**Ford Madox Ford and the First World War**

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The First World War had a significant impact on Ford in physical, mental, and literary terms. In Ford studies the biographical and literary repercussions of the conflict have consistently been among the most productive critical fields. In August 1914, Ford Madox Hueffer was in an invidious position: he was 41 with a history of agoraphobic breakdown and other mental health issues, allied with relatively poor physical fitness. Combined, these factors made him an unlikely recruit. Nonetheless, he joined up, and the work that resulted, particularly the *Parade’s End* tetralogy (1924–28), is among the most frequently-cited about the conflict. Ford’s poem *Antwerp* (1915) was lauded by T.S. Eliot as ‘the only good poem I have met with on the subject of the war’ (1917: 151; see Chantler 2010). Ford’s hybrid national identity helped him to grasp the war’s import and empathise, to varying degrees, with both sides; this was perhaps heightened by his relative maturity. My focus is Ford’s prose writings about the war, with the exception of *Parade’s End* (see Clasen and Saunders’ chapter in this volume): his essays, propaganda, novels and short stories have featured less in criticism to date and therefore offer plenty of scope to future researchers.

Consciousness of his Anglo-German ancestry affected Ford’s self-fashioning. Christine Berberich (2015) argues that Ford’s Englishness is ambiguous and developing, rather than innate and fixed, noting his paradoxical take on tradition. Contributors to *Ford Madox Ford and Englishness* (2006) addressed this topic via a wide range of prose and poetry. Ford’s lineage made him acutely aware of the developing tensions between the two nations in the early years of the twentieth century; as those tensions increased, he wrote more about them. Ford negotiated his ancestry, along with feelings about place and national identity, in volumes such as *The Cinque Ports* (1900), the *England and the English* trilogy (1905–7) and the lyrics of *Songs from London* (1910). Sara Haslam (2002) traced links between Ford’s lesser-known Edwardian fiction and *Parade’s End* through the Great War in *Fragmenting Modernism*, focusing on Ford’s representational negotiations with the fragmented experience and perception of modernity. Brian Groth (2005) charted the development of his views on London as utopia via two lesser-known writings on place. The political tension was heightened for Ford by the association of Germany with recovery from his 1904 nervous breakdown, and the lyrics of *High Germany* (1912) repeatedly treated war and death (particularly in the long poem ‘To All the Dead’), themes with which Ford also engaged in his chapters appended to Violet Hunt’s *The Desirable Alien: at Home in Germany* (1913). Their fractious relationship was attested to by the backhanded compliments of Ford’s preface, in which he ‘admire[d] the kindly, careless, inaccurate, and brilliantly precise mind of the author’ (1913: x); Joseph Wiesenfarth discusses Ford’s corrections of Hunt’s assertions about Germany and their relationship more generally (2003; 2005; see also Cohen 2002).

Ford’s preface continued to argue that he was promoting international accord and understanding: it

can do nothing but good in the sense of letting people understand each other better. It is better than statistics of armaments, for these can be manoeuvred to prove anything the writer likes; it is better than the pompous analysis of national traits, better than the analysis of mineral wealths. (Ford 1913: xi)

He addressed the problems that seemed imminent as a result of the naval race, alluded to the imperial values that were instrumental in the war, and revealed a healthy disdain for crude forms of nationalism. And above all he contrasted northern Prussian militarism with what he presented as the relatively humane and southern Rhineland, anticipating the theory elaborated at the end of his career in *Great Trade Route* (1937) and *Provence* (1938). Brian Groth concludes his essay on London by alluding to Ford’s changing relationship with Germany, moving from a belief in internationalism to a warning against Fascism (2005: 91).

Ford’s interest in conflict and war writing predated the First World War. He had a high regard for Stephen Crane, the American war correspondent and author of *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). The two knew each other in the late 1890s when Crane lived in Oxted, Surrey, around fifty miles from Ford’s residence at Bonnington, Kent. The connection has been little explored (Max Saunders notes the impression made on Ford by re-reading Crane at the front (1996: II. 21; see also Saunders 2015)). Ford admired Crane’s vivid journalism as well as his great psychological novel, and later commented that ‘no more poetic vision of humanity in our late Armageddon was ever written than the *Red Badge of Courage*—and that was written twenty years before Armageddon was upon us’ (1921: 108). Crane’s novel shows the impact of the American Civil War on a young recruit, Henry Fleming, an anti-hero who flees from (and later returns to) the conflict, ironically gaining the titular award from a stray bullet. Crane was born six years after the Civil War ended, but the vividness of his descriptions of battle scenes led him into a career as a war correspondent and impassioned commentator on its unproductive hysteria. Ford was struck by his perspicacity in the context of the First World War, a brutal, mechanised conflict on an even larger scale that seemed prolonged by supposed civilian enthusiasms and detached commanding officers. Alongside Crane, Ford praises Emile Zola’s epic Franco-Prussian war novel *La Débâcle* (1892). *La Débâcle* is the longest of the twenty-volume Rougon-Macquart series and the penultimate volume; links with Ford’s apprehension of war as rupture would benefit from further exploration. While Ford’s creative links with Guy de Maupassant have been examined by W.B. Hutchings (2003), those with Zola have not been properly considered. Both Crane and Zola deserve greater intertextual attention alongside Ford’s war writing.

Ford was quick to comprehend the wide-ranging impact of the war, from the personal to the global. He had already written about the army in *The Panel* (1912), a farcical comedy about Major Edward Brent Foster, who has achieved preferment by reading the Complete Works of Henry James. When the First World War came, on 4 August 1914, the first part of *The Good Soldier* (1915) had already been published in Wyndham Lewis’s iconoclastic *Blast!* (1914–15). In the second part of the novel, however, that date becomes a conduit for calamity: it is the day on which Florence Dowell is born, sets out to travel, commits adultery (twice), marries and commits suicide. Julian Preece (2015: 231–2) and Ambrose Gordon Jr. (1964: 51–7) differ on whether or not the significance of the date was decided before or after the war: as a coincidence it seems unlikely (see Stannard, in Ford 2012).

The 4th of August remained iconic for Ford. In his ‘Epilogue’ to *Women and Men,* written in 1916 but later rewritten as part of *No Enemy*, the narrator judges Rosalie Martin’s story (Rosalie Prudent in *No Enemy*) as the most striking women’s narrative since the outbreak of the war, implying the separation of women’s and men’s narratives in wartime (1999: 59; 2002: 114–30). (Discussions of Ford and gender at war are offered by Sara Haslam (2015), and Elizabeth Brunton in this volume.) In *No Enemy* (written 1919–20, published 1929) Gringoire describes how ‘from the moment when, on the 4th August, 1914, the Germans crossed the Belgian frontier “near a place called Gemmenich,” aspects of the earth no longer existed’ for him (2002b: 13). In *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine* (1935), a cultural study haunted by the previous war and the prospect of another, Ford writes that:

Christianity as a faith died a few days after the 4th of August, 1914 ... the only sign of protest against that reign of crime and assassination having been the death, as soon as the effects of the war manifested themselves, of Benedict X … Of a broken heart on the 19th August, 1914 .... (2009: 297–8)

This compelling assessment typifies Ford’s literary response to the war and his casual approach to the facts of the matter. Ellipses such as these are characteristic of Ford’s prose style, suggesting silences, tailings-off and taboos; he developed this mode in *Parade’s End* with specific reference to the war (see Haslam in Ford 2011: lxxii-lxxiii and Brasme 2010). Ford’s impressionistic approach to factual information makes it difficult to parse his referents. He misidentifies the Pope: it was the noted anti-modernist Pope Pius X who died, in fact, on 20 August 1914 and was succeeded by Benedict XV. The condition of the Pope, already ill following a heart attack the previous year, was supposed to have been worsened by a sense of melancholy resulting from the outbreak of war. Furthermore, Ford leaves ambiguous whether the reign of crime and assassination refers to Christianity or the modern world at war. The date given is the date that the German army occupied Louvain; Brussels was taken the next day. In all the uncertainty Ford creates here, it is worth returning to his impressionistic sense of history (see Seamus O’Malley’s chapter in this volume). For him, accuracy was secondary to storytelling and 4August remained pivotal as an allusion to major social and political change that accumulated symbolism.

Ford also wrote monographs for C.F.G. Masterman, the Liberal MP who became head of the War Propaganda Bureau. The books *Between St Dennis and St George* and *When Blood is Their Argument* (both 1915) allowed Ford the space to develop a nuanced, even conflicted argument. Ford elaborates a division he made in *High Germany*, separating out Prussia for criticism from Germany as a whole. He refused to be vindictive or shrilly denunciatory, a position which even at the time seemed on the ambivalent side of what was acceptable, as Dominique Lemarchal (2004) has observed; he disavowed the most bloodthirsty enthusiasms, and suggested that a solution could be found within Germany. Ford regrets that Britain has to go to war in response to German antagonism, rather than seeing Britain as complicit in imperial conquest. Nora Tomlinson and Robert Green (1989/90) discuss ‘Ford’s Wartime Journalism’ for *The Outlook* in the context of his other war writing, and Mark Wollaeger elucidates the literary links between Ford’s propaganda and his other writing in his study of literary propaganda, examining the ‘winding digressions, anecdotal structure, and personal immediacy’ in terms of Ford’s impressionism and modernism (2006: 129, and see also Haslam’s analysis (2007) of this polyvocal text). Observing that Ford’s propaganda is discussed primarily for its literary qualities in relation to his *oeuvre*, Anurag Jain (2006) contextualises it within the British propaganda effort. Trudi Tate (2013) sees Ford’s use of anecdote in a different context, exploring the connections between propaganda and the role of rumour in *Parade’s End*: the refusal of the stoical Yorkshireman Christopher Tietjens to speak out against the slanders and libels committed against him points to the egregious nature of propaganda as a weapon. John Coyle (2007) links Ford to Proust, whom Ford admired greatly, in an essay on rumour and mourning. Despite this attention, further contextual and comparative work remains to be done, particularly in terms of early twentieth-century imperialism, along with a more developed engagement with Ford’s other non-fictional prose, much of which is usefully brought together in the Carcanet *Collected Essays* (2002).

Although Sondra J. Stang has noted Ford’s discomfort with writing ‘short’ (1986: 448), the brevity of essays and short stories suits Ford’s impressionistic style. The saccharine story ‘Fun!—It’s Heaven’ is his most stridently pro-war work: the short form which for him usually offered the possibility of ambiguity was, in 1915, clearly focused on supporting the conflict. By turns insistent and even-handed, his work in these forms mostly exhibits the tensions that typify wartime writing, often with an open-ended structure that acknowledges the fact that, as Ford later put it, ‘*this* war was not over’ (2011: 68). ‘Enigma’ deals with a disappearance whose only witness is shell-shocked; his suggested unreliability links the war with questions about its impact on narrative. ‘The Miracle’ also addresses the impact of the strain of war, returning in short form to a device Ford used successfully in *A Call* (1910), in which the certainties of its protagonist are disturbed by unsettling experiences. His little-mentioned short story ‘The Colonel’s Shoes’ also deals with a protagonist who is being pushed towards the limits of his endurance. All of these texts are available in the Carcanet *War Prose* (1999).

Particularly worthy of extended analysis is ‘The Scaremonger’, which draws on Ford’s experience of Anglo-German suspicion perpetrated by Edward Heron Allen in a thinly-veiled attack. As Robert and Marie Secor point out in the introduction to their valuable edition of Ford and Hunt’s 1917 war diaries, this story, and a piece on ‘the gallant enemy’ for *The Outlook*, made Ford’s position even more difficult (1983: 24). A former lover of Violet Hunt, Heron Allen resented her relationship with Ford because of his German connections. He was a ‘superpatriot’ who irritated Ford with ill-informed militarist talk: Saunders calls Allen’s obsession with German submarine attacks ‘paranoia’ (1996: I. 473–4). The comedy of pre-war novels like *The Panel* remains in this story, but the context makes it much blacker. The fear of the Squire of Bleakham, ‘old Blue Funk, as he almost liked to be called’, is remarkable:

The Squire made no secret of his terror—of his terror, personal, immediate, and frantic. The enemy, he was certain, would land in Bleakham, and in no other place than Bleakham, that night, the next night, or the night after next. They would come in one of the new, great submarines. A hundred cyclists would land, burning, executing, pillaging the neighbourhood during the hours of darkness; then they would disappear again into the black depths of the sea. And the first house that they would visit would be the manor house, because it was the residence of himself, old Blue Funk. (1999: 143)

The repeated patterns of three heighten the rhetoric, adding formally a sense of urgency to the terror of the squire, who takes pride in being fearful. The implicit contrast, of course, is with the men at the front who constantly face that fear. The ridiculousness is emphasised by the need to imagine the logistics of a platoon of cyclists emerging from a submarine and then returning to it after having wreaked havoc upon the neighbourhood. It is easy to see how Heron Allen took this personally.

Ford’s most deeply contemplative response to the war outside of *Parade’s End* comes in a pair of striking essays written in wartime, while he was still serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers, but was recovering from his injuries. They remained unpublished until much later, although Samuel Hynes situates them as essays of 1916 in his wide-ranging *A War Imagined* (1992: 105–6). Writing as Miles Ignotus (the unknown soldier), in ‘Arms and the Mind’ and ‘War and the Mind’, Ford understood the First World War as a conflict of modernity and anticipated how later authors came to write about it. Many of the contributors to Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes’ essay collection *War and the Mind: Ford Madox Ford’s Parade’s End, Modernism and Psychology* (2015) set out methodologies that might profitably be used to engage with these and other Fordian war writings, particularly the overlapping areas of shell-shock, trauma and empathy. Charlotte Jones (2015) discusses shell-shock, aligning Ford with Rebecca West; elsewhere, Wyatt Bonikowski’s wide-ranging discussion of Ford in *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination* offers an explicitly Freudian reading (2013: Chapter 3). Karolyn Steffens (2015) also draws on Freud, as well as more recent theories of trauma by Cathy Caruth, in arguing that Ford’s impressionism is a way of representing historical trauma. Eve Sorum’s (2015) exploration of the possibility of empathy in war invokes Deleuze and Guattari, whose theories of the rhizome seem particularly apt for discussing Ford’s more impressionistic works with their serendipitous intersections. Meghan Marie Hammond focuses on empathy in discussing the importance of the eighteenth century in *Last Post* (2015).

Ford was too early to represent the war as an incommunicable ellipsis, as many writers came to see it; Walter Benjamin claimed that ‘men returned from the battlefield grown silent—not richer, but poorer in communicable experience’ (1999: 83–4; see Hammond on Ford’s similar comment in *It Was the Nightingale* (2013: 135–6)). Ford explored the difficulty of describing the Western Front in the ‘Arms and the Mind/War and the Mind’ essays. The 4th of August remains pivotal, as Ford explains how ‘an invisible barrier in my brain seems to lie between the profession of Arms and the mind that puts things into words. And I ask myself: why? And I ask myself: why?’ (1999: 37). The repetition shows the traumatised urgency of the question and the inability to move past it, as the shell-shocked Ford struggles to represent the idealised pre-war world. Patrick Deer argues that in these essays Ford paradoxically offers a powerful visual representation of the fractured battlefield, while refusing to present its totality (2009: 15–19). The long-held supposition that there was little writing about the war in the 1920s came to pass because veterans wrote about their experience by describing it as incommunicable; Mark Larabee points to this paradox in talking about these essays (2011: 40). Social codes about masculine performance and proprieties about representable subjects did not allow soldiers to represent their experience directly, brutally and vividly. As a consequence, the struggle for a narrative to represent incommunicability, taciturnity, and avoidance comes to define the First World War, as Ford demonstrates in his stoical protagonist Christopher Tietjens—one who, nonetheless, wants to get to Valentine to talk to her. My own account of the development of First World War fiction in *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose, 1914–30* examines ‘disenchantment’ as a condition of industrialised, bureaucratic modernity (2014).

After the war, Ford eked out a living at Red Ford, a remote cottage in Pulborough, West Sussex, as he struggled to build up his physical, mental, and literary strength. His shell shock was a significant factor in reshaping his literary style and identity. In his study of Ford’s war novels, Gordon argues that he returned

to an England where he felt a stranger and which seems to have held no place for him. But as a novelist it was under that sign that he would conquer. His best work was written between the approach of war and the end of the twenties; it records the debacle, his own and society’s. (1964: 18)

Ford’s struggles to write in the immediate post-war years attest to his alienation. They would ultimately lead to the composition of his great post-war series, discussed by Max Saunders and Peter Clasen in this volume, but Ford needed to leave England first. As well as ‘Arms and the Mind/ War and the Mind’, ‘True Love and a G[eneral] C[ourt] M[artial]’ was started before the war ended but soon abandoned. It does offer, however, an insight into his mind: the alienated protagonist Gabriel Morton strives to recover from the shell shock that returns him to childhood and fills him with dread (Saunders 1996: II. 5–6, 8–14). There also remains an unpublished manuscript, *Mr. Croyd*, completed, after a creative struggle, in late 1920. Saunders describes it as raw, powerful, and featuring an idealised Fordian protagonist (1996: II. 92–3). Despite repeated efforts to place this manuscript during Ford’s lifetime, it remains unpublished. However, as interest in Ford continues to develop, it may be salutary to consider these fragmentary manuscripts in the context of the composition of more successful later works such as *No Enemy* and the *Parade’s End* novels, which are intensely personal and highly autobiographical.

Other than *Parade’s End*, *No Enemy* is Ford’s most successful creative work dealing with the war, and his last great work written in England before his departure for France and the U.S. Indeed, its long-time working title was ‘English Country’ (Skinner 2004: 65). A fragmentary text, *No Enemy* is barely a novel. It is a meditative reflection on the war, the factors that caused it, and the structures that surround it. Paul Skinner, in his introduction to the first U.K. edition, sees it as an early piece of creative non-fiction, charting its development from essays and reminiscences into a single volume thanks to the addition of a fictional frame (2002; see also 1989/90). Two Fordian avatars, Gringoire and the Compiler, address issues of the war in a work that moves between two countries and languages. The protagonists attest to the dualities to which Saunders draws attention in the title of his biography, including the gap between realism and the real and the relationship between Ford and the two protagonists; Rob Hawkes offers a strongly-theorised narratological reading of the novel and the trustworthiness of its narrators (2012: 105–15). Like much of Ford’s fiction, *No Enemy* is interested in writers and writing, here drawing on Ford’s long-standing appreciation for French literature. Gringoire is an English poet whose name is French. As Cornelia Cook points out, the slippage of pronouns makes clear that Ford aligns himself with both Gringoire and the Compiler, as reinforced by the quotation of war poems by Ford as the poems of Gringoire (Cook 2003: 191). The subtitle ‘A Tale of Reconstruction’ alludes to Ford’s personal and literary reconstructions, as well as the reconstruction of the affected nations, particularly in this case France and England. However, it was not published until 1929, and then in the U.S. only, which reveals much about both the state of mind of the writer and the readerly expectations of the post-war decade. It was not published in the U.K. until 2002. In addition to its limited availability, it was out of step with the popular view of the war at the time: Skinner states that its ‘optimism is provisional but real’ (2004: 69).

The critical time lag that results from being out of print means that much remains to be said about *No Enemy*. Studies by Karolyn Steffens (2015), who discusses it through the lens of psychoanalysis and trauma, and the earlier critic Paul L. Wiley, who sees it in terms of impressionism and memory (1962: 242–7), point towards avenues for further critical exploration. However, the novel has tended primarily to be analysed in terms of nationality and landscape, and these critical lenses also remain vital to appreciation of Ford. *No Enemy* is structured by spaces, its sections entitled ‘Four Landscapes’ and ‘Certain Interiors’, and each ending with an account of a cricket match. The *Envoi* to the novel, ‘Une partie de cricket’, is written in French about the quintessential English subject, as the Compiler banishes this ‘specimen of [Gringoire’s] prose written under fire’ to a separate chapter at the very end of the work (2002b: 66). Reconstruction, Cook reminds us, is not only about the physical world and the individual, but to achieve the betterment of our world it must also be about the reshaping of the grand narratives that underpin our existence in politics and ideology (2003: 203). The inaccessible pastoral of the cricket match is contrasted with the greyness of the war and the apparent colourlessness of the landscape. That landscape of the war is mostly constructed from the same materials and colours as the cricket match, but the fresh greens and whites are subsumed by the mud of the Western Front: the black and greyness of the guns and concrete reinforcements. Jonathan Boulter (2004) has analysed Ford’s sympathy for the landscape (and see Skinner in this volume). Eileen Lévy (2011) explores the ways in which Ford’s representations of France in *No Enemy* intersect along what she calls ‘maplines’, lines of trenches, frontiers, communication, memory, and genealogy, and Mark Larabee similarly reads the novel in terms of space and cartography (2011: 41–54; see also Charlesworth 2014: 96–9). Rob Hawkes, in the most extensive analysis of *No Enemy* to date, aligns it with other fictionalised war memoirs by Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon in terms of the connections between time and landscapes, which ‘remain [...] lived experiences which co-exist with the present moment, and which are projected into the future in anticipation of their continuing intensity’ (2012: 128).

The landscape with which Ford is unable to reconnect is literary and cultural as well as physical and phenomenological. Indeed, ‘Pon ... ti ... pri ... ith’, a short reminiscence written in France in the dying days of the war, probably as a propaganda piece, concludes with Ford’s regret that he cannot find any copies of Flaubert in ruined Rouen (1999: 35). An area suggested by this novel that might be profitably explored further in Ford’s other work is his creation of worlds, the spatiality of his literature. Where much attention has been given to the spaces of modernism by critics such as Andrew Thacker (2005), Christopher GoGwilt (1995, 2000), Scott McCracken (2007), and others, Ford has not tended to feature in these discussions. This is perhaps due to the fact that his novels, with the exception perhaps of his great early modernist novel *A Call* (1910) tend not to be typical metropolitan novels. As spatial studies turn towards the rural and local (for example, Goodman and Mathieson 2014), this is a trend worth pursuing in Ford.

The other post-war fiction that arguably demands further study is *The Marsden Case* (1923), which focuses on Anglo-German conflict without the war being a primary factor in the plot. It appeared after Ford claimed to have started writing *Parade’s End* (Saunders 1996: II. 125–6) but before *Some Do Not…* was published, suggesting that it was a necessary step towards Ford’s definitive creative interpretation of the war. Wiley offers a succinct summary in this context (1962: 209–12). The novel has received little critical attention, at least partly because it has never been reprinted. Saunders is complimentary, describing it as ‘almost a brilliant novel, but one compromised by the [...] problem of the relationship between the protagonist and his social context’ (2002: 135). However, Gordon, a rare critic to devote attention to the novel, excoriates the plot as ‘exceedingly complex, melodramatic, whimsical, sentimental—and often it is plain tiresome’ (1964: 26). Suicide is linked with the war by the coincidence of the date with the 4th of August: it is the day on which the Earl hangs himself. George also contemplates and attempts to commit suicide, although Saunders argues that the relationship between that decision and the war is undercutting rather than strengthening (1996: II. 110–16). The relationship between *The Marsden Case* and other works that elide the war, or address it obliquely, is worth further critical attention, as is the style of the novel itself: Ford seems unable to face directly the impact of the war. Jenny Plastow discusses the importance of shadows in the novel, arguing that it is ‘pervasively attentive to shadows, in ways which turn them, and the shadow-play, into powerful metaphors for perception, displacement, and death, especially the war dead’ (2009: 165). Paul K. Saint-Amour has rigorously and extensively theorised shadowing in relation to the encyclopaedic form of *Parade’s End* (2015: Chapter 6). Those shadows lingered long on Ford.

The war is similarly evaded in Ford’s autobiographical accounts of the war. While *No Enemy* and *Parade’s End* clearly tell us something about Ford via their protagonists, he resists writing about the war in the first person. Written as he was struggling to readjust, *Thus to Revisit* (1921) mentions the war but pointedly reveals nothing about Ford’s experience. Later memoirs came after the great success of *Parade’s End*. *Return to Yesterday* (1931) closes with the news of war breaking out, while *It Was the Nightingale* (1933) recommences the narrative with Ford’s leaving the army in 1919. Ford also elides details of his relationships down to the names of his partners, as Ros Pesman has pointed out: Hunt is omitted from *Thus to Revisit*, and Stella Bowen from *It Was the Nightingale* (2003: 221). This evasion itself attests to Ford’s often contrary position: in these volumes of memoirs, likely to sell just as well, if not better, than any of his creative work, he refuses to address either of the things which, arguably, are the most interesting aspects of his life: war and his relationships. Ford’s liking for aphorism and tendency towards impressionistic anecdote deflect from the serious matters and substance of his life. Available primary material such as his war diary and correspondence awaits greater engagement as Fordians continue to parse the distinctions between fact and fiction, perhaps most of all in talking about the First World War, a defining event for him and one linked to his greatest literary successes, but which was difficult for him to recover from and talk about directly.

Ford continued to write about the war evasively in his later works oriented towards cultural and literary history. The cranky and magnificent *The March of Literature* (1938) managed to avoid discussion of the First World War almost entirely, a remarkable feat given his own success and the impact of the War Books Boom of 1929–30 on so many of his peers. He restricted himself to a brief comment on the antepenultimate page that Dorothy Richardson’s *Pointed Roofs* (1915), the first volume of her *Pilgrimage* series and an early novel in the stream of consciousness form that Ford adapts for *Parade’s End*, ‘was drowned under by the reverberations of the interwar’ (1939: 774). *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine* (1935) also alludes obliquely to the war as it engages in Ford’s own idiosyncratic way with modernity and the past cultures that he and other modernist writers such as Pound and Aldington drew inspiration from and sought to recuperate. There is valuable work to be done in seeing Ford’s literary work on the war more extensively in the context of his writings about modernity, and taking him seriously as a cultural theorist and critic of his age, as well as a man of letters. His critical essays are also yet to be fully engaged with as contexts and intertexts for his writing about the war, just as there are few readings of Ford using major critical and cultural theorists. The richness and ambiguity of his work is receptive to such approaches.

Ford consistently saw the war as an epochal event, from soon after its beginning until his death in June 1939, when the world was poised on the cusp of another war. In his two-volume biography, which splits at the beginning of Ford’s active service, Saunders notes that Ford imagined himself back in the war on his deathbed: the alignment of two profound experiences that resist representation is palpable (1996: II. 228–9). Ford’s work offers a salutary contrast with that of younger writers, many of whose careers he facilitated in their early days (Herbert Read, Wyndham Lewis, D.H. Lawrence and Richard Aldington, to name but a few) and who viewed him with sometimes contemptuous but genuine affection. Ford’s position in the literary canon is now secure, and the excellent recuperative and cultural-historical work that has been done is a firm foundation on which new and innovative readings might build. There has as yet, for example, been little digital humanist work on Ford—the ability to cross refer by digital means across his war writing would be a particularly useful development for future researchers. The continuing expansion of Ford Madox Ford studies regarding those works dealing with the First World War can only enhance our understanding of his post-war career and its defining triumphs.

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