business drop'. There even seems to be a suggestion that Ford's efforts should be consigned to the dustbin because after Fathead tells George the facts about the missing diamond George suggests that 'the silly thing got knocked off the table and fell into the waste paper basket' ('Wash' 320). On this occasion we cannot be sure that Violet Hunt will redeem the contents of that bin as she did later in the case of *The Good Soldier* because she is fed up with Ford 'refusing to be confronted with any of the problems that beset an author unfortunately doubled with a man' (FY 123), his selfish abandonment of responsibility. As readers, we are ourselves detectives and must make our own investigation, starting with that vital question concerning the identity of the double of Ford the author. David Garnett remembered see-

ing him in London soon after the launch of the *English Review*: 'he was arrayed in a magnificent fur coat; his fresh features the colour of raw veal, his prominent blue eyes...' ⁴¹ Surely these eyes seem rather startling, just like those 'heavy and minatory eyes' of that other man on the windy Leas ('Gadsby' 107) – and then it all gets very frightening because there is that 'minatory double' of Notterdam's, 'growing daily more and more detestable and older...a stage figure in a long furred cloak' (WTWM 167-168). Perhaps this all indicates that we should not take the Fathead stories too seriously because, as Ford reminds us, even 'silly stories' have their uses: 'there are times during certain railway journeys when we must needs prefer the lowest of sporting novels or the barest of detective stories to the newest book of Mr Henry James.' ⁴²

NOTES

1 Joseph Wiesenfarth, *Ford Madox Ford and the Regiment of Women* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 137.

2 Ford, *Return To Yesterday* (1931; edited by Bill Hutchins, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 207: hereafter RTY.

3 'Books of the Year. Chosen By Eminent Contemporaries', *Sunday Times* (24 December 1950), 3: 'I never read contemporary fiction – with one exception: the works of Simenon concerned with Inspector Maigret.'

4 Ford, *The March of Literature* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1947), 775, 760: hereafter ML. Simenon, like Ford, was an impressionist writer: 'I consider myself an impressionist because I work by little touches. I believe a ray of sunshine on a nose is as important as a deep thought'. Quoted in David Geherin, *Scene Of The Crime: The Importance Of Place in Crime And Mystery Fiction* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2008), 13.

5 Ford, *It Was The Nightingale* (London: William Heinemann, 1934), 194: hereafter IWN.

6 W. H. Auden, 'The Guilty Vicarage', in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 146.

7 Ronald Knox, 'Decalogue' in *Murder For Pleasure*, edited by Howard Haycraft (New York, D-Appleton Century), 256: hereafter 'Haycraft'.

8 Dorothy L. Sayers, editor, *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*, Second Series (London: Victor Gollancz, 1931), 'Introduction', 11-26, 14.

9 Ford, *When The Wicked Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), 9: hereafter WTWM.

10 Rascoe Burton, 'Review of When The Wicked Man', *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 7 (May 31, 1931), quoted in David Dow Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford 1873-1939: A Bibliography Of Works And Criticism* (New York: Gordian Press, 1972), 390: hereafter DDH.

11 Charles Egerson, *The House Of Boni and Liveright, 1914-1933* (London: Thomas Gale, 2004), 412-413.

12 Ford, *Vive Le Roy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 39: hereafter VLR. Ford may have had 'a glandular detective novel', *Death In The Dark* (1930) by 'Stacey Bishop', in mind when he formulated Walter Leroy's background, the documents which prove 'that he was going to France to pursue studies as to the ramifications in behaviour in unusual circumstances of the pituitary gland' (VLR 14). The composer George Antheil provided the plot for this collaborative effort by friends including W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, both of whom were fanatical readers of detective stories. Antheil believed that endocrinology determined behaviour and appearance and published *Every Man His Own Detective: A Study Of Glandular Criminology* (1937). See Ann Saddlemeyer, 'William Butler Yeats, George Antheil, Ezra Pound, Friends and Music', *Studi Irlandesi: A Journal Of Irish Studies*, 2 (2012), 55-71.

13 'Fathead And The Great Gadsby Fraud', *The Tramp* 1, MCMX (April 1910), 107-115 – hereafter 'Gadsby'; 'The Bride's Tragedy' (May 1910), 216-223, hereafter 'Bride'; 'The Waistcoat At The Wash' (June-July 1910), 315-324, hereafter 'Wash'.

14 Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, editors, *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism*

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 1.

15 Violet Hunt, *The Wife Of Altamont* (London: Heinemann, 1910), 56. Ford serialised the novel in the *English Review*, beginning in December, 1909.

16 'The Tramp. Advertisements' in *The Tramp: An Open Air Magazine* (September 1910), xii. See also Helen Southworth, 'Douglas Goldring's *The Tramp: An Open Air Magazine* (1910 – 1911) and Modernist Geographies' in *Literature and History*, 18:1 (2009), 35-53.

17 'Editorial Notice', *The Tramp* (1910), 581.

18 Ford expressed a profound contempt for Conan Doyle's hero: 'a detective story as long as it does not contain Sherlock Holmes I can read on any train journey'. See Ford, 'Joseph Conrad', *English Review*, 10 (December 1911), 68-93, quoted in *Ford Madox Ford: Critical Essays*, edited by Max Saunders and Richard Stang (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002), 76-90, 85.

19 Ford, *The Young Lovell* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), 47.

20 '[T]he introduction of a character in a word or two, a word or two for atmosphere, a few paragraphs for story, and then click! A sharp sentence that flashes the illumination of the idea over the whole.' Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), 204.

21 One of Oliver Hueffer's many careers was as an actor. At one time he played opposite Ellen Terry. For more on this see Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player In Her Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 212.

22 Jon Thompson, *Fiction, Crime, and Empire: Clues To Modernity and Postmodernity* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1993), 111.

23 *Morning Post*, (25 June, 1894), 7.

24 Violet Hunt, *The Flurried Years* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1926), 97: hereafter FY.

25 Ford, *Ancient Lights And Certain New Reflections* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1911), 254: hereafter AL.

26 Ford, *Some Do Not*. . . (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 87. Merrymineral knocks a policeman down in *The Brown Owl* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1891), 34, and Police Constable 742L drops dead in *Mr Apollo* (London, Methuen, 1908), 22.

27 Marie Belloc Lowndes, *The Lodger* (London: Methuen, 1913), 68 (first published as a serial in *McClure's Magazine* in 1911). See Ford, 'Literary Portraits: XXX. Mrs Belloc Lowndes and "The End of Her Honeymoon"', *Outlook*, 33 (4 April 1914), 460.

28 Both Ford and Oliver attended boarding school at Folkestone. For more on this see Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 33. Also Ford, *A Mirror To France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), 48: 'I remember once when I was quite a small boy at Folkestone there were tremendous red sunsets connected with the eruption at Krakatoa, I think. To walk along the Leas in the evening was like walking up against an orange wall.'

29 See notice for Oliver Hueffer, 'The Man With The Black Beard', *Detective Magazine* 4, 52 (7 November 1924), 1248-1256 – 'a tale of a journalist, international finance, and a murder most foul that is told with a lightness of touch ...'

30 Oliver Hueffer, 'Introductory: The Day Of The Envelopes' in *Detective Magazine*, 4, 41 (6 June 1924), 134-138, 134.

31 Oliver Hueffer, 'The Story Of A Crime' in *The Windsor Magazine*, (February 1932), 349-358. Monsieur Curoz sees a frightening face on his skylight which is that of Artemis, a gipsy girl's escaped monkey: "'Artemis! Artemis!' cried the girl. 'See here is a beautiful banana for you...'" The title of Oliver's story is similar to Ford and Conrad's *The Nature Of A Crime* (London: Duckworth, 1924).

32 Jane Wardle, *The Lord Of Latimer Street* (London: Alston Rivers, 1907), 221.

33 Ford, *Henry For Hugh* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1934) “:hereafter HH”, 86.

34 G. K. Chesterton, ‘On Detective Novels’, in *Generally Speaking* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1929), 1-7, 6, quoted in Joseph A. Kestner, *The Edwardian Detective, 1901-1915* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 184.

35 Ford, ‘The Baron (A Love Story)’, *Macmillan’s Magazine*, LXXX-VII (February 1903), 304-320. See also Peter Edgerly Firchow, *The Death of The German Cousin: Variations on a Literary Stereotype, 1890 – 1920* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986), 91, for later Fordian hopes regarding restitution of the family title. *The Nature of a Crime* was serialised in the *English Review* (II, v, April 1909) under the pseudonym Baron Ignatz Von Aschendorf.

36 Another ‘undertaker’ (possibly a Fordian pun on the process of writing?) is to be encountered in Ford’s account of a literary reception, a painful moment of self-doubt. Other British writers, including Arnold Bennett, are present and presented as pantomime grotesques, their faces elongated, ‘pale, and screwed to one side or the other’. A figure in black approaches Ford: ‘It had the aspect of an undertaker coming to measure a corpse [. . .] “You used to write,” it intoned, “didn’t you? [. . .] You used to consider yourself a literary dictator of London. You are so no longer. I represent Posterity”’ (IWN 8).

37 See Rob Spence, “‘Beautiful and Instructive’: Ford Madox Ford’s Encounter With Popular Culture’, in *Ford Madox Ford’s Cosmopolis: Psycho-geography, Flânerie and the Cultures of Paris*, edited by Alexandra Becquet and Claire Davison, IFMFS 15 (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016), 81–94, 92.

38 Ford, ‘Literary Portraits – XXXIV: Miss May Sinclair and ‘The Judgment Of Eve’, *Outlook*, 33, (2 May, 1914), 599-600, 599.

39 Ford referred to the same disability in a short story in which Anne Boleyn’s hand appears at a séance: ‘There was a distinct rudimentary, extra little finger. Anne Boleyn had six fingers on her right hand’. See ‘The Medium’s End’, *The Bystander* (13 March, 1912), 551-554, 552.

40 For the suggestion that Ford's best known novel is a detective story, see Amy Griswold, 'Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* as Detective Story: Is Dowell A Murderer?', *English Literature In Transition*, 60:2 (November 2017), 152-166.

41 David Garnett, *The Golden Echo* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953), 129-130.

42 Ford, 'A Book of the Day: Mr Wister's *Wild Oats*', a review of Wister's *Members of the Family*, *London Daily News* (19 June 1911), 3.

Vivien Whelpton, *Richard Aldington: Poet, Soldier and Lover: 1911-1929*, The Lutterworth Press, Cambridge 2014, 414pp.

Reviewed by Max Saunders

Biographers need to present their subjects in the context of the other people who mattered most to them. But with some subjects the context is in danger of taking over. Especially if the other people emanate the kinds of intellectual and emotional force-fields of D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, H. D., T. S. Eliot, or Nancy Cunard. Theirs were the circles Richard Aldington moved in, and through. He also moved, prolifically and effortlessly, between the genres of poetry, criticism, fiction, and then biography. A founding contributor to the poetic movement of Imagism just before WWI; then a war poet; author of the best-selling ‘jazz’ novel *Death of a Hero* (1929), which George Orwell thought ‘much the best of the English war books’; later controversial first as a satirist of his former fellow-modernists, then for his biography debunking T. E. Lawrence, which scandalized the British literary establishment: there was plenty in Aldington’s work to secure him a place in literary history. Add a private life with more narrative interest than those of many writers, and it’s no surprise that he has already been the subject of several biographical books: *Richard Aldington: An Intimate Portrait* (1965), by his friends Alister Kershaw and F.-J. Temple; Charles Doyle’s *Richard Aldington: A Biography* (1989); and then Norman T. Gates’s *Richard Aldington: An Autobiography in Letters* (1992). What is more surprising is the extent to which he figures in relation to others: in Caroline Zilboorg’s *Richard Aldington & H. D.: The Early Years in Letters* (1992); Michael Copp’s *Imagist Dialogues: Letters between Aldington, Flint and Others*; or Helen Carr’s monumental group biography of poetic modernism: *The Verse Revolutionaries* (2009).

Modernism’s volcanic bursts of -isms and schisms means its story or stories can’t be told independently of coteries, campaigns, small magazines, alliances and enmities. Take the force of nature that was Pound. As scholars produce volume after volume of his idiosyncratic, typo-

graphically bizarre letters, we get a renewed sense of how much of his considerable energy went into literary networks, propaganda, advocacy and denunciation. Yet even though these published letters are being separated out by individual correspondent, any sense of the distinctiveness of a relation to any particular correspondent – of how Pound might have been different with – might have modulated his language or personality according to whether he was writing to Joyce or Lewis or Ford or Harriet Monroe – disappears behind the vortex that is Pound, buffeting his contacts into joining his campaigns.

Aldington's case is different. Why does he appear to exist more clearly amongst his networks than as standing alone? The recent prestige of 'relational' life writing and group biography is one factor. The turn in modernist studies to the magazines in which the campaigns were often conducted is another. These have both been useful correctives to the atomistic, poet-as-hero-worshipping individual biography, by restoring the milieu shaping an artist's work. But it is also to do with the extraordinarily close-knit nature of the group Aldington found himself in before and after the war. In 1912 the unhappily married Brigit Patmore introduced him to several writers, including Pound, who had been in London since 1909; and the poet H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), who had been Pound's lover in the US. The three poets agreed to form a new movement – Imagism – propounding an intensely visual *vers libre* that sought to abandon the excessive verbalism and hypnotic sonorities of the post-Swinburnean fin-de-siècle. Aldington and H. D. became lovers while accompanying Pound on a trip to Paris that year. They were married in the autumn of 1913; and though their physical relationship didn't survive the strains of the war, and a still-born child, they remained emotionally and intellectually extremely bonded. In the months before the war, Aldington, H. D. and Patmore all took dictation of passages from *The Good Soldier* by another mutual friend (and friend of Pound's), Ford Madox Ford. Ford had developed an infatuation for Patmore, and they may have had a brief affair. Towards the end of the war, Aldington met an American art student, Dorothy ('Arabella') Yorke, and began a tempestuous relationship with her that lasted the next decade. The problem was that emotionally he and H. D. never really untangled

themselves. When she had a daughter by another lover, who had left and wouldn't acknowledge paternity, she wanted Aldington to say the child was his; but he and Yorke panicked. From this point it was 'Bryher' (Annie Winifred Ellerman) who became H. D.'s most important lover for the rest of her life. Nonetheless, H. D. and Aldington remained married (but separated) until 1938.

In 1928, though, Brigit Patmore was back in Aldington's life, this time as his partner, and they visited D. H. and Frieda Lawrence, who were staying in a fort on Port-Cros (an island near Hyères). He had known Lawrence – another 'discovery' of Ford's, together with Pound, both launched in *The English Review* – from before the war. Aldington had been expected to become editor of the *TLS*, for which he had been reviewing throughout the 20s. But it had been a visit from Lawrence (while Aldington was still living in a Berkshire cottage) that had transformed his work, convincing him that he needed to write more personally, and also to write fiction. Lawrence was already terminally ill; and after his death Aldington would become one of his major champions, writing introductions for Penguin reissues of his works, and an impassioned, if conflicted biography: *D. H. Lawrence: Portrait of a Genius, But . . .* (1950). In the South of France in the late 1920s he worked on the war novel that would make him famous; and which contained satirical portraits not only of H. D. and Yorke, but of Ford and Lawrence, and the other figure who loomed largest in his literary and social world, T. S. Eliot.

That tendency to fictionalize and satirize suggests another reason for Aldington's inextricability from a coterie. His aesthetic network consisted mainly of other writers; and though all novelists draw upon real acquaintances when inventing imaginary friends, this group did so with a particular and reciprocal intensity. To understand the dynamics of the group, and to try to filter out the fictionalisations, a biographer needs to read the profoundly autobiographical *Death of a Hero* alongside Lawrence's novel *Aaron's Rod* (1922); H. D.'s *Bid Me to Live* (not published till 1960, but begun in the 30s); Patmore's two fictional books; and *Miranda Masters* (1926), a novel by another Imagist, John Cournos, based on H. D., who kept him on hand as her marriage to

Aldington was disintegrating. These in addition to their copious correspondences, and gossip about them in their other fellow-modernists' memoirs and letters. Perhaps it's not surprising that coteries of writers carry on like this, as a way of working off creative and sexual rivalries and anxieties; and it's certainly not unparalleled (the 'quartet' of books about Ford's affair with Jean Rhys, written by the two novelists and their partners, is roughly contemporary). But it does suggest an unusually inward-looking and interdependent circle.

Vivien Whelpton, in her new biography, has performed this sifting and detecting with exemplary care, and provides a sensitive and engaging portrait of Aldington among his fellow artists. Her four hundred pages take him up to the pivotal year of the publication of *Death of a Hero*, when he was only thirty-seven. Whether the remaining thirty-three years of his life – more than half his adult span – will receive a second volume is left teasingly open in an 'Afterword'. If they do, the challenge will be similar to that faced by Richard Holmes's magisterial biography of late Coleridge, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections*, of managing to make the story of decline and increasing rebarbateness as compelling as that of youthful energy and idealism.

Whelpton's subtitle – *Poet, Soldier and Lover: 1911-1929* – indicates her emphases clearly enough; though it is also one of the few false notes in a tactful and balanced study. This is partly because of the first date. Though the narrative does indeed start in 1911, with Aldington embarking on life in Bohemia, a second chapter flashes back to explore 'Family Secrets'. True, Aldington's family and childhood are less well documented than his literary life; but Whelpton gives as thorough an account as we're likely to get or need. More serious is the absence of the 'Novelist' from the list. True, Aldington had only published one novel by 1929; but not only was it his most important; it was the book that drew most searchingly on his early life. As she says, there were to be seven more novels; so clearly 'Novelist' will be the burden of a second volume. The first needed to include *Death of a Hero* for the way it dealt with Aldington's enervating war experiences, and survivor's guilt. To have paused the story just before its appearance would have made for anti-climax. But to end with it is not just to reach the point where he has

become a novelist: it is to frame the entire story as that of the process by which he moves from poet to novelist.

The issue this raises is in a sense the central critical one for Aldington. He is an important force in the development of modernist poetics, certainly; especially as a critic, an editor (of the *New Freewoman*, which became one of the major outlets for high modernism, *The Egoist*); an authority on the French literature that so many modernists – Eliot, Pound, Ford – believed foundational; also an energetic translator; and anthologist. But his poetry – quoted extensively and analysed generously here – reads slightly embarrassingly alongside that of Pound or H. D. or Eliot. The early, Imagist verse is the best, often surprising with expressive delicacy and beauty:

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine-trees,
And my desires have run with them.

But it too often buzzes with the energies of Pound and H. D. – his orientalism, her classicism – though at lower voltage. If this example reads like Ovid writing haiku, what works in it is the teasing obliquity of the metaphor. In the private language of the three poets, Aldington was ‘the Faun’ to H. D.’s ‘Dryad’. Does his desire run with the deer because of his faun-like nature? Because there is something deer-like in the hypersensitivity of the beloved? Or because the pace and nervous energy of his desire feels like the frenzy of a panicked herd? Pound defined his ‘ideogrammic method’ as ‘juxtaposition without copula’. Though Aldington uses an ‘And’ here, the juxtaposition suggests metaphors without insisting on any. Too often, though, the stanzas spell out the simile that turns the image into autobiographical lyric. As in these, from the same poem, ‘Images’:

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dark canals of Venice,
You, O exquisite one,

Have entered into my desolate city.

or:

The flower which the wind has shaken
 Is soon filled again with rain:
 So does my heart fill slowly with tears
 Until you return.

A poem might be able to carry off the image of a heart filling with tears as a metaphor rather than an anatomical awkwardness; but the metaphor within which it is enclosed here is too laboured for the effect of Oriental understatement being sought.

When he turned to fiction in the late 1920s it was a declaration of independence: not just from the ‘cant’ of his Victorian parents’ generation; but from the condensation and ironisation of Pound; from the classicising minimalism of H. D.; from the obliqueness and obscurity of Eliot. *Death of a Hero* is intensely personal in a new way. The earlier verse was personal about his feelings, but not about the context of those feelings: the experiences of his life. Now Aldington attempts autobiographical fiction with a Lawrentian passion and explicitness. But there’s a difference. Lawrence’s novels may contain Lawrentian diatribes about degeneration, sincerity, and the feelings. But though characters like Birkin or Mellors may seem like Lawrence’s mouthpieces, the novels don’t, because the more Lawrentian characters are placed in a dramatic context, their views challenged by the other characters. In *Death of a Hero* both the narrator and George Winterbourne are Aldington, and the other characters exist as caricature counterfoils to them.

Death of a Hero is one of the most powerful statements of what it was like being traumatised by the war; what it was like not to be able to get over the grief for the appalling scale of loss, or the guilt at having been one of those who survived. It is eloquent, gruesome, harrowing. But it is also relentless, hectoring, and discursive. As with the verse, there’s a mismatch between its formal ambition on the one hand (structured like a Greek tragedy, it gives the ending of the story at the beginning, so we then see George’s fate working itself out as something inexorable; his

suicide as inevitable); and on the other, the looseness of the outpouring of blood-guilt, and anger at the older generation.

The angry caricatures are powerful; shocking even, as with the scandalising example of George's parents becoming self-dramatising, and his mother even becoming sexually aroused, on hearing the news of his death in battle. One result of *Death of a Hero* was to show Aldington that his best gift may have been satirical rather than lyric. The process that freed up his novelistic potential certainly seems to have had a negative effect on his verse. *A Dream in the Luxembourg*, for example, was written, as Vivian Whelpton shows convincingly, as a result of Aldington's infatuation for Valentine, the wife of his friend Bonamy Dobrée; but published as 'For B.' (presumably Brigit Patmore). It presents a paean to romance, but in flat, conversational free verse which is both too discursive, and uneasy with its own conventions, not least its continual invocation of a literary tradition:

Now I am so much moved as I write this
 That my hand shakes with excitement,
 And there is so much to say
 I scarcely know where and how to begin;
 So hard is it to be truly Reasonable

When you are a little crazy with a Romantick love. (243)

One way not to begin is by telling us about the excitement rather than letting us feel it in the language and style and form; another is with an archaistic spelling like 'Romantick', which wants to glamorise its irrationality by referring it back to a Keatsian romanticism. The failure to specify the craziness comes across as mere laziness. By contrast, the prose Aldington wrote after reinventing himself as a novelist included some of his best work: the fictionalised satirical portraits collected as *Soft Answers* (1932). This includes caricatures recognisable as Pound or Nancy Cunard. But the most vicious, but also the most powerful, is the satire of T. S. Eliot as Father Jeremy Cibber, which had been published separately as *Stepping Heavenward* (1931). The parodic account of *The Waste Land* is unmistakable:

With these valued allies, Cibber exactly at the right moment produced his epoch-making *Notes on the Provincial Itinerary of the Emperor Antoninus*. At first sight it seems impossible that so abstruse a work should have epoch-making consequences; but then, as we all know, it is the method and not the substance of a work which makes its value. And Cibber had method. *The Itinerary* itself was relegated to footnotes, while the notes, cast in the form of a commentary, became the text. In the opening pages Cibber politely but decisively annihilated every living historian of eminence except Cholmp. Then, in passages of unparalleled eloquence, now known to every schoolboy outside the great Public Schools, he lamented the decay and disappearance of so many once great and prosperous cities. In prose which moved with the stately tread of conscious superiority, he lamented the degradation of Kingship and the fetid growth of democracy, and pointed out that the ruinous European War had been the combined work of the Socialist Free-thinkers and the Jews. But the War, he insisted, was but a trifle, a mere symptom. . . (*Soft Answers* 284)

This has a vitality and humour that is impressive. It is also devastatingly accurate, especially given that it appeared three years before Eliot's notorious book *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*, with its attacks on Lawrence, Yeats and Pound that make it more surprising than it might otherwise be that Eliot was offended by Aldington's treatment; and its claim that 'reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable'.

Aldington had been worried that Lawrence might have been offended by his own *D. H. Lawrence: An Indiscretion* in 1927. He wasn't, but wrote a clairvoyant letter wondering what made Aldington seem 'more to be living from a character not his own' than anyone he knew, feigning a 'conscience' that Lawrence didn't believe he had: 'What is it that you are afraid of? – ultimately? – is it death? Or pain? Or just fear of the negative infinite of all things? What ails thee, lad?'

It was Lawrence's questioning that made Aldington look into his mind, and especially to confront the negative infinite of death and pain that

had been the war. From then on much of his writing attempted what he'd been attempting in his relationships: to affirm life over war and negativity. The same year *Death of a Hero* appeared, 1929, Aldington gave another parody clearly directed at Eliot, this time of 'The Hollow Men':

A greatly admired poem by the most admired poet of the day may be summarized in the following excerpted words:

Hollow-dried-meaningless-dry-broken-dry-paralysed-death's-hollow-I-dare-not-death's-broken-fading-death's-final-twilight-dead-cactus-stone-dead-fading-death's-broken-dying-broken-last-sightless-death.

The poet's genius is not in question, but I hate this exhibitionism of a perpetual suicide mania which never, never, comes to the point. . . . It is the War despair which involved so many of us and from which the healthy-minded have been struggling to escape, not yearning to wallow in.

That doesn't seem the right diagnosis of Eliot, whose poetry is as much about feeling already dead, and fearing being re-animated, as it is about the living desiring death. (He told Middleton Murry: "I have deliberately killed my senses – I have deliberately died in the last ten years in order to go on with the outward form of living – this I did in 1915 – What will happen if I live again?")¹ But it seems the right self-diagnosis: the struggle to escape 'war despair', that made morbidity in literature seem intolerable to Aldington. At least, it was the struggle to become healthy-minded again after the damage done by the war. That was why he needed to renounce Eliot in favour of Lawrence.

Vivien Whelpton's book gives a finely-detailed portrait; the best we have. Where others have focused more on his literary contacts, or his relationship to H. D., hers is the fullest and most revealing about Aldington's complex private life: sympathetic for the most part; though the note of reproof in the verdict of him as confused and evasive about sexuality seems false both to the man and the times. Both Aldington and H. D. lived out a version of 'free love' with more grace and less

harm than in many more conventional marriages, and any harm that might have ensued to H. D.'s daughter cannot be attributed to Aldington. While the book brings out the importance of the roles he played as modernism ran its frenetic course from Edwardian London to jazz-age Paris, it makes one suspect that his biography may in the end be more significant than his writing. Much will depend on the case Whelpton makes for *Richard Aldington: Novelist*.

Endnotes:

1 To John Middleton Murry, [mid-April? 1925], *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, vol. 2, 1923-1925*, edited by Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber, 2009), 627.

Andrew Bennett, *Suicide Century: Literature and Suicide from James Joyce to David Foster Wallace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 270pp.

Reviewed by Seamus O'Malley

Andrew Bennett's *Suicide Century* is not as depressing as it might sound. One of Bennett's main claims is that many writers have treated suicide and 'suicide ideation' (picturing, imagining suicide) ambiguously. Suicide ideation can be, darkly, a form of 'dress rehearsal' (7) for the real act, but can also act as a mode of suicide prevention, as the poet Stevie Smith told an interviewer: 'if one can remove oneself at any time from the world, why particularly now?' (113). In Smith's poetry, Bennett argues, suicide ideation signals 'solace...redemptive, consoling, even encouraging' (112). Hence the ambiguity of suicide in literature: envisioning it can serve multiple purposes, sometimes within the same work.

It's remarkable that such a study had not been written before. Dissenting from Al Alvarez's *The Savage God* (1970), which posited that suicide correlates to artistic ability, Bennett instead explores the centrality of suicide for so many canonical writers, regardless of how their biographies terminate. His Introduction quickly surveys the western canon, and a list of suicide-centric works could start with *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Mrs. Dalloway*, but the importance of suicide is best summed up in literature's most famous line, 'To be or not to be'. Hamlet does not commit suicide (unlike Ophelia, one of fifty-two suicides in Shakespeare's plays) but performs suicide ideation repeatedly, and if we acquiesce even tentatively to Harold Bloom's assertion that Shakespeare's soliloquies produced the human subject as we still conceive it, then, Bennett persuasively argues, thoughts of suicide are central to how we construct the self. Responding to Joshua Foa Dienstag's theory that the first ever human thought must have been, in a response to physical pain, 'things could be otherwise' (30), Bennett posits that suicide had to have been envisioned as one option to escape such pain. Only the thinking subject can conceive of suicide.

Bennett's 'Introduction' reflects wide reading across the western literary and philosophical traditions, tracing the discourses of suicide that range from the early modern prohibitions on the act (since only God or the Church should have the right to judge and punish), to the modern, Protestant-informed notion of individual control over the self, whereby suicide is one of the inalienable rights articulated by the Enlightenment. The Romantics, naturally, idealized and aestheticized suicide, while the Victorians, also predictably, equated it with 'cowardice, degeneration, and immorality', and feared its supposedly infectious nature. Finally, the early twentieth-century scientific and sociological treatments of it (especially via Émile Durkheim) posed suicide as the result of flawed social structures (51).

Twentieth-century literature thus inherits a complex tradition of suicide discourse. Bennett's title is somewhat misleading, as the monograph begins not with Joyce, but with Ford Madox Ford. Ford's letters to his first wife Elsie are replete with suicide ideation, although it is difficult to determine how earnest he was at the time. But suicide is a theme throughout his writing career, from the early double-suicide pact poem 'Questions at the Well' (1893) to *The Rash Act* (1933). Tietjens' father has likely committed suicide in *Parade's End* (1924-1928), and of course in *The Good Soldier* (1915) half the quartet dies by their own hands. What attracts Bennett to *The Good Soldier* is not so much the prominence of suicide in the plot, but rather how it 'explores the formal and structural deformations consequent upon a narrative that presents suicide as its pivotal event' (57). So while the suicides of Edward and Florence are integral to the plot, with *The Good Soldier* plot itself is always a problematic notion, and neither suicide is 'effectively narrated' by Dowell (61). Florence's suicide is first presented to the reader offhand, and then Dowell keeps returning to it, offering various motivations, none of which ever emerge as the official record. Edward's suicide is equally oblique narratologically, occupying the last few pages, seemingly after the 'saddest story' had already come to a close. The result, for Bennett, is that "the sudden and brutal shock" of suicide constitutes the central, determining, event, but is, at the same time, systematically obscured' (61). In *The Good Soldier*, and soon modernism at large,

suicide 'becomes visible just to the extent that it cannot be effectively seen' (62).

Ford's novel is so useful to Bennett's study because it encapsulates how, 'confronted with the quotidian but incomprehensible trauma of suicide, twentieth-century writing comes up against, and indeed limns, the limits of literary efficacy' (68). The suicides of Florence and Edward are ultimately, like much else in the novel, unknowable and overdetermined. It is not that their deaths have no cause, but rather, they seem to have too many causes, and in an intriguing footnote Bennett explores the dynamic whereby the suicides of Edward and Florence are partly informed by their role as 'un-integrated Protestants' (69, 210). Bennett makes this point, however, just to demonstrate how such a sociological reading of suicide is revealed as inadequate by the novel, as suicide 'cannot be incorporated into or enmeshed within conventional narrative forms and will always finally remain resistant to psychological and sociological explanations, not least because of the fundamental incompatibility of psychological with sociological reasoning' (69). Scientific discourses interpret suicide; literary texts depict it as beyond interpretation. Faced with the overdetermination of the suicides, Dowell is 'forced to reinterpret interpretation itself, its value and cogency, its potential and power' (70).

Suicide was equally crucial for Joyce, as in *Ulysses* it is 'an "everyday occurrence," not least inasmuch as it is thought about, imagined, or remembered many time in just the one day that the novel records' (73). If June 16, 1904 is a typical day, does this mean that Blooms still thinks of his father's death this often, at this distance of time? The quotidian nature of suicide ideation puts it beyond traditional narrative, but right at home in *Ulysses*. As Bloom walks around Dublin, his thoughts return several times to his father's suicide, which Bloom can never figure out. His father had bought a new hat right before killing himself, and such moments provoke us to 'ask how the events preceding a suicide can be accounted for and how causality operates on such a day' (102). Suicide seems to beg explanatory stories, as it 'seems to narrativize a life, to give it teleological shape' (20), and we feel compelled to explore the life for meaning, the way we do with a literary text. But Bennett argues that

literary texts, like *Ulysses*, offer only ambiguous explorations: 'suicidal death has to be explained and cannot be; it both offers and removes a dream of coherence' (20).

After the two chapters on modernist prose, Bennett expands his scope, across time, place, and genre, moving to the poetry of Stevie Smith, and Sylvia Plath (for whom suicide ideations 'are weapons, instruments of vengeance, revenge, retaliation, reprisal that offer little relief' (147)), then to contemporary fiction by Michael Cunningham (*The Hours*, 1998), Jeffrey Eugenides (*The Virgin Suicides*, 1993), and David Foster Wallace (*The Pale King*, 2011), and concluding with several 'suicide memoirs'. The monograph is thus bounded only by the English language, which might be its strength and weakness: would a tighter focus on modernist suicide, for example, have been more persuasive? Possibly, although Bennett's wide reading make him equally comfortable with American poetry as much as European prose. But the chapter on Wallace—the 21st century's Sylvia Plath, the celebrity-suicide-author—actually strays from the central thesis, focused as it is on the role of boredom in Wallace's novels, and it seems that here Bennett might be seduced by the very habit he warns against, seeing suicide teleologically, whereby previous acts (like the writing of novels) can be explained and interpreted. Generally, however, despite the wide breadth of the work, Bennett's arguments are focused and consistent.

Ultimately, Bennett argues, suicide functions in twentieth-century literature as a limit case for empathy. Literary criticism has recently debated the function of empathy in literary texts: can we know the mind and feelings of another? Does reading make us more empathetic? Bennett shifts the debate, asserting that literary texts often deliberately 'confound empathy' (157), a process he dubs the 'empathy scandal': 'a resistance to or troubling of the reader's ability to identify, understand, sympathize with, or otherwise experience narratorial, characterological, or authorial empathy' (158). In *The Virgin Suicides*, for example, the collective, first-person plural narrative urgently desires to know the cause of the girls' suicides, voyeuristically exploring their lives from every possible angle. The narrative voice knowingly dismisses various theories offered by pop psychology or academic sociology, but it too

fails to ever probe beneath the surface of events. Thus the novel as a form is 'not so much a superior or refined form of empathy as an appreciation of empathy's limits' (163). Maybe, like Dowell, we can only ever know the shallows.

Helen Smith. *An Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett, Mentor and Editor of Literary Genius*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017; London: Jonathan Cape, 2017, 440pp.

Reviewed by Helen Chambers

Edward Garnett (1868-1937) was throughout his adult life a publisher's reader, first for T. Fisher Unwin, followed by William Heinemann, then Gerald Duckworth, John Lane at Bodley Head and finally Jonathan Cape. He was, as Helen Smith wrote first in her doctoral thesis the 'midwife of genius', who influenced the course of literary modernism for many decades. Smith's biography, following on from her doctoral thesis, and which makes use of much more previously unavailable archival material, has been eagerly awaited, since until now we had only family memoirs, Carolyn G. Heilbrun's 1961 family portrait and George Jefferson's 1982 biography.

In *The Inheritors* (1901), the first-published collaboration between Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad, Garnett is sympathetically portrayed. At the beginning of Chapter 5 of the novel the narrator, Etchingham Granger, an unsuccessful novelist, is on his way through Bloomsbury to visit Lea, the publisher's reader, and muses that 'You will probably find traces of Lea's influence in the beginnings of every writer of about my decade': when he tracks Lea down, he is 'sprawling angularly on a cane lounge, surrounded by whole rubbish heaps of manuscript, a gray scrawl in a foam of soiled paper.' This portrait of Edward Garnett is recalled rather bitterly in *The Simple Life Limited* (1911), a novel first published by Ford under the pseudonym 'Daniel Chaucer'. Here Parmont (Garnett) remembers 'the little books in yellow paper covers' (Unwin's Pseudonym Library) and how 'in the glorious nineties [he] had possessed a remarkable power to boom authors into positions of prominence', reflecting Ford's increasingly troubled relationship with Garnett about which Helen Smith has earlier written in detail.¹

The dominant image of Garnett sprawling on the wicker chaise-longue, his favourite manuscript-reading space (though usually on the terrace

at The Cearne, and later at Pond Place, London) is frequently recalled in this long-awaited, comprehensive and meticulously researched biography. Smith writes throughout in a crisp and limpid style, with no literary-critical affectations, making the work very accessible, despite its length. It usefully offers to its readers (particularly those who are not Ford, Conrad, or D. H. Lawrence specialists) a balanced and readable account of Garnett's changing relationships, professional and personal, with the canonical writers whom he launched. It looks set to become the definitive biography of Garnett, superseding that of Jefferson, itself a scholarly and readable, though shorter, work. This is partly because Smith fleshes out considerably the details of Garnett's literary relationships with the writers he nurtured, ranging from early Conrad, Ford, Galsworthy, Stephen Crane, and W. Somerset Maugham, through to D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Edward Thomas and T. E. Lawrence, and followed by, among others, Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Faolain and H. E. Bates. Furthermore, Smith had access to far more family papers, and we thus see more of Garnett's complex personal relationships.

Much of Smith's material is already familiar, from anecdotes in Ford's memoirs and letters, from Conrad's letters, from Olive Garnett's diaries, and from David Garnett's memoirs, all of which have to some extent already been recycled, first in Heilbrun's family portrait, and then the Jefferson biography, neither of which are mentioned by Smith except in her bibliography. Smith clearly extends Jefferson's work, and offers a closer and more balanced view of the Garnetts' unconventional marriage, and of Edward's lifelong companion, the painter Nellie Heath, much loved by Constance and all the Garnett family. Newly available letters reveal for the first time the tensions as well as the largely sympathetic triangulations within this Edwardian ménage à trois.

The very short introduction dealing with Edward's formative years includes only a brief mention (9-10) of the relationships between the young Garnetts, Hueffers and Rossettis, but this is arguably justified as it has already been well covered by memoirists and other biographers. The core of the book (and to judge by its title, its overall aim) is the narrative of Garnett's life as a publisher's reader and this begins at Chapter 2 when he joins Unwin, first as a book packer, but rapidly

becoming a reader. What follows is a portrait, mostly through the eyes of others, of an extraordinarily intuitive and independently-minded man, set in and against the Edwardian and post-World War I literary and publishing scene. The writers whom Garnett discovered, mentored, nurtured, promoted, and then let loose, move in and out of a narrative which, though chronologically anchored, is never rigid or tedious. Interwoven with other literary biographical information about Edward's own writing struggles, and Constance's translations, the focus, from Chapter 4 onwards is, in each chapter, on one or two particular writers, and the chapter titles reflect the main themes. For example, 'Why not write *another?*' (Chapter 4, on Conrad); 'Sympathy, criticism and counsel' (Chapter 6, on Conrad, Somerset Maugham and Crane); '*Write it, my dear Amigo*' (Chapter 7 on R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the birth of Unwin's Overseas Library); 'My friend and protector in love and literature' (Chapter 16 on D. H. Lawrence) and 'I want to tell you how much you have taught me' (Chapter 18 on Edward Thomas).

The biography has as a whole a strong narrative energy and the transition, within chapters, from one story to the next is adroitly and almost seamlessly achieved by a sort of *progression d'effet* which holds the reader's interest. For example, in Chapter 3, 'Quite a little Russian world', Nellie Heath is first introduced, after which there follows a discussion of the Russian exiles in and around London including Constance Garnett's intense relationship with Sergei Stepniak, which Smith considers in detail, basing this on new evidence from Heath's papers (37). A description of the sorry state of the Garnett family finances leads to six pages about Stephen Crane, newly arrived in the Limpsfield area and also living beyond his means (89-95). There are occasional light-hearted moments such as the re-introduction of Galsworthy in Chapter 8, here through David Garnett's unconventional education and childhood interests in natural history, and his memory of Galsworthy neatly and elegantly dealing with a conflict at The Cearne between a fierce semi-feral cat, the family dog and a stinking carcass of prey (119). We again see this smooth narrative technique in Chapter 10, which starts in 1901 with Ford introducing the Garnett family to Henry James in Rye; this leads to an exploration of Garnett's negative view of later

period James, with Smith writing ‘the models against whom Edward is silently and unfavourably comparing James are the Russians: in stark contrast with the Master’s propensity to look the other way when confronted with the seamier side of existence’ (148). This leads naturally to Constance and David’s three month visit to Russia (1904) when Garnett became much closer to Galsworthy, taking hiking trips and working critically and constructively with him on *The Man of Property*. Yet again, Chapter 15 slides from Conrad’s fierce and well-known objection to Garnett labelling him ‘Slavic’, to D. H. Lawrence’s comment about Conrad in 1912: ‘what on earth turned him to Razumov?’ and thence to Smith juxtaposing the Lawrence/Frieda Weekley love affair with Garnett’s own affair with the young Russian, Natalie (Natasha) Duddington *née* Ertel, revealed in now available letters.

Smith provides a useful overview of aspects of the Edwardian and inter-war publishing milieu, starting with Unwin and including here a more detailed account of Garnett’s involvement with Yeats, initially through the Pseudonym Library, then the proposed Library of Ireland, than is to be found in earlier writings on Garnett. In her discussion of Duckworth’s Greenback Library, which Garnett also launched, Smith discusses his promotion of Henry Lawson and another Australian, Barbara Baynton, but curiously (and this is a small quibble) fails to mention the 1903 volume of Maupassant stories for this series, so effectively translated by Elsie Hueffer and with a preface by Ford. The last 20 years of Garnett’s life, from the death in 1917 of Edward Thomas, to Garnett’s own death in 1937, occupy only the last 89 pages of the text. This is probably justified as there are far fewer memorable highlights, other than the account, evolving over several chapters, of the publication history of T. E. Lawrence’s works. This part of the book, with its sections on Liam O’Flaherty and Sean O’Faolain, recalls Garnett’s much earlier interest in Irish literature (while noting how in 1914 he had rejected Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist* for Duckworth). The discussions about, among others, H. E. Bates, Henry Williamson, Naomi Mitchison, and Henry Green (to this reader anyway) lack the interest of the earlier chapters.

The view we finally have though, is still from the outside. The now very familiar, tall, myopic, initially lanky and later overweight, sometimes

irascible figure described by others, permanently surrounded by manuscripts, even while eating at his weekly Mont Blanc restaurant lunches, remains a rather misty and refracted portrait of a man, who was altruistic and generous and, after his own largely unsuccessful efforts at novels, plays and poetry, dedicated himself to the promotion of others, for an often very meagre salary. I would have liked more on Garnett's early influences – his own formative reading and what made him such a rapid, critically astute, almost non-stop reader of manuscripts (300 to 400 a year). But, in view of the unprecedented extent and forensic detail of Smith's archival research, it seems unlikely now that more evidence about Garnett's early life will emerge.

NOTES

1 Helen Smith 'Opposing Orbits: Ford, Edward Garnett and the Battle for Conrad', in *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts: International Ford Madox Ford Studies 6*, edited by Paul Skinner (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 79-93.

Notes on Contributors

Venetia Abdalla completed a PhD on Ford Madox Ford and he has continued to dominate her life ever since. She has a particular interest in promoting his lesser known works.

Lucinda Borkett-Jones is a PhD student at the Open University, researching Ford's journalism and propaganda during the First World War and his relationship with Germany throughout his life.

Helen Chambers made a late career leap from investigative medicine, transferring those skills to literature and history of reading, particularly early 20th century literary and travelling readers. Based in France, she is an honorary associate in English at the Open University, and part of its History of the Book and Reading Research Collaboration. The research strategies used for her recent monograph *Conrad's Reading: Space, Time, Networks* (Palgrave 2018) are now being extended to an examination of Ford's reading.

Gill Gustar is a part-time doctoral student at King's College, London. She is researching representations of madness in Ford's novels.

Meghan Hammond is a writer living in Chicago. She has a PhD in English and American Literature from New York University. Ford Madox Ford is one of the featured subjects of study in her book *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism* (Edinburgh University Press).

Dr Sara Haslam is Senior Lecturer in English at the Open University and Chair of the Ford Madox Ford Society. She has published a monograph and a wide range of chapters and articles on Ford's work, and is editor or co-editor of three volumes of *International Ford Madox Ford Studies*. Her critical edition of *A Man Could Stand Up* —, volume 3 of *Parade's End*, was published by Carcanet in 2011 and she has also edited *The Good Soldier* (2010) and the trilogy *England and the English* (2003). She is currently editing Waugh's *Helena* for OUP and researching First World War bibliotherapy.

Alan Judd is the author of nine novels and two biographies. He won the Royal Society of Literature's Winifred Holtby Award for *A Breed of Heroes* and the Guardian Fiction Prize for *The Devil's Own Work*. His life of Ford Madox Ford appeared in 1990 and won the Heinemann Award. He also wrote the authorised biography of Mansfield Cumming, founder of MI6. His latest book is *Inside Enemy* (2014) and he is a regular contributor to *The Spectator* and *The Telegraph*, among other publications.

Seamus O'Malley is Associate Professor of English at Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University. He is the author of *Making History New: Modernism and Historical Narrative*. He co-edited *Ford Madox Ford and America*, and also the forthcoming *Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford* and *A Place Inside Yourself: The Comics of Julie Doucet and Gabrielle Bell*.

Max Saunders is Professor of English and Co-Director of the Centre for Life-Writing Research at King's College London. He is the author of *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 volumes (OUP 1996) and *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (OUP 2010); and has edited several volumes of Ford's writings.

Paul Skinner has edited two books by Ford Madox Ford, *Last Post* and *No Enemy*, and a collection of essays, *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts*. He also compiled a pocket guide to the *Museums of London*. He lives in Bristol and blogs at: reconstructionarytales.wordpress.com

A few items of Fordian news

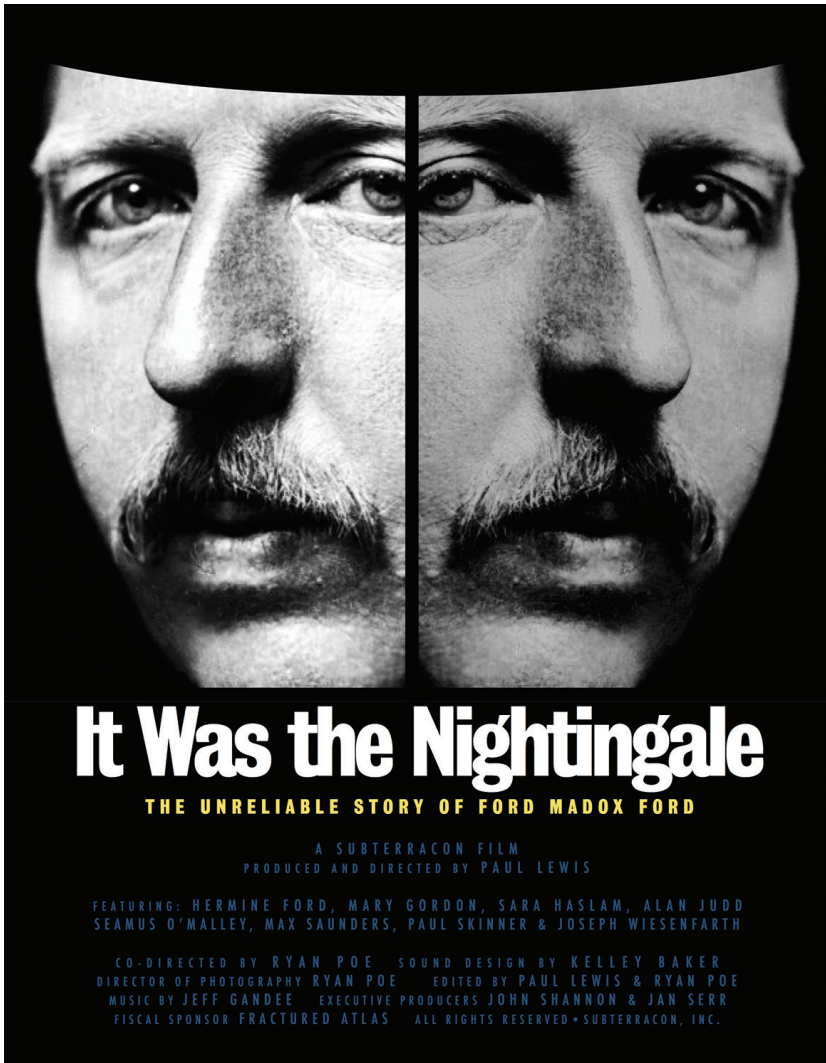
The main news for Fordians is the imminent arrival of *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Sara Haslam, Laura Colombino and Seamus O'Malley (530pp, 13 b/w ills.), which, taking account of Ford's entire literary output, brings together prominent Ford specialists to offer an overview of existing Ford scholarship and to suggest new directions in Ford studies. Some two dozen chapters are arranged under five main headings: 'Scholarly Foundations', 'Literary Identity', 'Ford and Place', 'Case Studies', 'Themes and Critical Approaches'. Within these sections, the contributors cover areas relevant to Ford's fiction, nonfiction and poetry, including reception history, life-writing, literary histories, gender, and comedy. The *Research Companion* promises to be an invaluable resource for students and scholars of Ford Studies, modernism, and the literary world that Ford helped shape in the early years of the twentieth century.

An internet search of Ford's name over the past few months brings up an inordinate number of references to the rock band Ford Madox Ford, fronted by Chip Kinman; a remarkable number of free downloads of Ford's own books and related titles, some of them a little dubious, and references or more substantial discussions on a great many blogs. Ford has also cropped up in a number of book chapters, theses and articles, all of which will, no doubt, make their way eventually to the 'Critical Writing on Ford' section of the Ford Madox Ford Society website: <http://www.fordmadoxfordsociety.org/critical-writing-on-ford.html>

Mary Gordon's '10 Favourite Books', prompted by the bookseller One Grand Books and appearing on the Vulture website, included *The Good Soldier*: 'It reminds me, always, of the futility of most judgments, how difficult it is to know anyone whom one thinks one knows, the truth that some problems have no solution but a tragic one.' Another 'Greatest Books' list included the *Observer* associate editor Robert McCrum's 'Top 10 Books of the 20th Century', with *The Good Soldier* at number seven.

David Scourfield, Professor of Classics at Maynooth University has sent

an advance notice of a conference which he is involved in organising: ‘Re-orientating E. M. Forster: Texts, Contexts, Receptions’: An international conference to be held in Cambridge Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 April 2020. David’s essay, ‘Classical In/stabilities: Virginia Woolf, Ford Madox Ford, and the Great War’, appears in a special issue (October 2018) of *Classical Receptions Journal* (OUP).



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International Ford Madox Ford Studies Volumes

Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal, edited by Robert Hampson and Tony Davenport, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002.

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

History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings, edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

Ford Madox Ford and the City, edited by Sara Haslam, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.

Ford Madox Ford and Englishness, edited by Dennis Brown and Jenny Plastow, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts, edited by Paul Skinner, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.

Ford Madox Ford: Literary Networks and Cultural Transformations, edited by Andrzej Gasiorek and Daniel Moore, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

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

Ford Madox Ford, Modernist Magazines and Editing, edited by Jason Harding, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.

Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence, edited by Dominique Lemarchal and Claire Davison-Pégon, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011.

Ford Madox Ford and America, edited by Sara Haslam and Seamus O'Malley, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012.

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

Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End: The First World War, Culture, and Modernity, edited by Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014.

Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier, edited by Max Saunders and Sara Haslam, Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2015.

Ford Madox Ford's Cosmopolis: Psycho-Geography, Flânerie and the Cultures of Paris, edited by Alexandra Becquet and Claire Davison, Amsterdam: Brill/Rodopi, 2016.

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