

Imaginative visions

In the two previous chapters Ford's major male characters have been seen to be under attack. Their behaviour codes, or vision of how to organise life having been fragmented (by war, by social shift, and by women), they are brought to a self-knowledge leading, particularly, to reflective or compulsive admissions, and to a degree of sexual awareness. War multiplied perspective; it showed Tietjens how to look on his men with love, and how to choose to love Valentine, despite the psychological dangers associated with each case. For Grimshaw, forced to battle of a different kind, the female gaze came to mean intellect along with sexual confidence; both of these undid him in the end: 'she looked up again into Robert Grimshaw's eyes. "I think, my dear", she said slowly, "as a precaution, I think you cannot have me on those terms; I think you had better" – she paused for the fraction of a minute – "marry me"'. Katya 'gets him both ways', and he admits as much to her.¹ Grimshaw's masculinity is partially liberated, and then reincarcerated, in *A Call* (Tietjens's, by contrast, is heightened and given new life). Ultimately, as the conclusion to these two chapters, the fragmentation endemic to modernism (represented in these cases by the war, by technology and by the contemporary perception of the 'woman problem'), involves multiple perspectives that can destroy one's sense of one's world and one's sense of oneself. But this isn't always the case. Regeneration, of the kind that eventually comes to Tietjens, as the end point of his journey through war, is also in its gift. This chapter traces the roots of this (often atavistic²) regenerative possibility in Ford, a possibility that attunes the mind not to the commonly expressed modernist experience of fragmentation, but to its rich and life-giving mirror – multiplicity – instead. The discussion in this chapter, then, will help to disprove Levenson's assertion, in *A Genealogy of*

Modernism, that Ford ‘lapsed towards scepticism’ by suggesting that subjectivity and individual consciousness were the only repositories of value in a world racked by the loss of ‘comprehensive vision’ and ‘moral authority’.³ He does experience this sense of loss acutely, as displayed in the discussion of previous chapters; but this is by no means all that he feels, and nor is his position in the subjectivist (modernist) tradition an unqualified one.

From the vantage point of 1918, Ford wrote in an essay of the events of the Somme that they ‘come back to me as some fragments, confused, comic or even pathetic’.⁴ Like Gertrude Stein, who talked of the war as having a composition different from that of all previous wars, what she called a ‘composition of cubism’,⁵ Ford makes something out of these fragments. In the same essay, he builds them into a collage that does homage not just to cubism, but to the great impressionist painters too:

In a corner of this picture is the menu of a sort of restaurant Duval, in Cardiff; ‘sweetbread à la financière, fourpence’; and the left eye of a crying woman; and part of Newport station and the large nose of a Colonel; and then, of Waterloo station – the livid light, the canopy, high and banal; and the mothers, and the wives and girlfriends of the Welch officers; and the little brown Tommies, heavily engrossed; and the wives who were carrying pale babies and the tin badges of their husbands. And all laughing and crying and jostling each other... and the alabaster hands shaking behind the ‘photographic representative’ of the Northcliff papers, who has his head hidden under a black velvet hood, and who exorts us to assume imbecile smiles... Clouds, shadows, pale faces, spirals of violet smoke, out of which loomed the iron columns supporting the station roof – enormous and as it were deathly...

Shattered and fragmented as these images were, Ford’s imagination, his literary vision, manages to structure them, to coax them into a shape that bespeaks a new kind of tradition post-war. In this new tradition humour, colour, emotion, tension and class, all supported and framed by the great looming mouth of the railway terminus that sets the light bouncing, are energised and articulated in what seems to become a true moving picture of war.⁶ Yes, the cubist perspective is crucial to its construction (the ‘left eye of a crying woman’), as is the Turner-esque take on the station’s structure. Shortly afterwards, though, as Ford develops the collage, by pushing the memory further back (as he so often does), he finds another of its aspects, one that is animated by a more distant part of his imaginative inheritance. The tradition becomes less ‘new’ and more of a reformation; simultaneously, our

attention becomes focused, as it should be, on the ‘Victorian Greats’ of Ford’s past. ‘And then’, Ford writes, ‘this cubist picture effaced itself and gave way to a small canvas [of the kind his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, or Rossetti sometimes produced], as who should say Pre-Raphaelite’; a vision in pink, black, white, green and blue emerges. The jewelled colours of the pastoral scene become the dominant scheme for the time, and assert their vibrancy over the bustle of the station mouth (think back here to the Kitty/Katya scene in *A Call* for another example of such a scene). It is this Pre-Raphaelite dominance and inheritance – traced mainly through his grandfather – that will form the basis of my investigations of the roots of regenerative possibilities in Ford, and the nature and provenance of his imaginative visions. Lord Leighton judged the duty of visual art to be to ‘awaken those senses directly emotional and indirectly intellectual, which can be communicated only through the sense of sight’.⁷ Ford would agree with Leighton, but he would stretch his definition to include prose. He both adopts, and adapts, Pre-Raphaelite techniques and subject matter in much of his fiction – in *The March of Literature*, published in 1938, he uses the phrase ‘we Pre-Raphaelites’⁸ – fiction that will be discussed here.

In this chapter, then, I will be concentrating on the visions that inspired, in part, what can perhaps be called Ford’s positive fictions. These fictions possess roots that mean the multiple perspectives central to modernism often regenerate as well as destroy. Regeneration itself will be seen to be a potentially painful or fearful process; for Ford – or, perhaps, for anyone – stimulation in any new or reclaimed emotional or psychological direction is not unqualifiedly joyous. However, the mixture of joy and fear is elementary to the process, and the fictional rewards, of the kind that complemented such texts as *A Call*, are necessary to a complete understanding of Ford’s vision of the fragmenting forces of modernism.

Ancient Lights

The ‘Half Moon’ (1909), *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911), *The New Humpty Dumpty* (1912) and *The Young Lovell* (1913) (the main subject of the next chapter) are works instructively linked in this exploration to the publication of Ford’s first volume of reminiscences, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* (1911). My regenerative reading of the texts listed above will give particular attention to patterns involving

his treatment of women and sexuality that appear in them; once more, the visual aspects of Ford's imagination and prose will be foregrounded, and will form further instructive links between the texts. But *Ancient Lights* is also in a category of its own. As I argued in Chapter 1 regarding this text, one of Ford's primary responses to this period of change is to 'go back' to the past story of his life – to reflect, and to reconsider. Emphasis in that chapter lay on the interrelationship between this instinctive narrative technique in *Ancient Lights* and the political and psychological tenor of the time. Focus here will be instead on the role of this text in the regenerative quest; *Ancient Lights* provides complex and sometimes overwhelmingly powerful images of a mind both struggling with, and celebrating, figures deep in its past and deep in its consciousness. The products of that struggle can be witnessed in the fiction that I also discuss in what follows.

Ancient Lights formed part of Ford's narrative response to a changing world (he says in the preface to a later autobiographical volume that the 'only excuse' for writing one's life is to give a 'picture of one's time',⁹ perhaps because he believed that 'prose is a matter of looking things in the face'¹⁰). In a contemporary article in the *Daily News*, he explained the title: '*Ancient Lights* has as its moral the fact that the Pre-Raphaelites were no "great shakes" but they were giant and flaring beacons – ancient lights, in fact, compared with anything today that stands upon any hill tops'.¹¹ Beacons provide warning of danger; placed on hills, they are used to light the rocks that may otherwise harm unsuspecting sailors. Instead of beacons, Ford sees figures from his familial past on his hills, signalling the way. In *A Call*, published a year before *Ancient Lights*, Ford expressed the existential significance of being able to stand upon a hill. Grimshaw, meeting an Orthodox priest, is granted by this encounter the means to 'stand upon a little hill and look down into the misty "affair" in which he was so deeply engaged'.¹² His fortunate encounter with a crucial yet neglected part of his past (he has Greek Orthodox roots) enables him to see himself with some critical distance, to reflect on his role with a placid eye.¹³ In this instance, the ability to be a 'homo duplex', to find oneself in two actual or figurative places at one time, often used to connote a Fordian image of hell, is a positive attribute – as it is for the protagonists in this chapter. Is Ford saying that the beacon provided by the Pre-Raphaelites, for whom *Ancient Lights* is named, enabled him to stand on, and to see himself from, a similar existential promontory as the one from the vantage point of which he wrote the text? Perhaps the visual stimulus they

provided helped him to construct his picture of this time? We will see. What is certain is that the ‘impossible things of the past which assuredly would never come again’ in Ford’s conception of reality in 1915 do, in his fantasies – his positive fictions – and that the ‘polished armour, shining swords, fortresses, conflagrations’ and impressive women (all common Pre-Raphaelite props) are joined by mental forays that produce magnificent archetypes and felt reminiscences that invigorate his prose.¹⁴

Ford dedicates *Ancient Lights* in the preface to his two daughters, Christina and Katharine (named, I suggest, after Christina Rossetti and Catherine Howard). After an initial paragraph, quoted and discussed in the Introduction to this book, he writes the following:

The earliest thing that I can remember is this, and the odd thing is that, as I remember it, I seem to be looking at myself from outside. I see myself a very tiny child in a long, blue pinafore, looking into the breeding box of some Barbary ring-doves that my grandmother kept in the window of the huge studio in Fitzroy Square. The window itself appears to me to be as high as a house, and I myself to be as small as a doorstep, so that I stand on tiptoe and just manage to get my eyes and nose over the edge of the box, while my long curls fall forward and tickle my nose. And then I perceive greyish and almost shapeless objects, with, upon them, little speckles like the very short spines of hedgehogs, and I stand with the first surprise of my life and with the first wonder of my life. I ask myself, can these be doves – these unrecognisable, panting morsels of flesh? And then, very soon, my grandmother comes in and is angry. She tells me that if the mother dove is disturbed she will eat her young. This, I believe, is quite incorrect. Nevertheless, I know quite well that for many days afterward I thought I had destroyed life, and that I was exceedingly sinful [...]. [I]t was my misfortune to have from this gentle personality my first conviction – and this, my first conviction, was one of great sin, of a deep criminality.¹⁵

Despite the obvious significance of this passage (Thomas Moser quotes it in full in his autobiographical study of Ford’s fiction, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, as do Sondra Stang in her *Reader* and Max Saunders in his biography), especially to those of psychoanalytic intent, there seems to be very little in Ford’s description of his sight that can be described as regenerative, or as anything other than fundamentally disturbing. I will move to discuss the Pre-Raphaelite connections that frame the incident shortly, but for now I want to concentrate on the stunning memory which has as its locus the squirming box of Barbary doves. Ford is using the adjective ‘Barbary’ most obviously

geographically (as well as scientifically): it refers to the countries along Africa's northern coast. And yet, other connotations attached to the definition of this word must also be used to analyse this memory (see the *OED*). These are connotations of foreignness, of heathen and uncultivated behaviour, of the primacy of nature over civilisation.¹⁶ The primacy of nature over civilisation seems to include in Ford's Oedipally revolutionary vision the devouring primacy of the female over the male. We have been here before.

In Chapter 3 I quoted from Camille Paglia's somewhat sensationalist trawl through literary and philosophical history, in which she constructs, as gendered polarities, nature versus civilisation. She could herself have been extrapolating from Freud's study of civilisation, society and religion, which declaims as follows:

We have spoken of the hostility to civilization which is produced by the pressure that civilization exercises, the renunciations of instinct which it demands. If one imagines its prohibitions lifted – if, then, one may take any woman one pleases as a sexual object, if one may without hesitation kill one's rival for her love or anyone else who stands in one's way, if, too, one could carry off any of the other man's belongings without asking leave – splendid, what a string of satisfactions life would be! [...]

But how ungrateful, how short-sighted after all, to strive for the abolition of civilization! What would then remain would be a state of nature, and that would be far harder to bear. It is true that nature would not demand any restrictions of instinct from us, she would let us do as she liked; but she has her own particularly effective method of restricting us. She destroys us – coldly, cruelly, relentlessly, as it seems to us, and possibly through the very things which occasioned our satisfaction. It was precisely because of these dangers with which nature threatens us that we came together and created civilization. (SE xxi, p. 15)

Freud projects a feminine gender onto 'nature', as does Paglia (and as Ford has seemed to – see Chapter 3), and he uses the present tense, warning of the continuing 'dangers' with which surrendering to her threatens us (so is he advocating repressing desire?) in society. Thinking about it further, it appears, somewhat bizarrely, that women have no place in this vision of society: Freud seems to address males only as the protagonists in the collective civilisation massed against the female subversive that must be excluded. Sexology with which Ford would become familiar (years after the Barbary doves event occurred, as a writing adult) would have suggested the same pattern of analysis: Weininger, as Joseph Bristow points out, concludes that woman 'is

sexuality itself, and man must protect himself accordingly.¹⁷ Ford, though perhaps proving himself in 1911 to be imaginatively aware of these deeply felt opinions, by evoking them in expressing his childhood memory, does not see himself as protected in this way.

As Ford reflects on the memory of the doves, rather, he finds himself to be vulnerable in his situation. Despite the barriers with which his memory furnishes him – the box, and the window, and the doorstep – these seem to exacerbate, rather than to contain, the sight. In fact, the size of the window focuses the attention along with its light and warmth on the alliterative, fecund, ‘breeding box’. Ford, small and frail, peeks over the top of the box which conceals, and then, worse, reveals, the wonder of sex and procreation that is suddenly and permanently rendered co-existent with death. The dove, which in Judeo-Christian symbolism represents purity and simplicity, stands for something very different here.¹⁸ It provides Ford with an image in which the female is not only omnipotent, but is voracious, and comes at him from two different (though then united) directions, as the procreative and the murderous mother. Seemingly, Ford’s presence in the imposing house of his grandfather is forgotten at his point; the female is in the ascendant.¹⁹ Despite, or perhaps because of, his vulnerability, he is evidently fascinated, enthralled. His curiosity in this incident is unsurprising; Freud argues, as Bristow puts it, ‘that when children first examine their social worlds, they are pre-occupied with only one question: where do babies come from?’²⁰ What is of note is the fact that he chooses to revisit this powerful and female-oriented memory in such vivid form, and places it at the start of his autobiography, in the dedication to his female offspring. Ford isn’t simply displaying an interest in origins here, though placed as it is in the preface, this rich scene could be described as the source of the text; it is more to do with a fascinated recognition of female power over those origins. Here we can begin to spy the regenerative roots of the memory, especially as they are revisited in other, fictional, soon to be encountered, scenes.

Ford’s memory of the above occurrence is detailed in the extreme; it is hard to believe that he has ever ‘forgotten’ this aspect of his past – his ostensible explanation for the writing of the memoir. He shifts from the past tense into the present almost imperceptibly as the comparatively weak constraints of the intervening years fall away. The Oedipal influences present in the picture that he paints concentrate the attention on the sexual identity of the young doves and the wrath of his

grandmother. Ford sees himself as the young innocent, curls falling about his face, surprised simultaneously by the sexual nature of the scene before him and by the resultant fury of the 'disturbed female', whom he confuses and conflates with his grandmother acting *in loco parentis*. The part of this passage that stands out over and above any other is, perhaps, the question, formed in the present tense, 'I ask myself, can these be doves – these unrecognisable, panting morsels of flesh?' Here the 38-year-old writer articulates his remembered and still experienced enthralled anxiety as to identity, as to sexuality, and as to the power of the female figure. Compelling though this scene is, it cannot be fully appreciated until the forces it generates are traced into the fictions that emerged at the same time; particularly resonant in this instance will be the imagery Ford employs in *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, published the year after *Ancient Lights*.

The Pre-Raphaelites and Ford

In addition to the story behind the title of the text, reference to the Pre-Raphaelites both frames and punctuates this memory that is placed by Ford at Fitzroy Square, Ford Madox Brown's London house and studio from 1865. (Though on the fringes of the Brotherhood, Brown knew most of its members well, and shared some of their artistic aims.) The occasion of Ford's remembrance is introduced by the phrase, 'I seem to be looking at myself from outside', perhaps indicating his attainment of some small hill from which to view the scene.²¹ The necessary space for such a view is certainly formed by those words, a critical distance is thereby established, but it is more complicated than that. In the first edition of *Ancient Lights*, the dedication is preceded by a portrait of Ford aged 4, painted by Madox Brown. In this portrait he is painted as William Tell's son, and holds up the two halves of the apple that have been (thankfully) divided by the father's arrow, which remains stuck in the tree behind Tell's/Ford's head. Underneath the portrait, Ford has placed an inscription that is then echoed precisely by the words with which he introduces his memory – 'I seem to be looking at myself from outside'. In the painting it is obvious that Ford would be looking at himself thus, but he proves he also does this in prose.

Moser's analysis of this portrait is that 'the little boy [...] is looking out with very strange eyes',²² and this is a fair description, except Ford himself emphasises instead the action of looking back in at himself, proving a split vision of himself as subject and object. He describes

looking at himself alongside others, one a beloved grandfather, but also the father who has, in Ford's role as William Tell, fired an arrow at him, and who will shortly, in the written text, call him a 'stupid donkey' (p. ix). Ford here establishes the tone of the ostracised innocent, one suffering a self-analysed crisis of identity that will be so effectively and sexually developed when the grandmother too intervenes.

From that point, then, at the very beginning of the text, he pictures himself as a fragmented subject, one that is in addition guilt-ridden, death-threatened, stifled not just by the doves but by the men who came to call at Fitzroy Square. Ford writes that he can only breathe freely in a modern world without the 'Victorian Greats', and dwells a few pages further on in the narrative on the enormous stone urn that stood outside Madox Brown's house and seemed always to be about to fall on him. The threatened suffocation is emblematic, perhaps, of the panic attacks from which Ford used to suffer, as well as of the feeling of being overwhelmed, physically and emotionally, by these enormous male and female figures. Nothing, however, that he writes here about the 'Greats' is as replete with psychological and emotional energy as the memory of the doves.

Many of the 'Greats' did come to call on Madox Brown; over the years, as Teresa Newman and Ray Watkinson write, 'the Madox Browns entertained Browning and Tennyson, Mazzini and Charles Dilke, Mark Twain and Turgenev, Franz Listz and Cosima Wagner, as well as Swinburne and the younger writers Arthur O'Shaughnessey, Edmund Gosse and Oscar Wilde'.²³ The addition of members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (to 'every luminary' of which, George Steiner asserts, Ford was 'connected by birth and relation'²⁴), forms the group of men who frame Ford's Barbary-doves memory at its other extremity, the 'terrible and forbidding things' that squash the breath in his body. Far from granting him the benefit of clarity of vision, these men seem to maintain a position on the hill that precludes him from getting a toe-hold. 'These people', he stresses, still addressing Katharine and Christina, 'were perpetually held up to me as standing upon unattainable heights, and at the same time I was told that if I could not attain these heights I might just as well not cumber the earth'. Almost his last word on the subject in *Ancient Lights* affirms this sense of the intimidated and overwhelmed subject. Ford says it is finally 'astonishing how little I seemed to have changed since I was a very little boy in a velveteen coat with gold buttons and long golden ringlets ... I do not go into [my kitchen] because lurking at the back of my head I have

always had the feeling that I am a little boy who will be either spoken to or spanked by a mysterious “They” (p. 253). Looking back at himself, it is a Pre-Raphaelite vision that he sees, all ringlets and velvet and colours. He says that he hasn’t changed. Ford’s visual imagination, and the way he depicts and situates his position in the world, are essential to this narrative. (He treats himself as a protagonist similarly to the way he treats those others to be met shortly.) He makes meaning from the often sexualised situations in which he sees himself and others in his mind’s eye, displaying the tendency to place himself in specific surroundings, with specific and vivid connotations. He watches, remembers and depicts the dramatic results. More positive results than those just detailed are discernible in this text, and in his fiction too.

Ford was desperately fond of his grandfather, with whom he went to live after his father’s sudden death in 1889.²⁵ His effect upon Ford is extensively explored, and documented, by Moser, Saunders and Judd, among others (Judd avers that ‘it would be hard to exaggerate the influence Brown had on his grandson’²⁶) and also by Newman and Watkinson in their study of Ford Madox Brown. They state that ‘Brown had become exceptionally close to his grandson Ford’, partly because, after the tragic death of Brown’s son Oliver in 1874, he looked to Ford to fulfil Oliver’s ‘literary genius’. ‘Ford inherited Nolly’s spiritual mantle’, they conclude, just as he would ‘inherit Rossetti’s real cloak and stride about Bloomsbury in it, playing the last Pre-Raphaelite’ (echoing Douglas Goldring’s biography of Ford entitled *The Last Pre-Raphaelite*), a role that would later exercise Violet Hunt’s memories of Ford.²⁷

Madox Brown did indeed want ‘Fordie’ to write; he promised to illustrate the fairy story that Ford wrote for his sister Juliet after their father died, *The Brown Owl*. It is hard to ignore the significance of the title, especially when one enters the romantic, ancient world of the novel. Here is a land of magicians, kings and princesses; a king lies dying and extracts a promise from his beloved daughter to ‘cherish the Owl’. She does not know what he means, but promises, and after his death the Owl appears, and is soon ‘become a companion to her that would take the place of her father’.²⁸ The book is constructed as a series of emotionally demanding tableaux (think back to Leighton’s view of art). Far from asking the reader to view the text from a complex set of perspectives, as in *The Good Soldier*, Ford asks instead for sympathy and sensitivity, to fantastical, Pre-Raphaelite-laced, impressions.

The Owl is loyal and kindly, powerful and wise, and is Brown’s

representative in Ford's imaginative universe. Madox Brown always held such a position, thus providing Ford with one of the 'static verities' of his life.²⁹ The book was published in 1891, following Brown's persuasions at T. Fisher Unwin via Edward Garnett. It thus owes its existence to him through several related channels, and Ford's name on the title page acknowledges the debt.³⁰ This begins to illustrate Ford's ability to experience his Pre-Raphaelite inheritance as stimulus to positive ends; Saunders writes that 'Madox Brown opened his eyes to visual impressions; Ford's impressionism in words thus pays perpetual homage to the painter'.³¹ Two more fantasy stories were written by Ford before he set to his first biographical task: *Ford Madox Brown* was published in 1896.

According to Moser's analysis of these events and experiences, however, Brown's legacy expanded to contribute something very specific to Ford's burgeoning personality, and ultimately to that about which he would almost always write: 'young Ford had a much nearer, much more vivid guide to passion than his father's dull prose about twelfth and thirteenth century poets [*The Troubadours*]. From his colourful, garrulous painter-grandfather, Ford would have known a great deal, more perhaps than he wanted to know, of the real-life loves of his glamorous, sinister 'uncle', Dante Gabriel Rossetti' (p. 284). Moser thus focuses the attention once more on the extension of Ford's consciousness by those things that he experiences, even at second hand. In this case, as in Ford's memory of the doves, that consciousness (or visual imagination) is extended in primarily sexual directions. 'Thus I remember', writes Ford, seeing a new, sexual, tableau, 'in a sort of golden vision, Rossetti lying upon a sofa in the back studio with lighted candles at his feet and lighted candles at his head, while two extremely beautiful ladies dropped grapes into his mouth' (*Ancient Lights*, p. 5). The conduit for this consciousness was his grandfather, who was also, perhaps, an original cause of Rossetti's striking behaviour. Jan Marsh believes that the quality in Brown's work that fired Rossetti's poetic imagination was his 'intensely dramatic treatment of Byronic wickedness and illicit passion', appealing as it did to the young Rossetti encountering it in London exhibitions.³² John Fuller has suggested that Rossetti was more interested in sex and beauty than in achieving a reputation for artistic greatness.³³

This Pre-Raphaelite extravagance, painted as well as lived and talked about, became Ford's partly artistic, partly realistic, introduction to sexuality, and was a lesson learned with the ears and the eyes. Lessons

learned in this way, from this source, were also to do with attention to the natural world, for though the Pre-Raphaelites were not naturalists, they ‘rooted their aesthetic in truth to nature’ as a way of confronting what was seen by some as an overly secular and industrial age.³⁴ Stylistically, they dealt with this material with ‘lucidity and minuteness’³⁵ (the start of the link to Ford’s impressionism is clear here). Both aspects of the aesthetic, the sexual and the natural, and the style, were to prove crucial to Ford’s development. He was to pursue such intensely detailed, erotic, multiplicitous, licentious *and* regenerative matter into his prose, in a way that was intended ‘to make you see’. As I proceed, in the rest of this chapter, to investigate this prose, and to develop a sense of the visions that feed it, I will use as an illustrative comparison Robert Graves’s book on the mythological power of womanhood, *The White Goddess*,³⁶ as well as Freud. Owing to the often mythical subject matter (employed widely by modernist writers³⁷), Jung’s theory is also consulted in an interpretation of Ford’s fantastical fictional visions – Jung wrote in a letter to Freud in 1900 of the need to rekindle the religious, mythic urge, based on symbol.³⁸ Other evidence (including that in this chapter) suggests this rekindling was already extant.³⁹

Positive fictions

Positive fiction I: The ‘Half Moon’

In 1902 Ford wrote and published a book on the subject of his ‘sinister’ uncle, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It is a text that concentrates more than anything on the women that Rossetti loved and the women that he painted, finding Rossetti’s primary artistic gifts to reside in his ability to ‘record a type of feminine beauty’ whilst in ‘raptly mystical, mystically sensual or sensually rapt’ moods.⁴⁰ (I shall return to this book and to this idea of female ‘types’ – as does Ford; in *The Good Soldier*, Leonora expresses the belief that ‘when Edward has exhausted a number of other types of women he must turn to her’.⁴¹) Revealing the continuing extent of Rossetti’s influence on him, in 1909 he wrote and published a novel, *The ‘Half Moon’*, which takes as the source for its main plot Rossetti’s ballad, ‘Sister Helen’. The plot of this ballad concerns spurned love, hatred and jealousy; it explores, against a weather-beaten, mystical back-drop, the female desire to kill a lover rather than give up control of his heart. As I proceed, these sexually attuned, lurid and dramatic roots will be clearly discerned in *The ‘Half*

Moon'. Importantly, too, the typification of womanhood drives Ford's imagination in his novel.

In the dedication of *The 'Half Moon'*, to W. A. Bradley, Ford says something of another of his influences in this text, his interest in the historical period that inspired it: 'Fortunately for me the psychology of the Old World in the days of Hudson has always been very fascinating to me. It is, as you know, the subject to which more than anything I have devoted my attention: for at that date the Dark Ages were finally breaking up. There lingered many traces of that darkness...'.⁴² Henry Hudson (c. 1565–1611) was an English explorer. He 'discovered' the North American bay, river and strait that bear his name. Such a figure helps Ford to establish a form common to many of his narratives: the concept of two opposing forces. In this instance they adopt the presenting divisions of the Old World against the New, Catholicism (re-emergent with James I) versus a Protestantism that had been in the ascendant under the English queen, and Puritanism. And yet, it is nothing as abstract as the ruling faith and national politics that determine the binary and the nature of Ford's quest into fantasy here: 'So, my dear Bradley [Ford concludes his preface], let this voyage go forth, with its cargo of human passions, faiths and endeavours, as it were crossing and recrossing the windy seas, linking and relinking the *old and the new worlds with chains and networks of desires and fears*' (p. xiv) [my emphasis]. In an unstable world, a world that Ford often depicts in his fiction, chains and networks must be interpreted as offering a sense of security, an antidote to fragmentation. This would help to explain the obvious relish with which Ford charts them when he can. These chains and networks of fear and desire, visible in this text and in the others to be discussed here, operate across time as well as across space; they are made of links of sex and myth.⁴³ The Old World comes into contact with the New, the past with the present, as they are fashioned. Evoking the discussion of the personal narrative, in Chapter 1, Ford's phrase here, 'linking and relinking the old and the new worlds', suggests the chains are forged from searches in the collective, as well as in his individual, memory.

The least disparate trace of 'that [Old] darkness' in *The 'Half Moon'* is Anne Jeal (claimed by Ford in the preface to have really existed, and described as 'the most feared wench in the five ports'⁴⁴). Jeal, a Catholic witch, makes an attempt to disrupt and then to destroy the new order. She makes this attempt with two distinct methods of attack: her sexuality and her faith. Ranged against Jeal's ritualistic and often

frightening professions of faith is the biblical simplicity of the Puritan sect, personified by Magdalena Koop.⁴⁵ Ford takes care to establish these two in direct opposition of the most base kind, echoing Rossetti's 'Sister Helen', for they compete for the love of a man. His phraseology echoes this attempt at stark clarity: '[Magdalena] looked upon Edward Colman's drawing, and it was good; upon his smile – and it was good; upon the brown wood of the chests, and it was good' (p. 38). In this parody of the Creation myth, Magdalena represents one version of Eve, sanctioning male order, male creativity. An alternative version is found in the representation of Jeal, and Ford's portrayal of this second version seems to demand a psychoanalytic interpretation based on the Oedipal myth: '[Colman] smiled at the horse litter. For it had been instituted for the Mayoress, two years before, when Anne Jeal's father had for the fourth time become Mayor and Anne Jeal herself – her mother being lately dead – for the first time, Mayoress' (p. 31). Jeal has usurped her mother's place by her father's side, becoming mayoress to his mayor, and, with him, has assumed the leading role in local affairs. In addition to this symbolic act, she has altered the manner of her institution as mayoress, insisting upon the use of a litter, whereas in previous years a mule had sufficed.⁴⁶ In this way she proclaims her – unnatural – importance, and her essential (and desirable) difference from the calm and pious Koop. The witch, embodying, as she does, in Jungian terminology as well as Fordian, 'desires and fears', is the antithesis of the idealised image of womanhood.⁴⁷

Ford has come to a period of history where, in a way similar to that in *The Fifth Queen*, there are big symbolic interests under which people must ally themselves as they see fit. What is further developed in this case are the gender specifics of the experiment: the symbolic interests are both gendered (female) and dramatically portrayed. Indeed, women work solely as symbols in this tale that is little more than an allegory – along Pre-Raphaelite lines.⁴⁸ Simplistically sketched, in broad strokes, the female characters are brazen or pious, fanatical or humble – 'Magdalena was beauteous, and large, and strong, and silent' (p. 46). They are there to be enjoyed in this simplicity (Ford's language is evidence of this), and *watched*, in a series of dramatic scenes, in their medieval setting. Here are the originals for Etta Stackpole, Katya Lascarides and Sylvia Tietjens, in Platonic, perfect, undiluted form. Ford has chosen the setting in order to be able to investigate the two key components to Jeal's challenge to the *status quo* (sex and religion) in this allegorical, visual and crudely drawn fashion. He is travelling in

time to find a validation, and a perfection, of the essences of woman as he sees her, owing to a significant degree to his Pre-Raphaelite associations. What Weiss calls Ford's 'fascination with the idea of woman' is played out.⁴⁹

Jeal is tried for heresy and witchcraft by six lords of the court of James I. Moser writes that Jeal is 'emphatically a Catholic witch' (p. 72) and despite the lords' religious allegiance to the Old World, her female arrogance must be punished. One of their number provides a further clue towards the unravelling of the symbolism within this text. He states, by way of explanation to his colleagues, 'My Lords, [...] if it is your pleasure, I believe that this is all a tale of a mare's nest' (p. 220). He locates Jeal and her tale in the shadowy world that Robert Graves investigates in *The White Goddess*:

And what is a mare's nest? Shakespeare hints at the answer [but] a fuller account of Odin's feat is given in the North Country 'Charm against the Night Mare,' which probably dates from the 14th century:

Tha mon o' micht, he rade o' nicht
 Wi' neider swerd ne ferd ne licht.
 He socht tha Mare, he fond tha Mare,
 He bond tha Mare wi' her ain hare,
 Ond gared her swar by midder-micht
 She wolde nae mair rid o' nicht
 Whar aince he rade, thot mon o' micht.

The Night Mare is one of the cruellest aspects of the White Goddess.⁵⁰

The 'mare's nest' is the mare's lair, where she must be sought out. What becomes most clear in this ritualistic charm is the expressed necessity for restoring order, of the day over the night, the physically powerful male over the mysteriously powerful female. The Night Mare seemingly meets a violent end at the hands of the fourteenth-century warrior, except she doesn't, and becomes progressively less easy to manage through time. In her more modern form, as the 'nightmare', she possesses power over the nether regions of the human mind; she is of the unconscious world. (Remember Freud's writing on nature, in its illustration of the chaotic and mysterious female threat to male order.) Similarly powerful in *The 'Half Moon'*, the Night Mare reappears in a form in which Ford seems to revel: in the guise of a witch who has a tale to tell. Using magic, she attempts to destroy the hero and his Puritan wife; the personifications of manhood and of pure, chaste, simple religion are simultaneously attacked. Ford resorts to intertextuality to force the sense of outrage amongst the blustering locals home,

borrowing from Shakespeare's reworking of the Lear myth: "Sirs," Edward Colman said, "we are a great and glorious corporation, nevertheless our daughters, for lack of beating, twist us by the beard" (p. 90). Colman could do no better in invoking moral indignation than to call in this way upon Goneril and Regan, the epitome of those who usurp the pattern.

Jeal's Catholicism is, of course, a highly significant fact, in historical and political terms (part of the reason for the nineteenth-century distrust of the Pre-Raphaelites was their 'High Church leanings'⁵¹). Ford intimates that it is more important in mythical terms, especially with regard to gender and to sex (bear in mind Dowell's puritanical description of Catholicism as a 'Scarlet Woman' in *The Good Soldier*⁵²). Graves examines Catholicism in particular detail as a 'female-based' religion, standing in opposition to the patriarchal emphasis on the Trinity found in Protestantism: 'The popular appeal of modern Catholicism is [...] based rather on the Aegean Mother-and-Son religious tradition, to which it has slowly reverted' (p. 56), he states, sounding the subversive strains found in Ford's novel. The phrase 'slowly reverted' is synchronous with a chthonic drag, reversing the forward thrust of new religion. The forward thrust is identified by Graves as the Puritan revolution, the period setting of *The 'Half Moon'*. Graves defines this revolution thus:

The Puritan Revolution was a reaction against Virgin-worship, which in many districts of Great Britain had taken on a mad-merry orgiastic character [...]. The iconoclastic wantonness, the sin-laden gloom and Sabbatarian misery that Puritanism brought with it shocked the Catholics beyond expression. It was a warning to them to strengthen rather than weaken the festal side of their cult. (p. 371)

He creates the sense of the male battling against the female and sexualised ritual – of a 'mad-merry orgiastic' nature – in the attempted repression of such religious traits. Catholics were warned 'to strengthen the festal side of their cult' Graves informs us, goaded to do so by the opposing quietude of the Puritans (perhaps Ford was also drawing on more immediate source material; Jay Winter describes the rise of nineteenth-century populist Maryan cults, particularly in Germany⁵³). 'The cult of Mary', writes Marina Warner, 'is inextricably interwoven with Christian ideas about the dangers of the flesh and their special connection with women';⁵⁴ in *The 'Half Moon'* Jeal's Catholic, festal side is nothing so much as her subversive promise of sex. So allur-

ing is this promise that many sought to deny the charge of witchcraft levelled against her, ‘such as argued that witchcraft was limited to the old, the wrinkled or the hideous had it in their favour that Anne Jeal set the teeth watering of youths’ (p. xii). Jeal’s sexuality is rooted in her communication with her eyes and with her mouth, in the way she looks and in what she says.⁵⁵ She taunts Colman, keeping eyes on him that are ‘dark, lustrous and intent as those of a cat’, calling to him: “‘Are the kisses of your fat wife sweet, Edward Colman? I warrant you have had none ere marriage from that Puritan. Whereas from me —”” (p. 82).

Ford’s admiration of Christina Rossetti, about whom he writes in *Ancient Lights* (unsurprisingly, because of the family to which she belonged), is to a large degree based on her Koop-like ability to vanquish the festal side of her nature. The battle between the festive and the ascetic, the natural and the restrained, is identified by Ford as fundamental to her nature; it is translated by him into the religious sphere in a further parody of the battle between Jeal’s instinctively high-church love of ritual and iconism and Koop’s low-church simplicity and inward-looking faith: ‘the trouble was, of course, that whereas by blood and nature Christina was a Catholic, by upbringing and by all the influences that were around her she was forced into the Protestant Communion’ (*Ancient Lights*, pp. 60–1). As he proceeds, Ford makes it abundantly plain that his admiration is caused by a vicarious pleasure at her subjection of her humanistic, ‘pagan’ and instinctive nature (pp. 66–7). By conforming to type, that of the ‘nun-like and saintly woman’, Christina Rossetti solves a problem. The Catholic within her, described as her ‘blood’ – her life flow – and her ‘nature’, and simultaneously the possibility of sexual existence have been vanquished. One representation of the ideal woman has silenced another. In his fiction, moral intent of the kind Ford seems to display in his analysis of Christina Rossetti rarely intervenes. Despite his admiration, then, he proves that he *also* has something invested in the idea of the rebellious woman, the myth of the sexually potent Catholic witch – a woman much more likely to be of interest to Christina Rossetti’s brother.

Ford took great pains, at times, to define himself as Catholic.⁵⁶ He is proud of this definition and revels in its festal side, creating Anne Jeal who will not die. It is, rather, Colman, the male protagonist who has bellowed ‘I hate Papists!’ (p. 52), who dies, beaten by women and their existence in a dramatic dimension that he cannot understand. Magdalena, in response to his loss, adopts a puritanical pose, claiming she will be with

him always due to the power of their love. In opposition, Ford paints a picture of the ousted Jeal venting her primeval rage (once more expressing herself vocally) at her lack of the man: 'every three weeks or so Anne Jeal was pervaded by such a fit of longing rage that she must go out at night into deserted places and scream, so that it was said in Rye that there was a new kind of ghost abroad' (p. 331). Does he believe she is a witch or a ghost? Perhaps. He could be alluding to the more modern form of the Night Mare, coming to assault the dreams of all good, self-denying, Protestant folk. But more significantly, she is symbolically, quintessentially, a sexual female – his use of the phrase 'every three weeks or so' could be said to invoke the menstrual cycle. Her screaming is an action no Puritan would have attempted; it is an individualistic expression of thwarted passion and desire no Puritan would have allowed herself. This is the dramatic, human legacy with which she leaves the reader. Ford's final suggestion that she is brought, semi-penitent, back within the ideological fold is a clumsy one and does not succeed. The abiding image is of Jeal standing against Koop, vivid with the buzz of sexual energy: 'Anne Jeal was drawn in dark, and small, and quivered, as a wasp quivers above an apple' (p. 46), waiting to strike.

Whilst Christina Rossetti subdued the feminine, the natural, the 'Catholic' – as Ford defines them – parts of herself, in Ford's positive fictions it is these aspects of his characters that are vividly animated. In his definition of his own Catholicism (which came through his father's side of the family, though Francis himself was agnostic), they were equally vivid. Olive Garnett recorded a conversation with Ford in 1892, the year in which Ford was received into the Church.⁵⁷ In it he reveals his own feeling that 'Catholicism [...] satisfied his sensual religious needs'.⁵⁸ Douglas Goldring goes one step further in stating that 'the romantic, aesthetic, magical, superstitious, and poetic aspects of Catholicism caught and held his imagination'.⁵⁹ In *The 'Half Moon'* Ford is not concerned with representing the moral superiority of one form of the religious life over another; he is investigating the magical, poetical and superstitious aspects of Catholicism and, more generally, of women. Female 'types' are worked with by him to express and to contain the dualisms intrinsic to faith, sex and myth as seen and experienced by him. The 'opposite types of feminine sexual passion' both have a heritage, then (a Pre-Raphaelite one), and a function.⁶⁰ These types, more of whom appear in the texts to come, can be understood as both a homage to his roots and a catalogue of regenerative, multiplicitous and mythical experimentations.

Rossetti and The Troubadours

Jan Marsh published a book called *Pre-Raphaelite Women* in 1987. The following chapter headings appear in this text: 'Fallen Magdalenes'; 'Medieval Damozels'; 'Sorceresses'; 'Allegories and Icons'; 'Pale Ladies of Death'; 'Bohemians and Stunners'; 'Holy Virgins'; 'Nubile Maidens'; 'Doves and Mothers'.⁶¹ It is this Pre-Raphaelite tendency to stereotype that Ford concentrates upon in his book on Dante Gabriel Rossetti.⁶² In this criticism, however, he treats the tendency as one that is not under the artist's conscious control: it is the unconsciousness of this systematisation that interests him. Marsh's headings become comparatively reductive when examined alongside Ford's 'reading' of the painter: 'Rossetti at his best was a painter in, not of, moods. He was most successful when, having recorded a type of feminine beauty – or even repulsiveness – he afterwards found a name for it; stood back in fact from his canvas and only then discovered the moral of what he had been painting'.⁶³ Rossetti has been painting unconsciously. He is 'taken' by his material, inside it in some way, not critically distant from it, as he paints. Only afterwards can he consciously understand what he has created, and give it a name, bringing it forward into language (the multiple levels of existence are again symbolised by their relationship with speech). In the continuing description of Rossetti's paintings, Ford supplants Rossetti in his titular delineations: the 'Joli Coeur' is a 'rather sensual and quite young girl'; the 'Monna Vanna' a 'refined and delicately sensuous type'; the 'Lady with the Fan' a 'more or less animal type' and the 'Lady with the Gold Chain' a 'sort of odalisque'. Ford is comfortable with these symbols of womanhood. They certainly emanate from his association with Rossetti, his relationship with Madox Brown, and his affiliated tendency to visualise the world in symbolic ways, but they are also more deeply rooted, and to be analysed, in turn, as he analysed them in his artist subject. This analysis serves to turn the attention back to Ford's family, and to the function of his enlightening and invigorating unconscious.

Ford has consummately created in Anne Jeal a representation of the 'type' of the sorceress; Rossetti's ballad 'Sister Helen' had helped to focus the type, as had many other factors in the contemporary world and in Ford's responsive imagination.⁶⁴ Though Rossetti undoubtedly was significant, as was Ford's route to him, Ford's imagination was stimulated in other familial ways. A further examination of Graves will serve to reintroduce Ford's father, Francis Hueffer, to the discussion.

Moser's deduction was that Ford would have found in Rossetti a far more vibrant exponent of the possibilities of woman and passion than his father's 'dull' work on twelfth- and thirteenth-century poets – *The Troubadours*. However, an interesting correlation between Francis Hueffer's book and Ford's novel is discovered if Graves's exposition of the roots of the festal Mary cult is placed alongside the roots of Anne Jeal's magic. Jeal is here described from the point of view of a male, comparatively feeble sorcerer: 'In Anne Jeal he had met a practitioner of magic that came of an older and more cunning tradition than his. There were, he knew, some such witches in country places. They still held the secrets that knights of the Temple, who were all black necromancers and worshipped Satan [...] had brought back from the Crusades with women captives from the Saracens' (p. 254). Earlier in the text she is accused of knowing 'Saracen prayers' (p. 75). Graves places an alternative, but perhaps not altogether different tradition, in the same beginning: 'When the Crusaders invaded the Holy Land [...] they found a number of heretical Christian sects living there under Moslem protection, who soon seduced them from Orthodoxy. This was how the cult of Mary the Gipsy came to England [...]. The lyre-plucking, red-stockinged troubadours, [...] ecstatically adopted the Marian cult' (p. 348), conflating the history of the troubadours and the crusaders as does Hueffer in his text (see pp. 128–30). Ford knew the troubadours well because of his father's work, and it is possible there is a similar conflation at work in his mind as he writes *The 'Half Moon'* (though the vision of Catholicism he projects has more in common with Graves's approach). *The Troubadours* (1878) is a serious study, dedicated to providing a history of Provençal life and literature in the Middle Ages. But it would also have provided Ford's fertile imagination with other, more mainstream, images of the Virgin Mary (as sexually pure, and as the link between heaven and earth), and with pictures of 'the wayfaring singer, wandering through the beautiful land of Provence in search of praise and amorous adventure'. 'Provençal poets', Hueffer suggests, 'were naturally a restless tribe, ever in search of new lands and new loves' (compare this with Dowell's admission that 'with each new woman that a man is attracted to there appears to come a broadening of the outlook, or, if you like, an acquiring of new territory' (*The Good Soldier*, p. 79)), joining religious veneration of womanhood with more earthy perspectives. Hueffer makes a direct link between the duty of the medieval knight or crusader (some of whom were troubadours) to his lady, and that of the Catholic to

'immaculate womanhood', the pure woman, another Marian ideal.⁶⁵ Hueffer's thoughts of womanhood, the subjects of his study, can also be seen to shape those of his son (think of Magdalena in *The 'Half Moon'*).

As Graves writes it, the troubadours adopted what could be described as a double-edged sword, and allowed themselves to be 'seduced' from Orthodoxy. But how this was dealt with, or defined, depended on geography (in time – in relation to Old and New worlds – as well as space). Whilst they were geographically free from England, the knights of the Temple could relish black magic: it was the Christians who indulged in the 'Marian cult'. It travelled with them, and, in travelling, became known as something altogether different. Back in England, where Orthodoxy ruled, the women were deemed to be witches. When women associated with the cult reminded men of what they would rather forget, they were persecuted, because they were feared. In the Holy Land, in the time of the troubadours, they represented instead transgressive freedoms. Ford has invested both in these transgressive freedoms and in their roots.

Graves traces the roots of female icons, or female goddesses, back to antiquity. His claim is that they have not disappeared, but make their presence felt in more subliminal ways – ways to which Ford proved himself to be sensitive and which he then used to construct his 'chains of desires and fears' between Old and New worlds. When Rossetti is 'without intent', in Ford's phrase, such evocations are the result of his brush: lack of intent is a Fordian maxim for the writing of prose.⁶⁶ The Fordian interest in such organised systems of female nature can be consciously traced to much of his youthful experience, mostly of his relatives; the meaning of these systems is both more ancient and unconscious, and more psychologically valuable, than this implies.

Ancient sanities

C. F. G. Masterman's phrase 'ancient sanities' described an aspect of spiritual life from which he felt modern man had been divorced.⁶⁷ Ford, in his use of female symbols (as well as in his criticism of D. G. Rossetti and in his analysis of his childhood) in his positive fictions, is re-finding them. He himself acknowledges the gendered nature of both this loss and the need, particularly when the subject is religion: 'Catholicism – with its female saints, with its female religious, with its feminine element in the Divine Concord – has its chief safeguard in its women. But in these islands, which have discarded alike female saints,

female religious, and the Mother of God as an object of worship, a comparative lukewarmness in attachment to established forms of worship has resulted'.⁶⁸ Jung says of the production of archetypal images that the 'main source... is dreams', but he goes on to add that 'another source for the material we need is to be found in "active imagination". By this I mean a sequence of fantasies produced by deliberate concentration'. (Think here also of Freud's 1908 essay on this subject, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming'.)⁶⁹ *The 'Half Moon'*, as discussed, and others that will shortly be considered, are the most fantastical of Ford's texts, those which, though not dreams, could be said to operate as a result of Jung's blurred distinction between the unconscious and conscious production of such material. The 'active imagination' of the imaginative author can be a source for archetypal images, for multiplicitous mythical forms then animated in fiction. This is one way of approaching and interpreting Ford's female characters which are the subject of this chapter.

Female types, and the reasons for them, have been definitively addressed by Jung in his delineations of the female archetypes, beginning with the anima:

The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature, and – last but not least – his relation to the unconscious. It is no mere chance that in olden times priestesses [...] were used to fathom the divine will and to make connection with the gods.⁷⁰

Ford's writing of women functions partly as a series of similar projections. His attention to multiplicity refers not only to modern visions but to mythical projections and to multi-faceted symbols. The fear induced in his male characters in the modern world by some of these projections of womanhood, as discussed in previous chapters, is countered by the visions of the fantasy worlds he creates.

Positive fiction II: The New Humpty-Dumpty

The New Humpty-Dumpty, written in 1912, has as its denouement the setting of a revolution. It is a cynical revolution, brought about as a side-effect, more than anything else, by the protagonists. Yet it is concerned with other worlds, with new lands, and in this way it echoes the cross-world voyage of *The 'Half Moon'*; as Ford stated in the preface to the earlier work, 'men were beginning to look out for truths of all

kinds [...] perhaps above all, for lands in which Utopias might be found or founded' (or rediscovered) (p. vi). Ford travels in his writing, searching for 'chains of desires and fears', for ways to make manifest ancient and alternative wisdoms; Hudson travels to the New World, to the place that is now New York, just as Macdonald, Pett and their band of revolutionaries travel to Batahla in *The New Humpty-Dumpty*.

The concept of a utopia, of such a new world, was a prevalent one in the literature of the time. Ford was not alone in his quest for other 'truths' (or, more cynically, spaces for expansion). Essential to this re-animation of a fictional tradition was William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890). Morris is mentioned in *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, and Ford has this to say on the subject in *Ancient Lights*:

In his *News from Nowhere* Morris tried to show us young things what a beautiful world we should make of it As far as I remember those young dreams, it was all to be a matter of huge-limbed and splendid women, striding along dressed in loose curtain-serge garments, and bearing upon the one arm such sheaves of wheat as never were, and upon the other such babies as every proud mother imagines her babies to be. (p. 119)⁷¹

Similarly to the way in which the Pre-Raphaelite legacy makes itself felt, Ford's work resonates with the effects of these youthful dreams. Big, physical, natural women, made busy by the wheat in one hand and the baby in the other, of nature and fertile, populate his mythical fiction. In terms reminiscent of the description of Magdalena in *The 'Half Moon'*, in *The New Humpty-Dumpty* Lady Emily Aldington fulfils the criteria: 'Lady Aldington herself suffered from no troubles of any physical kind. She was thirty-one. She stood five-foot nine in her stockinged feet. She rode ten stone, and she rode it for an hour and a half every morning of the year, wet or fine'.⁷² The sheer size of her is admirable, and the reader is requested to appreciate her superiority over the weather, over her physical well-being, and over any horse which she chooses to mount.⁷³ Ford himself is impressed. His sentences are short and weighty, imbued with added strength by the repetition of the universal and totemic 'she'. Ford continues his foray into typification, for, whilst Lady Aldington is ideally strong and 'natural', fit and beautiful, she is simultaneously a 'little frozen white lamb' or sexually unawakened and undemanding. And it is no coincidence that she is also an aristocrat. Ford develops a theory concerning social class and its correlation with female sexuality as he proceeds. In the following

extract, Lady Aldington is engaged in conversation with a friend; the subject is the affair which her husband has been conducting, and which he continues to pursue:

'It's still the same woman?' Madame Sassonoff asked.

'It's still the same,' Emily answered. 'I don't know what she's like. I know she was a barmaid. And I think I've gathered to-day that she has a cockney voice and drops her h's. And her extravagance must be extraordinary. I know in one way and another Aldington gets fifteen thousand a year out of me. Why, she has a house in Curzon Street...' And Lady Aldington's eyes filled with unmistakable tears. 'My dear', she said, 'what is the attraction of these creatures? Why is it that we women have to suffer? They appear to be nothing, these women. They are vulgar, they daub themselves with paint. And the men howl over them and suffer the pains of the damned. And if one offers to set them free to marry, they say "My God, no!" What does it mean? Isn't it the most abominable one can have offered to one? What *does* it mean?' (pp. 34–5)

Lady Aldington's frank speech in a moment of emotional unguardedness would seem to imply that what has, in fact, distressed her, has been the contravention of recognised boundaries to do with class and sex. She has learnt new information regarding this 'creature', who, as a sexual being and member of the lower classes, loses temporarily the right to be called a woman. 'She' (the female interpretation this time of the female Other) causes the women only grief and discomfort. When 'She' is poor, 'She' can be ignored; it is the treachery endemic in her possession of a house in Curzon Street, when added to her sexual status, that makes Lady Aldington cry.

Ford creates three distinct camps in this incident: the ladies Aldington and Sassonoff, the men and the creatures. Chaos only occurs when the strict guidelines governing behaviour in one category or another are contravened. Lady Aldington is a fine lady, and frigid. The 'creature' is lower class, and sexual, and the men have on this occasion begun to stumble between the two. Briefly, it looks as though Ford is heralding the world of *The Good Soldier* rather than describing his utopian, Pre-Raphaelite, dream. But Ford soon reveals that the added complication of class is not enough to disguise the true and only margins which exist: those between the sexually active woman and the sexually austere. Civilisation, society and the model of *The Good Soldier* recede. Lady Aldington falls completely in love with another woman's husband. Countess Macdonald, his wife, describes the new 'other woman' here, using, almost exclusively, identical imagery as that which

Lady Aldington employed, to describe *her*. Lady Aldington is no longer frigid; she has transgressed the boundaries by asserting herself sexually; she now is the creature. In conflict with Count Macdonald his wife demands: “I want to understand what sort of painted fool it is that has taken a useless creature like you to her heart [...]. Why have these creatures such power?... They are idle, they are frivolous.... What are they compared to a woman like me? What do you see in them? How do they affect you? It’s a mystery; it’s all a mystery” (p. 94). The sexual woman has been to the ladies Aldington, Sassonoff, and Countess Macdonald ‘a mystery’. Ford’s investigations, and in particular his illustration, of the nature of that mystery serve to reanimate the discussion of the Pre-Raphaelite inheritance and Ford’s memory of the Barbary doves.

The ‘dear dark forest’

The ‘dark forest’ is the most resonant symbol in this text. Ford’s conceptualisation of such a place forms the centre of the novel; it is its heart and was Ford’s chosen title.⁷⁴ At one level, the dark forest represents estrangement of self from self and self from other. The linguistic flag constantly employed to signify this recognition – ‘The heart of another is a dark forest’ – is repeated by many of Ford’s characters. Ultimate loneliness is enforced by what Saunders describes as the ‘sinister reserve of bitterness, envy, hatred, treachery and violence within apparently civilised conduct’ that operates in this text (Saunders I, p. 326). The rules of civilised conduct exist to protect each of them from the realisation of such sinister motivations. And from sexuality. ‘In this immense jungle that we live in’, affirms Pett, revealing the back-drop of nature out of control, Lady Aldington is ‘rather like a dark forest’ (p. 70). The behavioural niceties protect her investigation, her exploration and navigation, and simultaneously circumscribe the mystery of what is within.

Moser states that ‘sexual passion is the major source of the dark forest’ (p. 108), the major force in Pett’s ‘jungle’ and that which evokes the cries of ‘mystery!’ from those who are sexually abstemious. But sexual unions (as well as marital dissolutions) do occur, and, vanquishing civilisation, the tale finally buries itself in the containing confines of the differently conceptualised dark forest as discovered by Emily Aldington and Sergius Mihailovitch. The need for lonely protection from the terrifying heart of another disappears as these two lovers chart the contours of sexual union; the end point of Ford’s fictional travel is much more Donne’s ‘new found land’ than classical, civilised, utopia.

Ford constructs a pastoral scene towards the end of the text, nature, specifically *female* nature, triumphs, and, finally, Emily and Sergius find something that they have been looking for. Emily speaks: “We’ve found it, really. . .” And he said, “Yes! yes! The very centre of [the] dark forest!” (p. 334). Linguistically, as well as symbolically, sex is thus signified by Ford in a manner that bespeaks equality between the two, joint discovery, joint delight – such a scene would have to be situated beyond the confines of civilisation.

This union is repeated in the final pages of the book, for as Sergius dies he turns his head into Emily’s lap, saying: “The dark forest! The dear dark forest” (p. 432), in an act which, tragically, has the greatest sexual potential of any yet witnessed.⁷⁵ The final image of the book, caught up as it is with female symbolism, thus envelops it, becoming bigger than it, evoking Marlow’s interpretation of the ‘meaning of an episode’ in Conrad’s appropriately titled *Heart of Darkness*. Such meaning ‘was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze’.⁷⁶ The incident elicits a complete understanding, to which Ford’s tale has brought the reader, of the containing and desirable strength that woman, that the symbolic image of woman as a dark forest, natural and sexual, represents. Clearly, the box with the doves into which the young Ford peered represents at one level the vagina. In his memory, he experienced it mainly as a worrying, castrating and yet enthralling image. In this novel, more powerfully positive aspects of that sight are revisited; the ‘chains of desires and fears’ reveal another link.

Positive fiction III: Ladies Whose Bright Eyes

Ladies Whose Bright Eyes (1911) is a novel that Max Saunders has described as an attempt ‘to re-imagine the medieval past Madox Brown and Rossetti painted’.⁷⁷ It is the last of the positive fictions to be discussed in this chapter. The title evokes images of attractive, insightful women, as does the quotation from Milton’s ‘L’ Allegro’ from which it comes, one that also adds power and fantasy to the mixture. Ford’s epigraph is as follows:

Towered cities please us then
And the busy haunts of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With stores of ladies whose bright eyes
Rain influence and judge the prize.

It comes from the section in Milton's poem that is dedicated to the imagined joys and delights that Euphrosyne/Mirth can bring the speaker.⁷⁸ Ford chose a medieval setting and a dream framework for this text. Each of these criteria denotes great scope for both investigating and revealing his fantasies concerning women, men and love. In modernist fashion, multiplicity is enshrined by Ford at the level of form, as well as of content: there are two time frames here, two levels of consciousness, two female protagonists, two castles and two stories (in the middle of the text the action tracks briefly the knightly, and amorous, exploits of the women's husbands). Sorrell's very aim is to allow himself to submit to the broadness, reliability and safety of a courtly, though passionate, idea of love. A dream fantasy, in which he travels to the fourteenth century, as a result of that quintessentially modern accident, a train crash, is his method for so doing. Trapped on board the train, amid the 'extraordinary rush of modern life',⁷⁹ Sorrell has been peeping at a nun, and talking with a Mrs Lee-Egerton, when the hurtling of the train turns suddenly into a 'fantastic hard jabbing' (p. 21). It crashes, and leaves Sorrell unconscious and hanging upside-down. His daydream of living in the Middle Ages, into which his consideration of the nun has transported him, and his admiration of Mrs Lee-Egerton ('she was very dark and very tall and very aquiline, and her eyes appeared perpetually to be searching into mysteries', p. 13⁸⁰), create the world of his unconscious into which he 'wakes'.

Sorrell finds himself in a bright pastoral scene, a colourful nun on a donkey confronts him, the sun is high in the sky, and the sheep graze on shimmering pastures (Pre-Raphaelite visual stimulation again). Though he knows he is near Salisbury, he begins to regret that he has always travelled everywhere so fast, oblivious to the small places between Bath and London, one of which he now imagines must be his location. Not for some time does he (incompletely) recognise that he has travelled in time as well as in space, finally coming to explain his existence in the year 1327 by the fact that the crash has shaken the soul out of his body. It doesn't take him long at all, though, to use his surroundings to bolster his fantasy life; he is, in some deep and real sense, at home. On his travels Sorrell isolates the type of woman who offers him fulfilment. The Lady Dionissia combines the comfort of a politically feudal system with miraculous and simplistic (Catholic) religious sanction, and for this he loves her:

And these splendid and comfortable miracles of God and of the blessed angels of God and of the Mother of God, you, a poor sinful man [...] cry

out upon your fate and refuse to put your trust in God and the comfort of society's hierarchical sanction: [...] a king shall give you a castle here, and an emperor shall give you broad lands there [...]. And our lives shall be very pleasant and restful, and you shall not ever be sad. (pp. 259–61)

The biblical simplicity of her language resonates with the added strength of that used in *The 'Half Moon'* to describe Magdalena; this protecting vision of woman evokes restfulness-in-plenty. His lover will not be a sexual predator, but a provider of bounty and of peace. Her physical presence will give him a different kind of rest.

The Lady Dionissia 'was tall, large-limbed, and of an exceeding and most unusual fairness'. She is a further reincarnation of the utopian ideal of womanhood. She also serves to divest Sorrell of his heretofore very masculine, civilised, concentration upon order and self-assuredness: 'Mr. Sorrell found that his tongue was tied and he continued gazing back at the Lady Dionissia as if the sight of her had struck him with a disease of muteness' (p. 147). Dis-ease of this kind was prominent in Grimshaw's first taste of the unsettling nature of love: for Ford it seems to symbolise the ultimate in recognition of the power of woman. What is of crucial difference in this instance, and what stands in opposition to this image of restriction, is the correlating natural and instinctual freedom that Sorrell also discovers.

Sorrell is by trade, in the twentieth century, a publisher. Echoing one of Ford's most painful beliefs about the public perception of literature, Sorrell states at the outset of the text that publishing 'struck him still as something connected with literature and in consequence as something effeminate' (p. 8).⁸¹ Nonetheless, it is plain that Ford believes that he has to be shaken out of his publisher's reliance on facts and figures, one that emasculates his body and deadens his soul. Tietjens is evoked in Sorrell's differently conceptualised 'return to the body' (his own and that of a beloved woman) in this text.

Within the medieval framework, and in the face of a woman such as Lady Dionissia, Ford's male character finds the ability to embrace a challenge, and does not need to fear it. He discovers his ability to *act* as Dionissia's castle is attacked by outlaws: 'Suddenly they felt – and they screamed aloud – that the devil was amongst them. . . . The men on the left saw, enveloped in the clouds of smoke from the burning hovel, an immense white horse, that fell in amongst them. Upon its back was a terrible man all in red and white, waving a steel mace above his head and calling out in an unknown tongue' (p. 153). There is much of interest in this portrayal of a Fordian man. He is hugely, immensely

active, and finds the sanction to perpetrate his most deeply located maleness. Sorrell has regained his tongue – a tongue that exacerbates his threat to those he has come to destroy – and is using it to shout his strength as he masters an enormous horse and brandishes a murderous weapon. Order is indeed paramount in this society, but the power to perpetuate that order is apparently infinite; Sorrell can murder without fear of reprisal one who stands in contravention of its laws. In this vision of medieval times Ford finds the perfect combination of the order of civilisation (it is important that Sorrell is given power as a ‘holy man’, and starts his journey near the top of the feudal tree – and gets higher) with the freedom of nature. Returning to the quotation from Freud which described modern society as an enforcement of the ‘renunciation of instinct’ and continuing with him to imagine the lifting of these prohibitions: ‘If, then, one may take any woman one pleases as a sexual object, if one may without hesitation kill one’s rival for her love or anyone else who stands in one’s way’, the imaginary effects of modern society being rescinded are viewed as the Fordian concept of medieval living enshrined. Indeed, Sorrell points the way to a later Fordian protagonist who seeks what Sorrell has found. ‘Am I no better than a eunuch or is the proper man – the man with the right to existence – a raging stallion forever neighing after his neighbour’s womankind?’ (*The Good Soldier*, p. 15), questions Dowell, beset by modern society, and unable to discover the raging stallion which for Sorrell has been released, experienced and known.

Ford has created within this novel the room for the propagation of the unconscious. Sorrell can be his deepest self. His fantastical journey into his unconscious is finally rewarded (though he weeps when he wakes in the twentieth century, he has been transformed). And it is this aspect of the travel, rather than that of actual, physical discovery, that Ford chooses to emphasise. This does not mean that what Sorrell sees, feels and tastes is not important: it is, because that sight, taste and sensation is part of the liberation of the unconscious. Once more, what he sees owes more to a Pre-Raphaelite conception of the world than to anything else, one that Ford tempers with modernist multiplicity. Whilst the heart of *The New Humpty-Dumpty* is the ‘dear dark forest’ and what happens in it, bespeaking one kind of reclamation, at the heart of this novel is light instead, prismatic, joyful and splendid light. Sorrell rides into Salisbury, and it is a sensational event: sights and sounds, people and colours, light and shade are related by Ford in a way that evokes the chaotic description of the railway station quoted at

the outset of this chapter. He arrives at the cathedral:

The immense pillars were painted a strong blue, and the little pillars running up them were bright scarlet; the high windows through which the sun fell were all in violent, crude and sparkling colours, and these colours, thrown down, seemed to splash a prismatic spray all over the floor, which was of bright yellow tiles.

Mr Sorrell exclaimed:

'My God!' (pp. 233–4)

William Sorrell finds God in this cathedral, where also all life is to be found (Ford's use of the colours blue, red and yellow signifies the marriage of heaven and earth). Riotous humanity is praying and selling and talking and jostling and interacting in this holy, busy, living place. The 'prismatic spray' of light is important because it allows Sorrell to see all that is there. Light, separated out into its constituent colours, both mirrors his sight of all the levels of humanity and simultaneous experience of God, and indicates the fact that Sorrell would see, highlighted in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, aspects that would remain hidden had the light remained 'whole'. Here is a sense in which kaleidoscopic vision (examined in the Introduction), central to Ford's ethic, can be seen working to the multiplicitous good.⁸² Amid this riot of colour and communication, Sorrell finds the dean of the cathedral, a benevolent, wise man, one who advises sex outside marriage but also vows to help Sorrell's marital suit.⁸³ Close to God, with a wise man's blessing, and full of the rich and bright life-giving variety of the light and colour from the cathedral, Sorrell and the Lady Dionissia can then retreat to the pastoral idyll, also used in *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, to make love. The living heart of the novel gives way to its timeless, spaceless, yet also natural partner, where Sorrell 'felt as if he were sinking down between the myriads of stars into unknown spaces' (p. 262). He will know them now.

William Sorrell, the twentieth-century William Sorrell, obsessed by facts, decides as he comes back to his earthly body that he has not undertaken a spiritual journey at all. On recovering consciousness, he addresses his nurse, admonishing her that 'it must have been you that made me dream, and not my spirit that went back' (p. 360). This he believes he proves by a factual, historical inaccuracy he remembers from his travels. The woman who 'made him dream' is, by a beautiful irony, Dionissia – a descendant of the historically accurate Lady Dionissia that Sorrell 'met'. This contemporary Dionissia doesn't allow

him the knowledge of history he believes to be his, and corrects him on his analysis. His collapse at this reimposition of the threat of womanhood (as with Tietjens, facts are his lifetime's work) is anticipated, but it doesn't occur. Sorrell does not collapse. Grimshaw's comparative failure in the face of Katya is thus balanced and answered by one who has the increased strength of self-knowledge, fuelled by the self-exploration of dream fantasy.

Sorrell's dream, his unconscious production of archetypal form is thus fulfilled in reality; once his imagination has been freed he is reconstructed with 'ancient sanities' incorporate. He turns down a salacious, profit-making book, and instead decides to bring a morality to publishing, taking on loss-making, soul-benefiting poetry.⁸⁴ Words become possibilities to him, fantasy-bringers, and allow him to maintain a relationship with the part of himself that is through the veil of his consciousness. Words make pictures, the pictures that help to form the 'chains of desires and fears' for Sorrell immediately, and for Ford more broadly (as in the case of the doves). The ancient sanities are defined by Dionissia, the pinnacle of female wisdom:

'In the summer it will be very pleasant; the birds will sing, and we shall walk in the gardens. And in the winter we shall go into our little castle, and we shall sit by our fire, and our friends will come and we shall pass the time in talking and devising. And all around us there will be the oceans of time and the ages of space, like mountains and seas and forests that it shall take us many months to travel through.'

'I've heard that before,' he said.

'Yes, certainly you've heard that all before', she answered with a gush of words. 'It's nothing new; it's the oldest wisdom or the oldest folly. You will find it in Chaucer. . . And you will find it in the Bible. . . You will find it baked in the bricks that the Assyrians used for books and in the old sands of the desert and the oldest snow of the poles. It's the only thing worth saying in life.' (pp. 362–3)

In their talking, Dionissia promises, they will devise new interpretations of these old wisdoms.

Ford establishes, in ways such as this, a kind of imaginative repository in his positive fictions. In the series of texts investigated here he provides rich examples of the atavistic modernist consciousness; one that is plurally manifested, temporally complex and visually challenging. Experimenting with his past, with the unconscious, and with the archetypal definitions one discovers there, creates in Ford's fiction a regenerative possibility to be encountered alongside the fragmenting

forces more obviously endemic to modernism.

In the chapter that follows, the religious and existential aspects of Ford's regenerative quest are considered. In 1904 Ford published a poem called 'Grey Matter'. In it, one poetic voice asks of another,

Where has either of us scope
In this dead-dawning century that lacks all faith,
All hope, all aim, and all the mystery
That comforteth [?]⁸⁵

Continuing the analysis of his fantastical texts, *The Young Lovell* is compared with the poem 'On Heaven' in the attempt to answer Ford's own question, and a search is undertaken for the religious equivalent of the symbolic healing of women.

Notes

- 1 These are the last words of the text, and describe Grimshaw's vanquishment; see the end of Chapter 3 in this book.
- 2 Peter Childs writes that 'for the Modernists . . . the point of using myth was to compensate for the dissatisfying fragmentation of the modern world, to create a controlling narrative that could be mapped onto' (*Modernism*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 198). Schneidau makes a larger claim: 'in the imagination of the Modernists, atavism was rehabilitated, and became the matrix of a new energy in art', locating the source of this energy in the 'primordial past', and in the 'chthonic' religion of Greece (*Waking Giants: The Presence of the Past in Modernism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 15–23). Both analyses focus attention on ways that modernist literature *combated* fragmentation.
- 3 Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 56.
- 4 'Pon... ti... pri... ith' [1918], tr. Max Saunders, in Max Saunders (ed.), *Ford Madox Ford: War Prose* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1999), p. 32.
- 5 Quoted by Peter Conrad in *Modern Times, Modern Places: Life and Art in the Twentieth Century* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1998), p. 214.
- 6 Forster's depiction of King's Cross in *Howards End* (1910) is also conjured up in Ford's picture, especially because of the glorious yet fearful promise of the station. Once Aunt Juley has left for Howards End from its portals, 'no power on earth could stop her' (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1989, p. 27).
- 7 Quoted by John Fuller in 'The Fine Arts' in Boris Ford (ed.), *Victorian Britain, The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain*, Vol. 7 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 174.

- 8 Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1939), p. 723.
- 9 Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894–1914* (1931) (Manchester, Carcanet, 1999), p. 3.
- 10 *Outlook* 33, 17 January 1914.
- 11 *Daily News*, 14 January 1911, p. 7.
- 12 Ford Madox Ford, *A Call: The Tale of Two Passions* (1910) (Manchester, Carcanet, 1984), p. 121.
- 13 Conversely, at war, as Ford explores it in *No Enemy*, one's sight was almost permanently occluded. Ford writes that Gringoire had been able to notice 'only four landscapes' during 1914–18 (New York, Ecco, 1984, p. 23). Allyson Booth comments that the war could not be 'delineated' because it was 'too big to see from a distance [and] too confusing to see from up close' (*Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 87.)
- 14 Ford Madox Ford, *Between St Dennis and St George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p. 39.
- 15 Ford Madox Ford, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* (London, Chapman & Hall, 1911), pp. viii–ix.
- 16 To make good her point to Orlando in *As You Like It*, Rosalind tells him that 'I will be more jealous of thee than of a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen' (IV. i. 157). This is the best illustrative image she can find of primal, jealous behaviour.
- 17 Joseph Bristow, *Sexuality* (London, Routledge, 1997), p. 41. Ford read Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1903); refer to the discussion in Chapter 2.
- 18 The pagan context provides a more helpful interpretation of the dove: as Aphrodite's bird, the dove comes to symbolise along with her the 'irresistible generative force' and the 'passionate desires which it kindles in all living creatures'. See the entries for 'Dove' and 'Aphrodite' in Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrandt (eds), *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. John Buchanan-Brown (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1996).
- 19 This is despite the house's intimidating nature; it is described by Teresa Newman and Ray Watkinson as a 'substantial Georgian town house, adorned with pilasters, rusticated stone facing and a large Roman urn cantilevered over the door [of which more later], which struck fear into visitors' hearts' (*Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1991, p. 146).
- 20 Bristow, *Sexuality*, p. 71.
- 21 Financially embarrassed by his brother, Tietjens, too, 'viewed his case from outside' (*Parade's End*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1988, p. 202).
- 22 Thomas Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 284.

- 23 Newman and Watkinson, *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*, pp. 146–7. They quote at length in their study from Ford's remembrances of his grandfather.
- 24 George Steiner, 'Gent', *New Yorker*, 47, p. 98.
- 25 Saunders traces the Freudian significance of this relationship, adding it to that of his grandmother: 'In Freud's "family romances", children fantasize about having grander parents than their actual ones. In Ford's case the family romance was actual: his grandfather had usurped Francis Hueffer as his male parent' (Saunders I, p. 26.)
- 26 Alan Judd, *Ford Madox Ford* (London, HarperCollins, 1991), p. 30.
- 27 Newman and Watkinson, *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*, p. 191. Ford's feelings on inheriting Rossetti's cloak are detailed in *Ancient Lights*: 'Upon Rossetti's death, his inverness descended to my grand-father. Upon my grand-father's death it descended to me, it being twenty-three years old. I wore it with feelings of immense pride as if it had been – and indeed was it not – the mantle of a prophet' (p. 128). Violet Hunt talks of Ford's and Conrad's stylistic similarities to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic, and remarks on the extent of 'Pre-Raphaelite paraphernalia' at the *English Review* office. On a very different matter, she describes his marriage proposal to her as 'an essay in Pre-Raphaelite crudity of expression, as if a Madox Brown heavy oil painting ... had been suddenly turned into speech' (*I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years*, New York, Boni & Liveright, 1926, pp. 23, 68).
- 28 Ford Madox Ford, *The Brown Owl* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), pp. 5, 19.
- 29 This is the phrase used by Douglas Goldring (Ford's sub-editor at the *English Review*) to express the importance of Brown to Ford in *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: A Record of the Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (London, Macdonald & Co., 1948), p. 44.
- 30 Ford published this novel with Madox as a middle name.
- 31 Saunders I, p. 26.
- 32 Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p. 39.
- 33 Ford (ed.), *Victorian Britain*, p. 170.
- 34 Ford (ed.), *Victorian Britain*, pp. 169, 166. Whereas in its earliest incarnation, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was heavily Bible-oriented, emphasising God's revelation of himself in nature and in scripture, by the 1850s the concentration had shifted to natural forms.
- 35 Michael Mason in a review of Kate Flint's *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* in the *Times Literary Supplement*, No. 5108, 23 February 2001, p. 11.
- 36 Caroline Gordon notes that Graves's conclusions in *The White Goddess* 'shed light on aspects of Ford Madox Ford's work which have engaged my

- attention for years'. These aspects are Ford's use of myth and archetypal patterns (*The Good Soldier: A Key to the Novels of Ford Madox Ford*, Davis, CA, University of California Library, 1963, pp. 9, 16).
- 37 Refer to note 2, and to Peter Faulkner, *Modernism* (London, Methuen, 1977), p. 18, where he states that using myth was one way that modernist writers could give coherence to their work.
- 38 Quoted in Mike Jay and Michael Neve (eds), *1900* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1999), p. 326.
- 39 See Childs, *Modernism* (p. 57) on the contribution made by Nietzsche, Darwin and Freud; see Peter Gay's chapter 'Offensive Women and Defensive Men' (*The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, Vol. 1, *The Education of the Senses*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984) for a history of male fear of female sexuality and its mythic roots.
- 40 Ford Madox Ford, *Rossetti* (London, Duckworth & Co., 1902), pp. 136, 144.
- 41 *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* (New York, Norton, 1995), p. 119.
- 42 Ford Madox Ford, *The 'Half Moon'* (London, Eveleigh Nash, 1909), p. vi.
- 43 They thus prove Ford was helping to fulfil Edwin Muir's invocation in 1918 to modern writers to 'resuscitate myth'. See Vassiliki Kolokotroni *et al.* (eds), *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 357.
- 44 The five ports, also known as 'The Cinque Ports' (Ford published a book under this title in 1900 after living in the area for five years), are a group of medieval ports on the south-eastern coast of England: Dover, Hastings, Hythe, Romney and Sandwich. Rye and Winchelsea were later added to the five.
- 45 It is possible that the model for this character is to be found in Magdalena Schabrowsky, Ford's 'second Slav romance', whom he met in Germany whilst a teenager. Ford describes her as 'coming back to him' as 'calm Purity', rescuing him from educational failure by acting as 'Copperfield's Agnes – Sister Agnes with her finger to her lips, pointing upwards' (*Return to Yesterday*, pp. 100–1).
- 46 The symbolism of Christ's Passion and concomitant humility is relevant here.
- 47 The quotation is taken from Gerhard Adler, *Etudes de psychologie jungienne* (Geneva, 1957), p. 18.
- 48 See Gay, *Education of the Senses*, pp. 202–3 for a discussion of Pre-Raphaelite images of female power.
- 49 Timothy Weiss, *Fairy Tale and Romance in the Works of Ford Madox Ford* (Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 1984), p. 4.
- 50 Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (London, Faber & Faber, 1948), pp. 21–2.
- 51 Ford (ed.), *Victorian Britain*, p. 183.

- 52 *The Good Soldier*, p. 46.
- 53 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 63.
- 54 Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976), p. 67.
- 55 I am reminded of Cixous' *Sorties* ('Where is she?') here, in which she lists a series of gender-related binaries, including 'Writing/Speech, Day/Night, Culture/Nature' (see Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds), *New French Feminisms*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1981, pp. 90–8).
- 56 'I am a Tory because I cannot help myself, Ford averred in 1911, continuing, 'I am a Papist because it is the Faith of my Fathers' ('The Critical Attitude', *The Bystander*, 15 November 1911, p. 345).
- 57 It is necessary to acknowledge the complicated history of Ford's relationship with the church, however. Alan Judd calls him a 'kind of Catholic, or agnostic, or Catholic-agnostic' (*Ford Madox Ford*, p. 1).
- 58 From an entry in Olive Garnett's diary, quoted in Saunders I, p. 48. This entry is also quoted in full by Moser, *Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 13.
- 59 Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite*, p. 52.
- 60 Richard A. Cassell, *Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 73.
- 61 Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women*.
- 62 That ability perhaps extended in some degree to Ford's personal life. Arthur Mizener describes Violet Hunt as 'almost a Pre-Raphaelite beauty; she was auburn-haired, with large, liquid eyes and an expressive mouth that gave her a properly melancholy look' (*The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford*, New York, Carroll & Graf, 1985, p. 145).
- 63 Ford Madox Ford, *Rossetti*, p. 144.
- 64 See the discussion in Chapters 1–3. Edward Carpenter wrote in 1894 that 'woman is the more primitive, the more intuitive, the more emotional; the great unconscious and cosmic processes of Nature lie somehow nearer to her' (*Woman and Her Place in a Free Society*, Manchester, The Labour Press Society, 1894, pp. 8–9). Joseph Bristow writes that 'countless images of *femmes fatales*' hung in 'many a *fin-de-siècle* art gallery' (*Sexuality*, p. 44). Peter Gay puts it more strongly still: 'no century depicted woman as vampire, as castrator, as killer so constantly, so programmatically, and so nakedly as the nineteenth' (*Education of the Senses*, p. 206).
- 65 Francis Hueffer, *The Troubadours: A History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1878), pp. 56, 59, 128.
- 66 See his discussion of Henry James' ethic, in which he praises James for having 'never committed the sin of writing what he "wanted" to write ...

- The novelist is not there to write what he “wants” but what he *has*, at the bidding of blind but august Destiny, to set down’ (*Henry James: A Critical Study*, London, Martin Secker, 1918, p. 121). I discuss this in Chapter 3.
- 67 C. F. G. Masterman, *In Peril of Change* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), p. xiii.
- 68 Ford Madox Ford, *The Spirit of the People* (London, Alston Rivers, 1907), p. 115. Perhaps Ford’s interest in his father’s project is partly to do with its mitigation of this loss: ‘Courtly love is in essence the result of the transfer of an attitude of religious adoration from a divine to a secular object – from the Virgin Mary to the lady worshipped by the troubadour’. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London, The Hogarth Press, 1987), p. 136.
- 69 C. J. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, ed. Herbert Read, *The Collected Works of C. J. Jung*, Vol. 9, Part I (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 48–9; Sigmund Freud, ‘Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming’, SE ix, pp. 141–53.
- 70 *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Jung and von Franz (London, Picador, 1978), p. 186.
- 71 Compare this with *The New Humpty-Dumpty*: ‘Whereas [Count Macdonald’s] views had completely altered, his wife’s had remained exactly the same. She still dressed in clothes of sage green, her sleeves still swept the floor; around her neck was a rope of amber beads’ (London, John Lane, 1912, p. 44). This description is usually interpreted by critics as a dig at Ford’s wife Elsie, who was refusing to divorce him at this time. Aspects of the past were perhaps not so valuable in reality as they were in fantasy.
- 72 *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, p. 12.
- 73 Compare this with Sylvia’s metaphorical mastery of horses in *Parade’s End*. Her mounting of a chestnut stallion, her ability to maintain her seat, her occasional cruelty, her prevention of it consorting with its mate, all relate to her treatment of Tietjens and his relationship with Valentine. Sylvia’s mastery opposes that of the Lady Aldington (*Parade’s End*, pp. 708, 779–85, 798–808).
- 74 Freud’s description of adult female sexuality as a ‘dark continent’ did not occur until 1926.
- 75 It is hard to avoid the idea that part of what Ford is signifying here is the desire is to reclaim the womb.
- 76 In *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 138. The metaphorical use of the forest in Ford’s novel also evokes that of Conrad; what is found to be within depends very much on [s]he who discovers it: death and fear, or enlightenment. The sexual connotations are also present in *Heart of Darkness*.
- 77 Saunders I, p. 324.
- 78 John Milton, ‘L’Allegro’, in Helen Darbishire (ed.), *The Poetical Works of*

- John Milton* (London, Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 420–4, ll. 117–22.
- 79 Ford Madox Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (London, Constable & Co., 1931), p. 5. The novel was first published in 1911, and was rewritten extensively for the American edition in 1935. I have used the original version, because of my attention to Ford's works of the time. Mizener states that Ford, in his revision, decided in part to 'bring his style into accord with his prose of the thirties' (*Saddest Story*, p. 485). For a detailed analysis of the discrepancies in these two editions, and of the reasons for Ford's rewrite, see Cassell, *Ford Madox Ford*, Chapter IV, 'Ford's Vision of His World'.
- 80 Compare this description with others already encountered in this chapter: of Magdalena, Emily Aldington, Morris's heroines.
- 81 This belief – one to do with remuneration and well as cultural currency – does dog Ford; see my discussion of it in the final chapter of this book.
- 82 Such use of light is an important part of Ford's technique in *The Young Lovell* too.
- 83 One must take account here of the fact that Ford was trying to divorce his wife Elsie at this time, in order to marry Violet Hunt.
- 84 Thus coming much closer to a work ethic of which William Morris would have approved.
- 85 Ford Madox Ford, 'Grey Matter' in Max Saunders (ed.), *Ford Madox Ford: Selected Poems* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1997), p. 23.