



Newsletter 20

2014

Edited by Ashley Chantler.

Honorary Members: Julian Barnes, Bernard Bergonzi, A. S. Byatt, Rupert Edwards, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Mary Gordon, Samuel Hynes, Alan Judd, John Lamb, Bill Nighy, Sergio Perosa, Ruth Rendell, Michael Schmidt, The Hon. Oliver Soskice, Christian Steinhagen, Sir Tom Stoppard, John Sutherland, Susanna White.

Executive Committee: *Chair:* Sara Haslam *Treasurer:* Paul Skinner *Secretary:* Andrew Frayn.

• <i>Ford Madox Ford Society Newsletter</i>	1
• Notes, Reports and Reviews	2

FORD MADOX FORD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

This is the final newsletter. The Society now has a brilliant new website, designed by Rob Hawkes, that is updated regularly and contains everything members need to know about the Society and Ford-related activity. Pages include:

- Latest News
- Recent Events
- Future Events and Calls for Papers
- *Parade's End*
- Critical Writing on Ford
- International Ford Madox Ford Studies (with guidelines for contributing authors)

The URL is: <http://www.fordmadoxfordsociety.org/>

Queries, notes, musings, invitations, celebrations, congratulations, photos, and links to newspaper articles and websites are posted by Society members and others on the 'Ford Madox Fordies' Facebook group page: www.facebook.com/groups/fordmadoxfordies.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed material to the newsletter, 1997–2014.

NOTES, REPORTS AND REVIEWS

Modern Language Association (MLA)

In January 2014, three members of the Ford Madox Ford Society presented papers for a special panel titled 'Vulnerability of Body and Mind in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* Series' at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) in Chicago. The panel was specially designed to address the MLA's 2014 presidential theme: 'Vulnerable Times'. Seamus O'Malley opened the panel with 'Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*: Vulnerable Memory, Vulnerable History?' Featuring work from O'Malley's book on modernism and the historical novel (forthcoming from Oxford University Press later this year), the paper argued that Ford's series theorizes a mode of writing in which amnesia serves as an aesthetic model for modernist historiography. Max Saunders delivered the session's second paper, 'Physical and Mental Violence and Vulnerability in Ford's *Parade's End*'. Saunders made five key arguments about Ford's representations of vulnerability: that those representations tend to relate to sexuality; that for Ford, physical and mental vulnerability are inseparable; that Ford foregrounds near-death experiences as existential moments of extraordinary power over the characters' lives; that Ford explores sado-masochistic versions of physical and mental vulnerability; and that the war's tangling of Eros and Thanatos enables Tietjens finally to escape from the sado-masochistic fix of his marriage. In the panel's final paper, 'Feeling Into Pain: Vulnerable Bodies in Ford's *Parade's End*', I looked at the connections between the vulnerability of bodies and the availability of character minds in *Last Post*, arguing that the traumatic narrative of *Parade's End* as a whole depends on Tietjens's disappearance in the final volume. The papers were followed by an enthusiastic question-and-answer session with the audience.

Meghan-Marie Hammond

[The Society is investigating the application route for 'Allied Organisation' status with the MLA. See the website for updates.]

The Ford Madox Ford Collection Maughan Library, King's College London

The Society and Maughan Library are grateful to the estate of Jenny Plastow for donating the following books by Ford:

- *The Queen Who Flew* (Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894)

- *High Germany* (Duckworth, 1911)
- *The Nature of the Crime*, with Joseph Conrad (Duckworth, 1924)
- *The March of Literature* (Allen and Unwin, 1939)
- *Christina's Fairy Book* (Latimer House, 1949)

With the exception of a handful of extremely rare first editions, the collection now includes most Ford firsts. If any members of the Society are looking for a good home for spare copies of any of the following, they would be extremely welcome. Please email me: max.saunders@kcl.ac.uk

<i>The Feather</i> (T. Fisher Unwin, 1892)
<i>The Inheritors</i> , with Joseph Conrad (William Heinemann, 1901)
<i>Christina's Fairy Book</i> (Alston Rivers, 1906)
<i>An English Girl</i> (Methuen, 1907)
<i>The 'Half-Moon'</i> (Eveleigh Nash, 1909)
<i>A Call</i> (Chatto and Windus, 1910)
<i>The Portrait</i> (Methuen, 1910)
<i>The Simple Life Limited</i> [pseudonym Daniel Chaucer] (John Lane, 1911)
<i>Ladies Whose Bright Eyes</i> (Constable, 1911)
<i>The Panel</i> (Constable, 1912)
<i>The New Humpty-Dumpty</i> [pseudonym Daniel Chaucer] (John Lane, 1912)
<i>Mr. Fleight</i> (Howard Latimer, 1913)
<i>The Desirable Alien</i> , with Violet Hunt (Chatto and Windus, 1913)
<i>Collected Poems</i> (Max Goschen, 1913)
<i>The Marsden Case</i> (Duckworth, 1923)
<i>Women & Men</i> (Three Mountains Press, 1923)
<i>Mister Bosphorus and the Muses</i> (Duckworth, 1923)
<i>New York Essays</i> (William Edwin Rudge, 1927)
<i>The English Novel</i> (Constable, 1930)
<i>Return to Yesterday</i> (Liveright, 1931)
<i>Collected Poems</i> (Oxford University Press, 1936)
<i>Vive Le Roy</i> (George Allen and Unwin, 1937)
<i>Critical Writings of Ford Madox Ford</i> , ed. Frank MacShane (University of Nebraska Press, 1964)
<i>Letters of Ford Madox Ford</i> , ed. Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton University Press, 1965)

Max Saunders

Wyatt Bonikowski, *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

Ashgate's blurb on the back cover of Wyatt Bonikowski's book indicates its likely interest for readers of this newsletter. Ford is the first of the three authors listed as his focus in the exploration of the shell-shocked soldier and trauma in their various representations in the

literature of the First World War. Analysis of *Parade's End* forms the major part of Chapter 3, 'Transports of Wartime Impressionism', and, as this title suggests, it is the embodied *return* of shell shock – to England, to loved ones, to those who did not fight and had no direct experience of the conflict – that interests Bonikowski. Problems of communication and their relationship to experience; the degree to which returning soldiers 'brought the death drive home'; the cross-over between history and fiction are all treated at length in the Introduction as Bonikowski leads up to a summary of his intent with regard to his main texts. *Parade's End* is to be examined as a fictional response to 'narrative amnesia', while his approach to both *The Return of the Soldier* and *Mrs Dalloway* is to be concentrated on the encounters between shell-shocked soldiers and women at home. The crucial difference in their treatment of the death drive, he will argue, is that Chris Baldry is 'cured' and returned to war by Helen, while Septimus Smith's suicide can be interpreted as an attempt to communicate, paradoxically, to Clarissa Dalloway: '[m]ore than [Ford and West], Woolf suggests that the silence of the death drive might, in its very resistance to representation, be a way of communicating the traumas of war' (p. 16).

Chapter 4, 'The "Passion of Exile": Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*', begins with a brief comparison of West's novel to *Parade's End*. Both reveal the impossibility of the dream of the return home – where that dream anticipates stability. More of this cross-reference and comparison would have been welcome overall in the book – especially with regard to the classical themes that Bonikowski introduces. However, it is Chapter 3 that Ford scholars are most likely to find of interest; here, Bonikowski unpacks Ford's response to the 'nerve tangle' of the war and the writing of *Parade's End* that resulted. In this chapter, he addresses Ford's personal experiences of war; sexuality; what he calls a 'new kind of literary impressionism' born of war – one which is based on materiality rather than the visual impression – and the particular function of the death drive in this text. His analysis is linguistic as well as textual and structural. Tietjens's name is a focus point as Bonikowski assesses the 'trope of letters' in the text. Overall, it is the metaphor of transport that governs his approach in the chapter: transports of war are related to transports of passion as he analyses the novel's movement between life and death. Bonikowski's book is a welcome contribution to Ford scholarship, and though it has been unable to take advantage of the upcoming *Parade's End* volumes of essays, it will provide those working on Ford and war, psychology and sexuality, in particular, with a further frame of reference.

Sara Haslam

Alice Reeve-Tucker and Nathan Waddell (eds), *Utopianism, Modernism, and Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

'Tolstoi implies that whatever happens in the way of violent revolution there will also be a private and secret revolution in men, from which a new religion will be reborn, or rather something altogether new, which will have no name' (Arles, end of September 1888)

Vincent van Gogh was among a number of artists and intellectuals who were seeking to discover a reassessment of cultural paradigms in the last decades of the nineteenth century. He took great

interest in the message provided by Tolstoy's *My Religion*, but he might have found similar attempts to bring about change expressed in the work of others. At a similar moment, William Morris was looking forward to a future that was in fact a pre-industrial ideal past of socialist medievalism – the basis of his fantasy, *News from Nowhere* (1890). Ford's view of Morris was of a man who had a notion of 'promoting human kindness and peopling the earth with large-bosomed women dressed in Walter Crane gowns and bearing great sheaves of full-eared corn'. After 1900, other writers, such as H. G. Wells, attempted to articulate a utopian vision for the modern world – significantly the turn into the twentieth century marked the crossing of a boundary into a new age; and the idea was not lost on an emerging generation of writers and thinkers. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* (1905) was the expression of these desires for new ways of living – and ran counter to the vision of Morris and others who could only look backwards.

The association between utopianism and modernism is one that would have struck contemporaries as perhaps less strange than it does to twentieth-first-century audiences accustomed to think of modernist practice in terms of aesthetic hygiene. There was a yearning for something better to be found in the writings of André Gide, such as *Les Nourritures Terrestres* (1897); Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks* (1901) saw civilization in decay; and Maxim Gorky espoused a call for revolution through the realism of such novels as *The Mother* (1907). The desire for environmental improvement found expression in the Garden City Movement which sought to respond to what were seen as the failings of the nineteenth-century urban development. Ebenezer Howard had shown the way in his influential book *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902). Ford himself entered these debates by envisioning, 'The Future in London' (1909), in which the 'problem is to make of the whole of Outer London one garden city'. However, as Wyndham Lewis shrewdly observed with characteristic brio, the advent of the First World War killed the optimism, 'then down came the lid – the day was lost, for art, at Sarajevo'. And if it was lost for art, it was also lost for much of that early faith in utopias.

Utopianism, Modernism, and Literature in the Twentieth Century, edited by Alice Reeve-Tucker and Nathan Waddell, is an attempt to read modernism and the writing of the twentieth century by the light thrown by the searching for the ideal society. There is something truly exhilarating to get back in touch with the energy of those early and formative years of the century when the modern movement in the arts emerged. In these essays, it is not just the more obvious manifestations of this energy that are explored but also the pervading influence of the urge to make it new. In their introduction, Reeve-Tucker and Waddell demonstrate that their conception of utopianism is one that is not limited by an understanding that any imagined utopia is by its very nature a vision of what cannot be in actuality.

Scott W. Klein's chapter on Ford – 'A Likely Impossibility: *The Good Soldier*, the Modernist Novel, and Quasi-Familial Transcendence' – takes the concept of utopia, and how such discourses were manifest in the culture of the time, to re-read *The Good Soldier*. How much does the utopian idealism of the times make an impact? Klein argues persuasively that, like Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Forster's *Howards End*, the novel is concerned with the condition of England, which in some sense is measured, in the absence of adequate alternatives, on a yearning for perfection. Rather than becoming too narrowly focussed on reading the novel as simply an exercise in the demonstration of the limitations of Dowell's narration, Klein suggests

that the spirit of the age that could indulge in fantasies about a better life to come – understood not in terms of religious salvation but through secular social planning – shapes the way individuals interpret their lives.

It is part of Dowell's confusion (perhaps his misreading is related to his being American) that he imagines that the relationships between the four principal characters can represent some sort of ideal social order. As such, it is deeply flawed because it places too much faith in the 'ancient haunts of peace' in which much of the action takes place, as well as being a fantasy of aristocratic behaviour. The tragedy is, Klein argues, that the impulses of the individuals that constitute the ideal form of society are undermined by their wayward and irrational individuality that threatens the fabric of the social organisation of the state.

When late in life Ford revised *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1935), it is relevant that he changed the ending so that Sorrell and Dionissia go off to Soviet Russia to be 'Beginning a new civilisation and certainly with new faith'. What seems to matter most to Ford is to be at the beginning of something, when things are being created. It is an opening world – and this is as close as he seems to be able to go to being able to realise the ideal of the 'terrestrial paradise'. Klein helps us to see how the novel, which attempts to render an affair, which is seen as tragedy (the discarded title *The Saddest Story* seems to deliberately bar the tragic but ironically invokes it), can integrate the processes of thinking that might be characterized as the utopian unconscious. Let Ford have the last word:

It is this tyranny of the Past that is one of the main obscurers of our view of the Future. [...] who can tell what petty and imbecile habit of today will not hinder some beneficent change of the Future? For the Future has only the idealism of a dim and unbefriended reason to wage war with. The Past uses this idealism of the picturesque, the Ancient, the Faith of our Fathers.

Stephen Rogers