

‘These fragments I have shored
against my ruins’¹

‘Eliot was different from either Pound or Yeats in being a poet who brought into consciousness, and into confrontation with one another, two opposite things: the spiritually negative character of the contemporary world, and the spiritually positive character of the past tradition.’² Other analysts of modernism would qualify Stephen Spender’s comparison here, but the oppositions he identifies are, of course, fundamental to an atavistic modernism (as is Eliot’s language of fragments to modernism generally³). In the search for fragments with which to embrace and describe modernism, Eliot’s poetic voice in *The Waste Land* (and in earlier poems too) probes the past. It does not superimpose that past which he discovers upon the present. Instead, the voice grants it new life, creating a conscious dynamic with which to confront poetically the early twentieth century. The literary consciousness that writes two such ‘opposite things’ is – or should be – itself a dynamic, in Eliot’s own opinion, consisting of the ‘man who suffers and the mind which creates’. The two elements are separate; indeed, he believes that ‘the more perfect the artist, the more separate in him’ they will prove to be.⁴ Sensibility and creativity must stand apart; balance is simultaneously implied. One is reminded by this essential faith in duality of Ford’s presentation of Lovell; it also signifies the crucial early modernist debates of subjectivism versus objectivism in the artist’s stance.⁵ (Not until Eliot ‘got hold of’ subjectivity, Levenson suggests, was it rejected as a modernist doctrine.)

The enriching and rewarding aspects of modernism (like myth, and self-discovery), as presented in Ford’s positive fictions, were the subject of the previous two chapters. These chapters sought to amplify such commonly overlooked aspects of, or ways of approaching, modernist texts. They countered the fictional wisdom that Ford was seen to

expound in more famous examples of his modernist texts, considered in earlier chapters, where the fragmenting experience of existence, in ways to do with sexuality and technology, faith and psychology, was paramount. Ford was closer to what Helen McNeil calls the 'characteristic modernist terror of Eliot', as discussed in the Introduction, in these more famous texts.⁶ This chapter is to examine which aspects of modernism are manifested in Ford's faith in the act of writing itself: the regenerative or the terrible. It will consider Ford's creative dynamic, his techniques, and his literary rules for the writing of prose. Using a range of Ford's writing, it will address the question of which aspects of modernism ultimately hold sway in Ford's oeuvre, and will suggest some reasons for the answers that it provides.

Fordian doctrine⁷

This chapter, then, will concentrate on Ford's criticism, on his critical persona. In his genealogical analysis of modernism – as a literary movement – Levenson has chosen a similar method of approach to Ford, because 'it was in his critical doctrine that Ford was of most consequence in this [pre-war] period' (p. 49). True, perhaps, although Levenson does not examine enough of Ford's *writing* to give a complete picture of this doctrine at work. What, then, is Fordian modernist doctrine? Answers to that question have been provided in the textual analysis in previous chapters, but Ford's critical brain will be seen to provide some more ideas.

As part of an immediate answer to the question posed above, I want first to make a brief digression to consider Ford's role as an editor of modernist writing. This will help to provide a useful context for later discussion, as it was in his role as editor of the *English Review* from 1908 that some of his critical ideas were put into practice. As Nora Tomlinson writes of this period, 'Ford's capacity to recognise and endorse new ideas, his openness to new forms of writing is impressive'.⁸ He published Hardy when others wouldn't ('A Sunday Morning Tragedy' was in the first issue in December 1908); he championed French writers, and thus forced consideration both of new literary techniques, and of sexuality 'without the distortions of bourgeois sentimentality'.⁹ Following previous discussion in this book, these tenets could be condensed into the desire to tell life 'like it is' (experientially and epistemologically), not as it should be (morally or ideally): Ford was thus allied more with writers like Lawrence, Hardy and Conrad

than with those like James and Galsworthy. Saunders writes that the *English Review*, publishing as it did Lawrence, Pound and Norman Douglas, as well as Conrad and James, both 'signalled the presence of English modernism' and quickly put Ford at the centre of literary London (Saunders I, p. 248). Commentators as various as Douglas Goldring, Arnold Bennett and Wyndham Lewis celebrated his achievements in what Ford described as the business of promoting 'either distinction of individuality, or force of conviction' in the writers he published. This statement of editorial intent, made by Ford in 1908, is a crucial one.¹⁰ It displays the working of his literary consciousness as applied to the writing he wished to see being read (writing that would bespeak the differences between poets and novelists, and their distinct, multiple perspectives). It has also been used to site Ford in the Hulme tradition of 'unrepentant subjectivity' in modernism, one that maintains there is value only in presenting individual consciousness. There is, of course, more to Ford than this.¹¹

In keeping with the use of Eliot at the chapter's head, and with the discussion throughout this book, questions about the nature of Ford's modernist doctrine must be asked from a historical, as well as from a literary, perspective. History can mean one's personal past (one that is never approachable in complete isolation); it can mean a wider past; most often, it means a productive combination of the two. When Ford describes an instance, in *It Was The Nightingale*, of historical trauma, it is his modern, literary brain which has undertaken the writing of it. Ford is crossing a London road in the following extract, whilst using his wartime experiences to translate the action: 'It would be long before you regarded an omnibus as something which should carry you smoothly along the streets of an ordered life. Nay, it had been revealed to you that beneath Ordinary Life itself was stretched the merest film with, beneath it, the abysses of Chaos'.¹² Ford's apprehension of abysses of chaos, and Eliot's apprehension of ruin, demand a reconstruction of rules or forms within the new milieu which the writers perceive.¹³ Eliot's climactic offering to the debate, *The Waste Land*, of 1922, was described by Ezra Pound as 'the justification of the movement, of our modern experiment, since 1900'.¹⁴ (Ford had made other contributions, including 'On Heaven', also praised in extravagant terms by Pound.) The mythic, historical, contemporary, seen and heard fragments that Eliot assembled in *The Waste Land* owe much to Conrad, from whose work Eliot nearly took the epigraph for the poem.¹⁵ These fragments are instructive when reading Ford. They form

part of that doctrine Ford both ranges against, and uses to come to know, the abyss often used to describe modernist sensibilities (think of the catastrophist analyses of modernism detailed in the Introduction to this book).

Doctrine I: the novel

The first, greatest and most conclusive aspect of Ford's doctrine is the generic form of the novel itself.¹⁶ Not, most immediately, the kind of novel that George Eliot and Charles Dickens used to write, for obvious reasons to do with omniscience and the nature of the modernist quest: in modernist novels, characters are not presented 'whole', but 'in the fragmentary way in which people appear'.¹⁷ Ford really means another kind of novel, a post-railway-age novel, one that, though modern and realistic, perhaps overall need not be fragmentary. In modern times, Ford-the-catastrophist asserts in *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad*, humanity has 'scrapped a whole culture; the Greek anthology and Tibullus and Catullus have gone the way of the earliest locomotive and the first Tin Lizzie. We have, then, to supply their places – and there is only the novel that for the moment seems in the least likely or equipped to do so'.¹⁸ The novel can both represent and shore up a catalogue of modern experiences, Ford thinks; he develops an argument in a similar vein. People no longer communicate (thanks to the 'habit of flux'): the novel can bridge that new disjunctive space and provide the knowledge, or perspective, of another that threatens to recede. Novels can give pictures of life, life as it looks from many angles; they can 'make you see'. The Great Figure, the heroic representation of mankind, has disappeared along with the allegiance to classicism, and the novel will replace their number – though with characters that look more like Christopher Tietjens.¹⁹ In the face of the decline of revealed religion, the novel will function as a new (pluralist) faith.²⁰ This latter view is taken up and extended by Joseph Wiesenfarth, who likens Ford's visionary novelist to the religious guide: 'Ford's lecture ["The Literary Life", delivered at UCL some time between 1919 and 1922] shows the seriousness in which he held the vocation of writer, likening it to that of the priest. The call of the writer is to hand on the sacred fire [a phrase borrowed from Ford] of the imaginative life. [This] is the only sign of genuine immortality'.²¹ There is little that Ford does not claim as the referential or representational or healing domain of the novel. Ford's theory of the genre

inflates it as a sociologically, as well as a psychologically, applicable critical doctrine that acknowledges and combats fragmentation and collapse.²² It is a way of living, of reacting to the splintering modern forces which rage through his world, splitting, metaphorically, self from self, but quite literally splitting self from other (from neighbour, from community). This chapter will continue to explore how Ford puts this essential, regenerative faith into practice. Experimentation with boundaries – as seen in Eliot's movement between past and present, as well as Ford's in many fictions – will be shown to be a primary method he employs.

Faith into practice: the novel at work

Joseph Conrad died in 1924. In his book on Conrad (one that Ford calls 'a novel', as well as many other things), published the same year, Ford attempts through narrative to maintain Conrad in life, involving him still in his literary imagination. In the following extract, Ford reconstructs the discovery of Conrad's death:

The writer exclaimed, 'Look! Look!'... His companion unfolded the paper. The announcement went across two columns in black, leaded caps... SUDDEN DEATH OF JOSEPH CONRAD. They were demolishing an antiquated waiting room on the opposite platform, three white-dusty men with pickaxes; a wall was all in broken zigzags. The writer said to himself, '*C'est le mur d'un silence eternel qui descend devant vous!*' There descended across the dusty wall a curtain of moonlight, thrown across by the black shadows of oak trees. We were on a verandah that had a glass roof. Under the glass roof climbed passion flowers, and vine tendrils strangled them. We were sitting in deck chairs. It was one o'clock in the morning. Conrad was standing in front of us, talking.²³

The 'writer' (Ford talks about himself in the third person) refuses to allow the newly discovered dead to remain so. 'Look! Look!' he shouts, disturbing the peace – reading does mean seeing for Conrad and Ford. Then, in a beautiful literary transformation, a real/imagined resultant wall 'of silence' becomes the dramatic yet fragmented backdrop against which Conrad's continued life can be revealed. Against this wall a stage is set and the past appears. An instant of time – enough only for recognition of an exclamation mark – distinguishes one time, one level of reality, from the other. Ford wants us to come to believe with hallucinogenic certainty in the sight that he sees, a sight caused by the fragmentation of the surface of time present (one that simultaneously

shores up the terrible experience of Conrad’s loss).²⁴ He wants us to believe in it to the extent that he has justification for using the past continuous tense – the emphasis falling on the present continuous nature of the participles – ‘standing, talking...’. To help, he uses light and dark, colour and shadow to enhance the picture-making upon which he is engaged, achieving a stillness in description, fuelled by short clauses, which grants precedence to the new time and space dimension with which he is working. The speed at which the passage is read slows gradually; chronological and formal time are challenged in the style of the passage as well as in its content. In Bergsonian terms, chronological time is clearly distinguishable here from ‘duration’, from Ford’s experience of a vision of his past in the present (a vision that he seeks to share).²⁵

As I have said, Eliot’s original epigraph to *The Waste Land* was a quotation from Conrad. ‘Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge?’²⁶ was his choice, one that emphasised, in modernist fashion, the retrospective vision (or memory²⁷) and the importance of parallel form, of the past coming alive in the present. Despite the change in epigraph, Conrad’s presence is still felt in the mix of ‘memory and desire’ in Eliot’s third line. Parallel form, the past in the present, is also taken to extremes in the first lines of *The Waste Land* in which the dead return to life. Owing to the strength of his vision, his memory, of Conrad, the same boundary is obscured by Ford on his narrative stage. The obscurantist tendency continues in his attempt to define technically this writing; in *Joseph Conrad* he crosses many genre boundaries in the search for a correct narrative description, one that culminates in an extraordinary definition:

This, then, is a novel, not a monograph; a portrait, not a narration: for what it shall prove to be worth, a work of art, not a compilation. It is conducted exactly along the lines laid down by [Conrad and Ford], both for the novel which is biography and for the biography which is a novel. It is the rendering of an affair intended first of all to make you see the subject in his scenery. It contains no documentation at all; for it no dates have been looked up [...]. It is the writer’s impression of a writer who avowed himself impressionist. (preface)

This is a work of fiction. It is to build towards the picture of a man, a three-dimensional image even – for the reader will ‘see the subject in his scenery’ – not a linear narrative. It will attempt to stand as an independent work of art. It will merge the confines of actual and imaginary.

It will resist the dictates of a supposedly universal time scale, and it will be an impressionist's impression of an impressionist. In addition, revealing its debt to its subject, it will make its appeal to those who encounter it 'through the senses' (as Conrad said that all art should) by springing them into a felt response. It is a formal riot, then, this book, and it certainly stands to assert Ford's freedom from 'traditional genre and form'.²⁸ Judging the text by the success of the first passage quoted, it achieves its aims: memory and desire create vision, the momentary experience of the past in the present. Ford has created in his vision of the novel, one shared to a greater or lesser degree with other modernists, an eminently plastic and various form.²⁹ He is unique in the way that he binds this to its spiritual, sociological and emotional regenerative promise.

Ford's often prevalent aim, when writing, is to capture the essence of Greek drama, as perceived by him.³⁰ The effect of his staging techniques has been examined more closely in reference to *The Fifth Queen*, in Chapter 2; here it is his success at manipulating boundaries in the development of his doctrine that is to be considered. In his work of reference (a contentious term for this book) *The March of Literature*, he confides that 'it is perfectly proper, then, for the chief actor on the boards at the moment to describe the beauty of the moonlight, the luminosity of the golden globes of the lemon and orange against the background of their dark foliages. That, indeed, is his function and the function of the poet who is behind him. He must make the hearers see the landscape with the eyes of the imagination'.³¹ There are echoes of the initial extract from *Joseph Conrad* in the above quotation, in which Ford describes how dramatic words (rather than scenery) make an audience see. Verbal conjuring of the moonlight, shadows and rich vegetation produces the critical effect, the coming forward of the 'eyes of the imagination'; these are powerful eyes. The description of fecundity, luscious nature, here in the form of 'golden globes of the lemon', or in the Conrad extract in the deathly embrace of 'passion flowers' and 'vine tendrils', helps to stir the imaginative, responsive, senses to life. Nature, it seems, must be invoked over civilisation. How much more than usual the reader will be engaged, and convinced, by a text if the light can be seen with the eyes of the imagination, if ripe fruit can be touched and smelled, with similar imaginative sense, if a voice can be heard? All this is achieved in Ford's writing on Conrad. He has manipulated boundaries between reading and seeing, and witnessing and participating, in order to create a multi-sensory, highly realistic, expe-

rience; crucially, this experience stretches and extends the imagination, and human sympathy, of those who encounter the text. Ford's 'narrative visions', Max Saunders writes, 'need to be seen (to be believed)' alongside other technical bastions of modernism: 'Proust's re-experiencings of the past, Pound's visions of pagan metamorphoses, Joyce's "epiphanies", and Woolf's "moments of being"' (Saunders I, p. 386). The things that Ford makes us see do relate intricately to many of these other modernist techniques; in the extent of their appeal, in the ways in which they resonate, they also stand alone.

Ford and Conrad, in their creative work together, which from 1898 spanned nearly ten years of greater or lesser intensity, focused very precisely on questions of the form of the novel as a method, *the* method, of artistic expression. They were dedicated to the debate, as Ford states: 'We agreed that the novel is absolutely the only vehicle for the thought of our day. With the novel you can do anything: you can inquire into every department of life, you can explore every department of the world of thought' (*Joseph Conrad*, p. 222).³² They thus proved a dedication to multiplicity, and perhaps also to the subjectivist movement signified in its early stages, according to Levenson, by Walter Pater's *Renaissance*, published in 1873. Of Pater's publication Levenson states that the literary 'step is a crucial one. It is not a move [...] in the direction of aestheticism. It is towards what we would better call psychologism: not life for art's sake, but life and art for the sake of a "quickened multiple consciousness" – consciousness as a source of value and a refuge from experience' (p. 19). Multiplicity of consciousness is enshrined in Ford's testimony to the novel – he admired Turgenev because 'he had the seeing eye to such an extent that he could see that two opposing truths were equally true'.³³ But does the novel also establish a new 'source of value' and create a 'refuge from experience'? Ford's writing on Conrad would seem to suggest so, for Conrad is to be maintained in life as Ford knew and loved him most. And yet, Ford's narrative has never been seen to offer a refuge; rather, it offers ways of reflecting and organising the plural nature of experience.

'The writer never in his life uttered one word of personal affection towards Conrad' (*Joseph Conrad*, p. 129), Ford admits. He uses his novel about him partly to revisit his past and invest it with feelings that have up until this point, the time of writing and the year of Conrad's death, been kept strictly under control. The novel served to fragment his control of his feelings. It also provided him with the only possible framework to organise those feelings. Ford is at the train-station when he discovers that

Conrad is dead; his literary eye and ear recreate immediately a vision of him and a conversation with him 'just now on this platform' (*Joseph Conrad*, p. 27). The memory is placed intentionally, perhaps fictionally. The train as modern totem, representing the death-knell to the old world, is vigorously appropriated by Ford, here and elsewhere, as the perfect symbol of modern fragmentation (or, rather, modern multiplicity). On the subject of the train, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in 1895 that 'it seems to me . . . as if the railway were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the earth and all the degrees of social rank'.³⁴ In this way he manages to sum up much commentary on this issue. Briefly, in regard to Ford, trains appear perfectly on time when there is trauma at hand. Ashburnham's portentous indiscretion occurs on a train journey; this symbol of the modern age seems to sanction, if not to incite, his sexual impropriety. In *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* Sorrell is catapulted into the past to enact his unconscious due to a railway accident. Tietjens and Macmaster conduct their most expressive and revelatory conversations – whilst behaving perfectly – as they watch England hurtle by. Dowell's lack of ability to control the running of trains, and the 'frenzy' this drives him into, is a thinly disguised parallel to the fact that he can neither understand nor harness twentieth-century sexual demands and existence (*The Good Soldier*, p. 39).³⁵

Ford detailed his critical thinking about the image of the train in *The Soul of London*, published in 1905. Here he describes the rushing days, the endless meaningless activity of the social set, acknowledging eventually that 'each of these things sinks back into the mere background of your you. You are, on the relentless current of your life, whirled past them as, in a train, you are whirled past a succession of beautiful landscapes. You have "seen" such and such a social event as you have seen, say, Damascus, from a saloon window'.³⁶ This is a very different sight from that of Conrad established by Ford's prose. The train window becomes symptomatic of the space between the self and what it does in modern society: one travels, one watches, one does not engage. It suggests an endless mixture and catalogue of responses, none of which is permanent. In this, however, there is potential for the novelist: time and sight manipulated in this way mean the ability to experiment. The train (or its railway) represents fragmentation; it provides the pluralistic 'jumble of pictures', which phrase Herbert Butterfield creates, in a strikingly similar piece of railway writing from 1924.³⁷ But Ford's novels also employ it, as part of his modernist doctrine, as the obvious

means with which to represent the multiple truths of modern consciousness (especially when visually represented, as in Ford's visions of the past). New ways of representing consciousness are endemic to the metaphorical journeys that it transcribes.

In Ford's mind, then, the novel can generate a more complete existence, in terms of what it enables one to see and to know. As a generic system, it can also enable one's communication of life, sometimes to the extent of usurping first-hand experience: 'Gossip is a necessity for keeping the mind of humanity as it were aerated and where, owing to a lack of sufficiently intimate circumstances [due to the railways, in part] in communities gossip cannot exist, its place must be supplied – and it is supplied by the novel'³⁸ (*English Novel*, p. 10). More often, however, the novel forms an added level to life, a new dimension. Ford says of himself as a young man, having read a line of Kipling, that life was edged gently aside by the novel: 'More plainly than the long curtains of the room in which I am writing I see now the browning bowl of my pipe, the singularly fine grey ashes, the bright placards as the train runs into the old-fashioned station.'³⁹ Kipling successfully courted the eyes of his imagination. Even now, as Ford writes, the sights he saw as he read that text return. It seems to be important, though, that he is writing as this occurs: his writing of the memory becomes a way of balancing, controlling and explaining the access he has achieved to an older self, to the past. One action incorporates, and sets the stage for, the other, just as writing brought Conrad back. It is no coincidence that a train has crept into the framework. It heralded Conrad's reanimation; it has heralded travel within the unconscious. Here it heralds the conjunction of times: the past and present; the conjunction of activities: reading and writing, living and reading; and the conjunction of levels of consciousness: the literary/fictional and the present/actual.

The novel is a mediator. It represents, as Ford thinks of it, a 'place' where plural truths can co-exist. It is at its best when it enables one to see, to hold, two seemingly exclusive truths of experience in conjunction, in equilibrium with one another (think here of Ford's praise of Turgenev). As Ford read Kipling, a moment was savoured not instantly, but continuously – it is a progressive example of what Joseph Frank believes modernism as a whole, as a movement, engenders as a response to an increasingly multiple consciousness. Frank has called this formulaic response spatial form. He states that in the 'juxtaposition of past and present, as Allen Tate has realized, history becomes ahistorical. Time is no longer felt as an objective, causal progression

with clearly marked out differences between periods; now it has become a continuum'.⁴⁰ Ford's use of time seems to place him somewhere between Frank's definition of time and that of Eliot; he envisions time as a fluid continuum where past and present can co-exist. His writing on Conrad and his memory of his reading of Kipling have most recently illustrated this point. But Ford also writes with a conception of clearly marked-out periods, occurrences and movements in history that he can identify and then novelistically exploit (think of *The Fifth Queen*, *The 'Half Moon'* and *The Good Soldier*).

The new control and manipulation of different levels of time forms only a part of what Frank analyses as possible through spatial form in the novel. To begin his discussion, he embarks upon a detailed examination of the famous fair scene in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.⁴¹

As Flaubert sets the scene, there is action going on simultaneously at three levels; and the physical position of each level is a fair index to its spiritual significance. On the lowest plane, there is the surging, jostling mob in the street, mingling with the livestock [...]. Raised slightly above the street by a platform are the speechmaking officials, bombastically reeling off platitudes to the attentive multitudes. And on the highest level of all, from a window overlooking the spectacle, Rodolphe and Emma are watching the proceedings and carrying on their amorous conversation [...]. 'Everything should sound simultaneously,' Flaubert later wrote, in commentating upon the scene; 'one should hear the bellowing of the cattle, the whispering of the lovers, and the rhetoric of the officials all at the same time.' (p. 14)

Ford makes no secret of his debt to Flaubert (describing him as he who 'most shiningly preached the doctrine' of aloofness in authorial creation⁴²) and in a novel published in 1923, *The Marsden Case*, he uses a similar dramatic structure to the one described above. This structure is one that acknowledges plurality, and mirrors the pattern Frank discerns.⁴³ The night club in *The Marsden Case* signifies the lowest spiritual plane; it is a den of iniquity, throwing the ground-level worry about war into dramatic relief as the inhabitants act, flirt and gorge themselves upon sexually evocative foods. 'We were at the bottom of the stairs,' narrates Jessop, teasing the reader with his or her exclusion as 'the fantastic vista of that home of orgies opened before us'.⁴⁴ The luscious natural world is again part of the framework, as Madame leans across the table towards Jessop and slowly peels and eats a 'Gargantuan peach' (p. 94). The reader is supposed to try to taste it, as well as to imaginatively see what Jessop sees. More overt, then, in its exploration

of sexuality than Flaubert's scene (Ford had written a few years earlier that 'the appeal of *Madame Bovary* is largely sexual'⁴⁵), but just as imaginatively and tightly structured, is this use of spatial form to present the more paganesque realities of human experience.⁴⁶ Once again the novel, as Ford's modernist tool, is designed in recognition of modern, visualised, multiplicity. Reflective, it omits nothing in its representation of what it is to be human.

Frank concludes his discussion of Flaubert by remarking on the space that is created in the narrative by its structure (he is discussing the same extract). The manipulation of time, and of its many levels, now becomes central: 'For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area' (p. 15). Frank finally judges the episode as a minor part of the narrative that is then reabsorbed. In the example of *The Marsden Case*, however, the preparation for, and the enjoyment of, that one evening, takes up almost a hundred pages of narrative. The time-flow is thus manipulated to a far greater degree, in a way that resists closure and climax simultaneously (compare this with my analysis of *The Good Soldier* in Chapter 2). This scene signifies not simply a Bacchanalian feast of delight, a facet of human experience which needs to be dwelt upon, but an escape into a peculiarly Fordian manner of evocation, where the narrative voice gestures towards sight, taste and touch, as well as (sometimes confusingly) knowledge. In so doing, it takes its time. The narrative voice controls the interplay between levels of consciousness in a way that correlates with its now moving, now immobilised, always turbulent, presentation of the narrative. This voice is a Fordian construct which is the subject of debate, and of which Dowell is the most successful proponent. Dowell is brought to mind by the difficulty Jessop has in progressing through the narrative, for Dowell's struggle with knowledge is similarly portrayed; 'I will try to continue my time-table', Jessop repeats (p. 111) after 'trying to put the events chronologically' (p. 45). (Of course, being in a modernist text means that he does not succeed.⁴⁷ Instead he puts events in the order in which they occur to him.) Dowell's explanation of such problematic dealings with chronology would be the one he offers in *The Good Soldier*: 'I have, I am aware, told this story in a very rambling way so that it may be difficult for anyone to find their way through what may be a sort of maze. [...] I console myself with thinking that this is a real story [and thus should be told as it would be experienced in "reality"]'.⁴⁸ There is a significant ambiguity here. One meaning is more interesting

than the other: Dowell, but more significantly, Ford, intends the difficulty of the prose, and the story – ‘so that it may be difficult’, for a reason, like the discovery of the way through a maze.⁴⁹ Ford is revelling in the conscious construction and design of a tale; the irony of the second sentence speaks for this: ‘I console myself . . .’. Delay is endemic. Design is obfuscatory. Is this solely indicative of the ‘reality’ of such treatment of time, or does the distance thus established between author and tale further illuminate the discussion of the possibilities of the novel? Frank Kermode would say that it does:

[Henry] James makes an elaborate plea for novels of which the technical disposition is such that they must be read twice. So he applauds Conrad’s *Chance* [...] at least a book which by the elaborateness of its method makes a gap between producer and product, a gap, as he puts it, ‘to glory in’. The existence of that gap ensures another, between the text and its reader, whose expectations are no longer subject to the usual kind of authoritative correction.⁵⁰

It is hard to imagine a more successful illustration of that gap than Dowell’s maze. An almost physical impediment prevents the reader from being carried away by the story, which would then by definition not be a real one, for life does not represent itself simply. Freedom is given to the reader by this systematisation of narrative, freedom from omniscience and from ‘authoritative correction’ – remember here Ford’s praise of Flaubert. Freedom too is given to the writer, and Kermode continues his discussion by praising *The Good Soldier* as a pinnacle of the modern novel, enshrining multiplicity, expounding perfectly what he means by the ‘turbulence of a text’ (p. 103). He shows once more how Ford’s grasp of the novel was such a glorious mirror to, and encapsulator of, modernism: ‘Ford wanted to be the historian of a civilisation but in the Jamesian way. The dream of Flaubert – a shift of emphasis from story to treatment – is now at least half-realised, story is transformed into “affair”, telling into “treatment”. Nothing in the text is to be classifiable as formal or inert, merely consummable: everything is capable of production’ (p. 106). Kermode signifies a riotously productive existence in Ford’s novel, one alluded to in the analysis of *The Marsden Case*. The novel, as well as being the perfect expression of the age, would seem to give Ford the opportunity to glory in the gap alongside, though presumably less sedately than, James. I want now to move to look at other ways in which the novel, as considered by Ford, offers this opportunity. Emphasis remains on the regenerative aspects of modernism also revealed.

Whilst Ford was on leave from military duty at the battle of the Somme he made a visit to the theatre. Joining conversation with some French officers about the progress in the war he had a sudden vision, one that finds its way into *No Enemy*:⁵¹

It was just at this point that I remembered Morgan and the old man of the bath-mill. I daresay you will think this merely a literary trick, when I say that I saw them.

But I saw them: against an immense black mass fringed by flaming houses.⁵²

‘Nothing is more vivid’, writes neuroscientist Susan Greenfield, ‘than the pictures we can generate inside our heads’.⁵³ Ford/Gringoire offers confirmation of this judgement. Not only does he believe that he actually sees these two soldiers, now dead, because memory encourages it (and thus prove that the sight in his mind is more powerful than that in front of his eyes); he also imagines, simultaneously, the setting as it was when they died. The two-dimensional word ‘point’, signifying as it does a position in space as well as in time, serves as the introduction to another instance of parallel form. Speaking of the same incident, Ford explains this phenomenon elsewhere by stating simply, ‘I think that is how the mind really works, linking life together’ (*No Enemy*, p. 173). Ford does not believe, then, that the brain deals with experiences in a strict and chronological order; it receives information, but does not necessarily process it immediately. It will return the information to the fore when it becomes significant, or instructive, or possible to deal with it. (It is interesting to wonder whether this conception was exacerbated by his wartime experiences.)

Reading Stephen Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage* had a similar pictorial effect upon Ford. He read this book about the American Civil War whilst at the front:

I had been reading, actually, *The Red Badge of Courage* by the light of a candle stuck on to a bully-beef case at my camp-bed head. And so great had been the influence of that work on me that, when at dawn I got out of my bed to see if a detail for which I was responsible was preparing carts to go to the Schiffenberg and draw our Mills bombs . . . against and below hills and dark woods I saw sleepy men bending over fires of twigs, getting tea for that detail, it did not seem real to me. Because they were dressed in khaki. The hallucination of Crane’s book had been so strong on me that I had expected to see them dressed in Federal blue.⁵⁴

He has hallucinated, as he has encouraged his reader to hallucinate

with him in his writing on Conrad. Both sections of war prose quoted above, written descriptions of transformative experiences, single out colour as a prime method of description, and both, more interestingly, use the word 'against' in their image-building. Conscious construction is evident. One facet, one level is set against another until the narrative becomes multi-dimensional, set on a stage; it creates a living, but written, picture. Picture-painting was a skill for which Ford's fiction was known (and this aspect of his prose has been a recurrent subject throughout this book). A contemporary review of *The Marsden Case* speaks of 'the incomparable charm and delicacy of portrayal, the sensitive, subtle revelation of the characters through the veriest fragments of speech or movement, or the pictorial power, which Hueffer possesses more than almost any other English novelist'.⁵⁵ Ford builds up the levels of portrayal of his characters partly by pictures. A multiplicity of these pictures, or portrayals, triggers to a reader's response, are held in equilibrium by his novels – in a way similar to that of his beloved impressionist painting.

Janice Biala (the painter who was Ford's last love; they were together from the early 1930s until the end of his life) was asked in an interview in 1979 whether there was any connection between Cézanne's aesthetic and that of Ford. She replied:

As a painter, I can't speak for a writer. But what does come to mind are the waterlilies of Monet. The waterlilies are floating on the water. They are blue and violet and pink. But when you look close, there are no waterlilies, no water, no trees – just blocks of paint. You step back – and once more the waterlilies are floating on the water shadowed by the drooping willow trees. In short you need a certain distance in front of any work of art. The artist is not concerned with scientific truth or facts.⁵⁶

Colour works differently when the viewer is close to art from the way in which it works when you step back. One needs that gap, an objective distance, for the contents of that which is beheld to assemble and form themselves. The view from the railway-carriage window both indicates the multiplicity of modern life and offers a frame for it; Dowell's maze impedes rampant and unconscious progress through the narrative, making one aware of life's turbulence as well as of the novelist's ability to represent it. Ford's prose contains many views; one is not more real than another. It is the conglomeration of tenses and colours and words that matters. Again, as a technique for combating the disjunctive forces of modernism, whilst being true to its spirit, Ford's writing would appear to be highly successful. As a way of representing and containing

the 'abysses of chaos', it is both honest and industrious.

Joseph Frank progresses a necessary step in the comparison between the writer and the painter:

There is a striking analogy [...] between Proust's method and that of [...] Impressionist painters. The Impressionist painter juxtaposed pure tones on the canvas, instead of mixing them on the palette, in order to leave the blending of colours to the eye of the spectator. Similarly, Proust gives us what might be called pure views of his characters – views of them 'motionless in a moment of vision' in various phases of their lives – and allows the sensibility of the reader to fuse them into a unity. (p. 25)

It is logical in a discussion of this nature to incorporate the work of Proust – although in his desire to complete his analogy Frank is somewhat reductive of Proust's intention. The gap between the reader and Proust allows the 'pure views' he creates to coalesce and make their multiple meaning. These 'pure views' are related to Ford's conscious picture-making, and thus are part of his modernist doctrine (think of Leonora 'looking into the pit of hell and seeing horrors there' though Dowell doesn't understand what her face tells him, and, differently, Kitty seeing Grimshaw and Katya embrace). Ford knew Proust was great; though he claimed not to have read him, he had an implicit understanding of his position in the tradition to which Ford had come. Frank's analysis of Proust's style is reminiscent of earlier discussion – the reader of *Joseph Conrad* must watch to see him and listen to hear him. However, Frank is most pertinent in his argument that the dialectic present in a painting can be found in similar dimensions in a piece of prose. Proust's 'moments', akin to those of Ford, are an instant out of time where that which is normally undetectable (though latent) can be appraised. These can be named 'pure views' or visions because Proust defined them as the product of a kind of supra-reality, a perfect conjunction of tenses.

Does Ford know and express this phenomenon theoretically, as part of his doctrine? Can it be actively solicited and consciously achieved; or is it a telling triumph of the unconscious? As can be seen in the following extract, an example of the Fordian 'moment', he is at least conscious of this technique. In *The Soul of London* Ford provides a glorious and picturesque rendition of the working of his layered, open and acquiring fictive mind. It is a picture of a mind which understands the 'moments', and the value of them, and which understands how to transgress the movement of time. For here, instead of sending one forward, time sends one below, and around, and above:

It is in the breaks, in the marking time, that the course of a life becomes visible and sensible. You realise it only in leisures within that laborious leisure; you realise it, in fact, best when, with your hands deep in your trousers pockets, or listless on your watch-chain, you stand, unthinking, speculating on nothing, looking down on the unceasing, hushed, and constantly changing defile of traffic below your club windows. The vaguest thoughts flit through your brain: the knot on a whip, the cockade on a coachman's hat, the sprawl of a large woman in a victoria, the windshield in front of an automobile. You live only with your eyes, and they lull you. So Time becomes manifest like a slow pulse, the world stands still; a four-wheeler takes as it were two years to crawl from one lamp-post to another, and the rustle of newspapers behind your back in the dark recesses of the room might be a tide chafing upon the pebbles. That is your deep and blessed leisure: the pause in the beat of the clock that comes now and then to make life seem worth going on with. (*The Soul of London*, p. 122)

Ford's punctuation in this beautiful passage, his imagery, and his control of tempo all combine to mean that, as readers, as viewers of a mind, we are presented with a lucid and calm visual image of what could be chaos. Ford's fictive mind looks out, and finds inspiration in whatever it lands upon. And yet it controls each impulse, holding 'the knot on a whip, the cockade on a coachman's hat, the sprawl of a large woman in a victoria, the windshield in front of an automobile' in an immediate equilibrium. The line does not progress, in a linear fashion, as does a normal list, towards a conjunctive clause; balancing commas alone are utilised. This is reminiscent of Biala's prosaic account of Monet's waterlilies as being 'blue and violet and pink': without hierarchy. Ford's writerly thoughts are evenly spaced, and he thus achieves a panoramic vision. The back and forth, suck and release rhythm of the tide, to which he directly refers, is endemic to the balance of the piece. He bestrides it, uses it. The surface level of life, which he fragments, is behind him in the rustle of the newspapers, a coarse splinter of rationality, of contemporaneity;⁵⁷ in front of him time broadens and lengthens, allowing him a manipulation of textures and stimuli to the extent that all, for a while, comes alive.

One of the more obvious achievements of this piece of writing is its regulation of consciousness; Ford patterns his psychological processes during a moment of this kind. He ascribes to natural and eternal – and therefore highly secure – rhythms, the overall impression, but within that he gains a unique independence and revelatory freedom. Such writing counters with great force the suggestion that for Ford prose was

only about mirroring the soul. For Eliot, art involved ‘selection, suppression, control and order’; Ford is usually approached, in criticism of the period, as adopting an antithetical position, a Hulmean position, one that collapsed in on itself by privileging individual experience as the sole aim of artistic representation.⁵⁸ But Ford acknowledges the need for both control and revelation. It is evident in the axiomatic Fordian paragraph above that he is not undertaking a simply private journey: *thoughts* are *sights*. What is more, he selects and orders that to which he responds, creating a system that controls it. It may be held simultaneously, rather than ordered preferentially, but much of *The Waste Land* is arranged in just such a manner. Ford has fashioned a critical doctrine for achieving equilibrium, a simultaneous awareness of the outside world and the inner response to that world.

It can be a protective equilibrium, for, as he states, ‘You live only with your eyes, and they lull you’; whilst lending truth to the multiple and intricate levels of consciousness, the experience of them does not become too much to bear. His understanding of literary consciousness was that it could at times be a necessary intermediary between the external and internal worlds. ‘I once heard’, Ford writes, ‘a couple of French marine engineers agreeing that although they had traversed the Indian Ocean many times and had several times passed through, or through the fringes of, typhoons, neither of them had ever been in one till they had read Conrad’s *Typhoon*’ (*English Novel*, p. 55). Taken literally, out of context, this is nonsense; taken in relation to the present discussion, it makes absolute sense. Experiencing war, as the writers examined in Chapter 4 proved, one can’t know it; only afterwards does the knowledge come, often through writing. Likewise with these sailors and their reading of Conrad: his writing made them see and know what they had experienced. The desired capacity of the novel to show how things are, to help one to ‘look things in the face’, has more to do with reality than with navel gazing; though, as Ford would be the first to admit, there is no *one* reality (he uses Conrad’s vision as an example here, after all). All the novelist can do is to show what he sees, or to use Ford’s phrase, ‘register a truth as he sees it’, and hope it is resonant, along with other versions.⁵⁹

This capacity of the novel is one that art too, as Ford thinks about it (perhaps more obviously), possesses. He uses the word ‘modern’ in his description, and criticism, of Holbein because ‘artistically speaking [the phrase “with the modern eye”] means that Holbein, penetrating,

as it were, through the disguise of costume, of hair-dressing and of the very postures of the body and droop of the eyelids, seized on the rounded personalities – the underlying truths of the individuals before him'.⁶⁰ Ford sees the realisation of who, and what, humanity most basely and plurally is in the artistic representation of Holbein's subjects; they appear in their most concealed secrets, for his brush finds out their 'underlying truths'. And it is a 'modern' trait, one to be embraced when searching for material: Paul Wiley cites examples of 'Ford's transference of Holbein's portraiture' in the *Fifth Queen* trilogy.⁶¹ The fictional mind will force the boundaries of the sight to bring out what is deepest and most true in what it sees, as will the artist's brush. It is, however, necessary to be continually aware of the elliptical nature of sight in Ford: to see is not always simultaneously to understand (think of Dowell, and of Sorrell). Sight must also, then, be divided and manipulated for purposes of narrative. Real sight, like real knowledge, can be delayed and buried further back in the unconscious, waiting to emerge as, of course, Dowell's 'complete' knowledge eventually does. How does the novelist 'see' her or himself? How do authorial levels of consciousness correlate to this concept of sight? Answering these questions is crucial to coming to a full understanding of Ford's modernist doctrine. In the following sections I will begin to address them, considering Fordian impressionism as a vital part of the discussion.

Doctrine II: the novelist, and impressionism

Up until this point in the discussion I have been primarily concerned with the regenerative aspects and functions of the novel as Ford sees them. Ford's extensive beliefs in the novel's healing and revolutionary power, and his use of various techniques within his novels, have been shown to work as hopeful, regulating, occasionally semi-transcendental, but most importantly realistic forces. The novel has provided him with ways to counter and to represent the fragmentations and realignments of the new age. From this point I will be shifting the emphasis of the discussion, in order to focus on how the artist can most ably achieve the visionary position necessary in order to write like this.

Ford provides a comprehensive image of the able writer in a letter to Mrs. Masterman (married to C. F. G. Masterman) in January 1912. 'It is for us [contemporary novelists]', he writes, 'to get at new truths or to give new life to such of the old as appeal *hominibus bonae voluntatis*

[...] in the clear pure language of our own day and with what is clear and new in our own individualities'.⁶² 'Getting at' what is new involves using oneself (one's distinct individuality) as a novelist, and 'clear pure language'. (Once you had 'got at' what is new, of course, as a modernist writer you then had to 'make it new' in the telling of it.) In his introduction to *The English Novel*, Ford's major image, and it is a recurring one, is that of a gradual but inescapable coming apart, or increasing disparateness, in English literary tradition. He exposes a deep pattern, one that possesses a 'refractory' nature (*English Novel*, p. 2); this nature is necessary, he concedes, for the incorporation of each new stage of writing. It seems necessary for writers to embody a similar level of refractoriness to do their job of accurately reflecting the times. If so, then a high level of self-awareness is required as literature moves into what is a particularly disjunctive age.

This sounds like a kind of reflexive fragmentation: as the times fragment, so must the self-aware, and thus genuine, novelist. Here we begin to encounter the kind of terminology associated with impressionism, a modernist doctrine with which Ford, perhaps more than any other modernist writer, is associated.

Impressionism

Consideration of the extent of self-consciousness necessary to a writer's professional existence caused a debate that pre-dated Ford, and modernism. It raged in the latter half of the nineteenth century, thanks to Matthew Arnold, amongst others,⁶³ but in the years before the First World War it became a quintessential part of literary life. In simple terms, on one side of the divide were the avowed impressionists, derided by Irving Babbitt as 'the last effete representatives of romanticism'. Levenson characterises impressionism 'as both a precise rendering of objects and an unrepentant subjectivizing' (p. 36): as attention to detail, in other words, in what one saw *and* in what one felt/remembered. (Saunders adopts a different moral framework, describing impressionism as 'a mode of getting people to see visions which have been prescribed' (Saunders I, p. 445).) Levenson's high moral tone, and Babbitt's plain offensiveness, are notable, and indicate the height of the contemporary cultural stakes over this issue. Opposed to the impressionists, on the other side of the divide, were those, like Babbitt, for whom art was primarily about self-transcendence and moral codes such as Duty (and we know from Chapter 4 how successful those were at surviving modern life).

The extreme expression of the belief in extensive self-consciousness (usually portrayed as an impressionist belief) is Anatole France's dictum,⁶⁴ quoted in disgust by Babbitt, that 'all of us judge everything by our own measure. How could we do otherwise, since to judge is to compare, and we have only one measure, which is ourselves'.⁶⁵ Babbitt, conversely, held a conviction that came to be shared by Eliot – that such individualism was entirely out of keeping with the business of literature, where rigorous and traditional uniform standards should be maintained. It was the impressionist writer who bore the brunt of his ire, for challenging uniformity and tradition. Despite its reactionary nature, Babbitt's attitude looms large in Levenson's genealogy of modernism (though he is omitted from other analyses of the time); it is useful partly because it encourages an analysis of the fragility necessary to Ford's kind of writing.

Things were not as simple as they look in the outline given above. The subjectivity/objectivity debate was often confused. Ezra Pound, for example, in 1914 both called Ford 'significant and revolutionary' and defined imagism as explicitly against impressionism, and the previous year opposed Ford's aesthetic to Yeats's 'subjectivism'.⁶⁶ The confusion, added to the simplistic and violent terms in which the battle was waged, mean that Ford's own view of impressionism is hard to place here. However, Levenson's statement that impressionism was about a 'precise rendering' comes close to Ford's realist, watchful, intention, and added to that must be Ford's idea that all the novelist had to offer was one – usually complex – view of the thing to be rendered. For who, as he might have said, knows and sees all?

For Ford, impressionism was about the development of the novelist's ability to 'make you see'. V. S. Pritchett describes Ford's 'ingenious system of getting at the inside of things by looking at the surface alone',⁶⁷ which sounds as though it is not doing justice to the multiple dimensions in which Ford works – until one considers the nature of the surface itself. It would, of course, be a reflective one. In the seminal essay 'On Impressionism' (1914), Ford writes that 'Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass – through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you'.⁶⁸ Ford seems to be looking through one of the many windows in Henry James's *House of Fiction* ('so many views'). In that early thinking on impressionism, James was concerned to represent the multiplicity of perspectives

possible from the multiplicity of windows. James’s windows are different shapes and sizes; they are peopled by countless individuals with their countless takes or views. Ford works, in detail, impressionistically, with similar windows. But Ford is not just talking about looking *through* the windows, he is talking about looking *at* the windows. In an added twist that turns James’s House of Fiction into something more Fordian, a vital ingredient must then be added to the impressionist’s vision: the embodied, because reflected, past. Memory, then, is what is in front of the impressionist as he beholds the world – it is the stuff of impressionist fiction. Ford proved in his writing about Conrad that this permanent access to the past can work smoothly, clearly, and that readers’ imaginations can be similarly engaged. But the picture can become more complicated even than it already is, when access to the past is blocked, or is incomplete.

In Sussex, post-war, Ford is haunted:

In Red Ford, whilst the crock boiled over the sinking fire the cottage was filled with a horde of minor malices and doubts. The stairs creaked; the rafters stirred; in the chimney the starlings, distressed by my fire, kept up a continuous rustling. The rest of that empty house I had only dimly seen by the light of one candle. It was unknown ground. I had a sense that the shadows were alive with winged malices and maladies and that the dark, gleaming panes of the windows hid other, whispering beings that jeered behind my back, hanging from the rose stems in the outer night. (*It Was the Nightingale*, p. 116)

The brightly, cheerfully reflective glass of ‘On Impressionism’, called to account for double vision, denotes the mind’s capability for being in two places (at least) at once. Those are places of time as well as of space: the person he sees, and will in turn show, is ‘behind’ Ford, in his envisioned past. Somewhere else can also be sometime else, but both are within easy reach. The clouded, obfuscatory glass of Red Ford is a post-war mutation. It threatens Ford with what he does not, any longer, know about himself and, in turn, about the world. His paranoia feeds on ghosts that whisper and jeer; he cannot quite hear them (his hearing was damaged also in the war); he cannot quite see them either, for his glass has become dark. So Ford’s doubts about his failing memory, and thus his continuing life as a novelist of history, centre on the changing glass that *has* described for him his impressionist’s view of the world. It is the ability, quite literally, to reflect, that is now challenged. When the glass is clear Ford can revel in his regenerative, recovering, impressionist techniques; he can rejoice in multiplicity. When the glass is not clear

that multiplicity becomes a terror, enacting the fragmentation of his hold on the past and on himself in front of his eyes. The impressionist's glass has been seen throughout this book to function powerfully in both states.

Impressionism is about lending a detailed, containing and representative truth to the multiple aspects of human consciousness; it is about 'making you see', and know, truths. Impressionism also depends on the novelist's ability to see, and to remember, in order to create the invigorating detail that for Ford constitutes 'good prose'. It depends on the novelist's ability to see, and to remember, in order that a picture (which would then of course have to be compared with another example) is presented. The critical doctrine at work here is primarily regenerative, then, so long as memory allows; others do not agree, as the following debate illustrates.

Trevor, in his foreword to Stang's book, *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, states that 'Ford shatters the surface of things and even out of the fragments creates an extra pattern of truth'.⁶⁹ He uses violent imagery to reflect the crucial nature of the issue, and the level of pain involved. As Levenson has said, 'Consciousness [...] enfeebls' (p. 33): it is hard to be aware. Ford strews about him, in his fiction, many versions of this maxim, most horrifically perhaps in the bed-ridden torture of Robert Grimshaw, or in Tietjens's stumbling, blind, madness. There is a splintering involved in showing humanity how it is, a temporary privileging of individual consciousness, but out of that splintering *can* come something else (think of Tietjens, finally, of Sorrell, and of the speaker in 'On Heaven'). Trevor believes that though Ford fragments the surface, he then uses those fragments to build a more complete picture. His word is 'pattern', after all.

For Levenson, however, there is no pattern in Ford. He places Ford in the tradition of James and Conrad, where he belongs, yet thinks him an unworthy, careless inheritor:

Both James and Conrad depended heavily on a conscious subjectivity – nothing could be clearer. But in both writers there remained a crucial *separation* between consciousness and the objective world. It is worth repeating James's well-known description of Conrad's method: namely that it was 'a prolonged hovering flight of the subjective over the outstretched ground of the case exposed'. In Ford, the 'hovering' relation breaks down. [his emphasis] (p. 116)

James's 'gap to glory in' re-emerges as a significant metaphor in the discussion. Levenson sees collapse in Ford's writing, but no subsequent

restructuring of newly gained information or ideas. He sees a chaotic obfuscation of boundaries, in the main due to Ford's non-observance of a strict line between objective and subjective visions (though he doesn't say where this line might be located).

If Levenson's analysis is accepted, then simultaneously the diminutive interpretation of Ford's 'impressions', of his Proustian 'moments', gains credence. It is a diminutive interpretation that is given voice by Michela Calderaro, who is, nonetheless, attempting to do justice to the difficulty of the relationship between what is outside the author and how it is reflected in his writing. 'The only answer to a fragmented world', she argues, 'is a narrative which represents only fragments, only impressions of life'.⁷⁰ Eliot's narrative persona in *The Waste Land* has no such redundant conception of the uses of fragments. 'His' fragmented impressions and truncated thought processes are a form of truth and are, equally importantly, a form of stability. They are a logical response to external chaos (Stan Smith writes that the Thunder's 'DA DA' is 'both chaos and cure'⁷¹). This chaos is alluded to equally effectively and revealingly in Ford's host of often contradictory impressions, impressions which are fragments of the whole and which reject the notion of one truth and one reality. As with the refractory nature of real life, so with impressionism; there is not one vision of life any more than there is one visual representation of a field full of poppies.⁷²

These techniques that Calderaro names as 'only fragments, only impressions' are the crucial elements of Ford's art. Throughout this book, Ford has been seen to show how life is for his characters in multiple series of fragments and impressions: because that *is* how life is. The same can be said for his approach to the novelist. In Ford's opinion, it is the novelist who is most attuned to impressions, and who is thus most aware of his or her fragments, as indicated in the letter to Mrs Masterman, who will write in the best way. Philip Davis puts this equation in a slightly different order, 'imagination is a function of memory and personality', but the point is similar: one's creative abilities are inextricably linked to one's self-image and one's views of the past (which of course one would have to be able to remember).⁷³

In the frank, though dramatic, appraisal of self that the Fordian novelist must undergo, there is access to an understanding of the fragments of life. This understanding can in turn be used to show life as it is, fragmented and multiplicitous, which is itself a way of shoring up the experience of modern life, as in Ford's picture of Conrad. C. H. Sisson demonstrates, in his afterword to *The English Novel*, how far

self-awareness is necessary to Ford's approach, stating that Ford has delivered 'Ford's history' of the novel, one full of enthusiasm and recklessness and provocation. Ford has not disguised his stance: 'I shall present to you my *reflections* on the English Novel – ... and the pattern that, *for me*, it seems to make down the short ages during which it has existed [my emphases]' (*English Novel*, p. 5). Returning to the letter that he wrote to Mrs C. F. G. Masterman, this technique of reflection, and making patterns, is partly what constitutes the 'new faith'. The defensive tone in this passage is notable, however; it is one that, when investigated, begins to tip the balance away from the regenerative aspects of his critical doctrine examined thus far.

Ford found difficulty in isolating a public, theoretical language for what he did, and, more significantly here, for the man who did it. There is little in his critical definition of his style and form which is as concrete as that, say, of Conrad (though Conrad too contradicted himself on the matter of objectivity versus subjectivity). Evidence of this appears in *The Critical Attitude* as Ford traces his experience of theory:

The moment you become constructive your theory is an integral part of yourself and you will defend it according to the intensity of its hold on you until you are worsted in correspondence in the public press or until you have earned the faggot and the halo of martyrdom. It is perhaps foolish – it is certainly perilous for the imaginative writer to attempt to occupy the position of a man of intellect. (p. 101)

In the long and breathless first sentence Ford's frustration at being, as he imagines, publicly misunderstood is made plain. The need to be artistically creative, in his terms, and in those impressed upon him since he was a small child (see Chapters 1 and 5), meant understanding of self, meant being creative and exaggerated, meant using and exploring one's whole personality in thought, in theory and in fiction. Anti-impressionist polemic that neglected to see how this stance could also correlate to realism meant that by 1914–15 this position entailed condemnation at best, and at worst professional death.

Levenson's implication is that Ford is included in the fringes of the movement traced from Bergson to Hulme of 'anti-intellectualism' (p. 62) and anti-materialism.⁷⁴ Despite this assertion, as I have suggested, Ford often rigorously formulated his beliefs. 'It seems pretty certain,' he wrote in January 1914, 'that we of 1913 are a fairly washed-out lot and that we do desperately need a new formula'. Continuing, he offered an antidote: 'what we want most of all in the literature of to-day

is religion, is intolerance, is persecution, and not the mawkish flap-doodle of culture, Fabianism, peace and good will'.⁷⁵ In the semi-fascistic tone that he adopts here, one can see his sheer frustration at the apparent mutual exclusivity (which he cannot control) of the 'imaginative writer' and the 'man of intellect'. He wants to be seen to be fighting hard for regulation, and objective status, and for his critical doctrines, but he sounds as though he thinks the battle he is fighting is lost.

It is not only his intellect that Ford believes is belittled by his cultural and literary surroundings. It goes deeper than that. He proceeds to decry the emasculating effects of the paltry remuneration offered to the imaginative (impressionist) writer, as public proof of his public worth. He then further forces his point to suggest a 'stigma of effeminacy' (think back to *Babbitt*) attached to his branch of the profession, one that he had not managed to elude twenty-seven years later: 'Imaginative writing is a despised, an as if effeminate, occupation, and the imaginative writer a something less than a he-man – and one whom you could not introduce to your wife'.⁷⁶ The vitriol he feels for those who judge his occupation is felt in this outburst, as well as his own sense of insecurity. The threat to his sexuality is endemic in the territory he has chosen, as it is often interpreted. It is a territory of watching rather than doing; of writing rather than building; of merely existing as opposed to making money; of showing rather than directing and of implying rather than making plain. He seems to confuse his images a little in the above extract, for this man is most certainly one whom you could introduce to your wife. Dowell, in his eunuch speech, shows that he experiences his lack of sexual knowledge in a way that resonates in Ford's lack of public status; Dowell also approximates Ford's concurrent anxiety about the public perception of the writer's sexuality. The emasculating effects of the business that Ford was in, coupled with the kind of writing that he produced, are perhaps related to Ford's many attacks on the academy. The nature of his profession, as well as the nature of his writing, determined what is emerging as Ford's difficulty in 'staying with' the regenerative aspects of modernism.

Ford wanted to encourage debate. He wanted this debate to proceed along the best Greek lines and he considered it essential to his mode of writing. 'If I choose to write those extreme statements', he avers without equivocation and with honesty, after a particularly stunning passage of subjective thought in *The English Novel*, 'it is because I want the Reader mentally to object to them the names of Swift, Keats,

Thackeray, Browning [...]’ (*English Novel*, p. 25). Sondra Stang outlines the confusion and lack of imagination implicit in the general non-understanding of this fact: ‘Ford liked to tell stories that stretched possibility, to see how far he could go. He expected resistance, skepticism, interpretation; what he got was belief or disbelief, indignation, and even a sense of outrage’.⁷⁷ Ford is seeking reaction, response, testing his ground in open debate, playing with ideas in some senses. He wants people to use their imaginations, to follow with him along the path of ‘stretched possibility’ where reality is a notion which demands experiment. He makes this aim theoretically explicit in 1907: ‘Let me here very particularly impress upon the reader that these remarks are intended as a purely personal view. They are matters to promote argument; they are views, not statements of fact, spoken with any *ex cathedra* weight. They are intended to arouse discussion, not to instruct; they are part of a scheme according to which one thinker arranges his ideas’.⁷⁸ What he received in response, in general, was literal ‘belief or disbelief’. His hope for the expression of an equal opinion, one that could similarly claim an element of truth, was not often fulfilled. Modernism has fragmented, he suggests; fragments of words, of visions, of experiences and ideas must be used to rebuild the bigger picture. Surprising though it is in modernist times, response was often one-dimensional instead.

One must adopt an impressionistic technique to read Ford – one that appreciates the reasons for his dramatic distance, for debate, for non-linear representations of reality, for the isolation of moments out of time and their special significance – if one is not to misunderstand or to condemn him. All of these techniques are described by elements of his modernist doctrine. Biala used her comparison of impressionist painting with Ford’s writing (based on the ‘considerable distortion’ necessary ‘for the purposes of a greater reality’) to ‘explain some of those famous “lies” of Ford’.⁷⁹ His use of facts was often liberal, highly subjective, and simply annoying, but this use is part of the impressionistic and empiricist holistic doctrinal system I have been exploring throughout this chapter.⁸⁰ Ford stipulates rules concerning the writers of fiction, as well as the novel as genre, which govern, and which combine to form a doctrine pertaining to his faith in fiction. These rules connote freedom as well as being true to the core of modernism: being a memory-fuelled, spatially aware, dialectically astute writer is of the modern essence. The question of whether these rules combined finally attest more effectively to the fragmentations and ruptures of

modernism, or to its regenerative aspects, will form the last section of this chapter.

Memory and modernism

In a series on the human brain broadcast in 2000, Oxford professor and neuroscientist Susan Greenfield made the startling claim that the ‘visual brain relies as much on what comes from our memories as on our eyes’. She went even further than this in the book that was published shortly afterwards: ‘we see things with our brains, not our eyes [...]. What we see must depend on the unique contents of our personalised brains – our memory’.⁸¹ Ford’s modernism has been seen throughout this book to be intertwined with what he remembered and with what he (and his characters) saw. Why? Part of the answer is provided by Ford’s image of the glass of impressionism, signifying as it does the interplay, the rejuvenation, of past meeting present in the watchful, memory-fuelled, writer. Part of the answer is also provided by Schneidau, who in his analysis relates modernist consciousness as a whole very closely to memory, and via memory to narrative. He writes that ‘consciousness seems to turn stimuli and perceptions into a running, subverbal but latently articulate narrative, a “story” of our lives’.⁸² Ford remembered in ways that made the subverbal verbal, even if incompletely (as I argued in Chapter 1). This also meant that he found ways of obscuring the boundaries between subject and object. ‘Ford was nearly all his characters’, attests Janice Biala; ‘he was Tietjens and Leonora, Sylvia and The Young Lovell, but probably not Florence, who was a cheat. How else could he understand them?’⁸³

Such expressions of Ford’s critical doctrine are as far as it is possible theoretically to travel from Eliot’s maxim: ‘the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates’. Consciousness, says Eliot, must not filter into the creative sphere, though interestingly he concentrates upon suffering nonetheless. This echoes the previous suggestion that consciousness somehow enfeebles and cripples a man, and perhaps goes some way to explain why Levenson seems to rate Conrad’s system for writing more highly than he does Ford’s. Levenson isolates Conrad as existing upon the middle ground between Eliot’s idealism and Ford’s impressionism, for, as he states: ‘If Conrad shares Babbitt’s desire for order, he also shares Pater’s conviction that consciousness is the source of meaning and value’ (p. 35). It must be *ordered* consciousness,

however, with a clear distinction between subject and object. Ford does not fully recognise such a distinction and this, ultimately, is the crucial factor.

When Robert Lowell asked Ford a question, whilst assisting him on the production of his final work, *The March of Literature*, Ford proved the extent to which he merged the boundary between fictional subject and object. Lowell reports: 'I once asked him the young writer's question "What does a writer need more than anything else?" and he said memory'.⁸⁴ Lowell's memory of his association with Ford, and Ford's answer, reanimate Davis's equation: 'imagination is a function of memory and personality'. Quotations from *Ancient Lights*, in the Introduction and Chapter 1, were placed there partly to invigorate the powerful murmur of the past. Ford continually 'went back' in this way. The need for memory must be considered to be prior to any aspect of critical doctrine, but what effect did Ford's more than usually tenacious, transfigurative and critical belief in its centrality have?

Herbert Butterfield links memory to fragmentation: 'The memory of the world is not a bright, shining crystal, but a heap of broken fragments, a few fine flashes of light that break through the darkness'.⁸⁵ Memory is not a singular entity then, a uniform whole, but a plurality of fragments. What works for the world as a subject with many alternate memories, works for the individual. Butterfield could be describing a Proustian moment as it flashes out and finds a relevant historical happening in memory to make it more real; he could be describing Ford's multitudinous levels of consciousness which all remember one version of the truth. He is saying that memory fragments and tears apart the notion of a solid existence; it refracts, not reflects, light in many opposing directions. The more memory one possesses, then, or the more keenly one seeks for it, the more fragmented one becomes.⁸⁶ There is immediate, contemporary and historical support for this contention.

In *Return to Yesterday*, Ford's reminiscences of these currently significant years, 1894 to 1914, he returns to the discussion of memory often (indeed the title alone indicates the temporary preference for existing in the past – temporary because the narrative is interspersed with 'memories' of the present as well). He claims that an 'amazing memory' (p. 127) saved his school career as he was naturally lazy and badly behaved; he states that his 'once prodigious memory' (p. 290) (referring again to pre-1914) was what helped him to build his characters. The loss of memory incurred due to 'shell-shock' during the war

does not seem to be to the detriment of this volume of reminiscences (and so the fear of losing his access to ‘impressions’, given such vivid life in *It Was the Nightingale*, was not permanent), for, in a particularly resonant ‘memory’, he achieves a very effective sense of a still-affecting past:

From 1903 to 1906 illness removed me from most activities. The illness was purely imaginary; that made it none the better. It was enhanced by wickedly unskilful doctoring [...]. I suffered from what was known as agoraphobia and intense depression. I had nothing specific to be depressed about. But the memory of those years is one of uninterrupted agony. Nothing marks them off one from the other. They were lost years. (p. 266)

This passage relates to his first period of serious mental illness, in the early 1900s (see Chapter 1). In it, he reveals a plurality of selves that are a mixture of fictive, experiential, critical and narrational creations. The first verb construction is a passive one, indicating a resigned ‘me’ in relation to an illness the strength of which at this point he does admit. It has affected him, it has brought him low, and this too is signified in the delayed personal pronoun that appears towards the end of the sentence. The next phrase introduces his critical persona: it is not particularly sympathetic, nor does it seem overly involved – with the second phrase of that sentence the original affected persona is reawoken. Yet the distanced tone of it – ‘that made it none the better’ – means that it does not counter the harshness of its partner; an uneasy co-existence is thus established. Ford is both an unsurprised and a resigned victim. He hated his doctors, and there is a confusion of bitterness and dismissiveness in the pronouncement that the illness was ‘purely imaginary’ (an unwitting acknowledgement of the existence of the unconscious). What follows a little later is the first ‘straight verb’, and by this I mean one which is unqualified or unmediated by another persona or reality: ‘I suffered’, he says, and this stands out from the page. Immediately, however, the critical self is reintroduced with a distancing, convoluted phrase, ‘from what was diagnosed as ...’, as he besmirches the reputation of his doctors. In some sense, he relinquished control of his own understanding in a sad and pathetic fashion – but the ‘narrative’ self performs the role of maintaining an alliance between his resignation and his control. The depression is non-specific (again he does not quite understand an element of what he is describing), but, conversely and finally, the memory is highly specific: ‘the memory of those years is one of uninterrupted agony’. Each word, in

comparison with the recent meanderings, has an explosive, moving simplicity.

The agony may be uninterrupted, but he has shown that it is also pluralistic. He remembers the uneasy, mutual exclusivity of the knowledge that the illness was imaginary, and the feeling of the pain. He remembers his distaste. He remembers his lack of respect for his doctors and simultaneously the suffering caused him by that which they were attempting to define. A more accurate statement at the close of that paragraph would have been, 'the memory of those years is one of uninterrupted agonies' – and the memory itself means it is uninterrupted still.

Conrad recognised a kind of ultimate significance in what he depicts in this instance as an intransitive power of memory. He wrote, in 1921, that 'the permanence of memory is the only form of permanence in this world of relative values'.⁸⁷ He finds it to be a stabilising factor, then, brooding over all, although it brings with it its own structural fragmentation. Levenson suggests that Conrad is one of the century's first proponents of consciousness and pluralism, in opposition to his Victorian predecessors with their comparatively singular vision. Levenson's example of this singularity is the narrative voice of George Eliot; he argues that the 'consistency of a single omniscient voice' stands in contradiction to Conrad's 'distinct voices, distinguishable points of view' (p. 8). I would agree that Eliot's narrative voice can be omniscient and singular, but she balances this tendency with representations of the complexity of human existence that would rival those of any modernist. One of the powerful ways in which she illustrates this knowledge of complexity in her great novel, *Middlemarch*, is through the representation of the fragmentative effects of memory, a representation that later proves fundamental to Ford. Here, George Eliot provides a different tradition for the development of spatial form; it is one that privileges memory above all:

It was not that [Nicholas Bulstrode] was in danger of legal punishment or beggary: he was in danger only of seeing disclosed to the judgement of his neighbours and the mournful perception of his wife certain facts of his past life which would render him an object of scorn and an opprobrium of the religion with which he had diligently associated himself. The terror of being judged sharpens the memory: it sends an inevitable glare over that long-unvisited past which has been habitually recalled only in general phases. Even without memory, the life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay: but intense memory forces a

man to own his blameworthy past. With memory set smarting like an reopened wound, a man’s past is not simply a dead history, an outworn preparation of the present: it is not a repented error shaken loose from the life: it is a still quivering part of himself, bringing shudders and bitter flavours and the tinglings of a merited shame.⁸⁸

Joseph Frank examined scenes from Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* as examples of spatial form. Eliot’s passage exhibits perfectly the criteria necessary, and deals more purely than Flaubert’s fair scene with time and its relationship to space. Eliot represents, ideally, the non-progressive, even retrogressive and dispersive, properties of novelistic language – in a way that proves that it can, as Frank pointed out and as Ford has shown, hold all together. The sentences are layered with the use of colons, and balance each other almost perfectly in weight and length until the final assault on the comprehension. The phrasing is non-hierarchical because Eliot is evoking, and displaying, a dialectic, although her image is more multiple in form than this description allows. The ‘light’ of memory, a concept that Butterfield also employed, reanimates all; it sets all a-‘quiver’ with life; it makes specific that which has been merely general and it exposes multiple surfaces when one has very comfortably believed in the existence of just one – ‘dead history.’ It is almost dangerous.

Eliot makes a bold statement of allegiance to a theory of the unconscious – ‘even without memory, the life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in life and decay’. She superimposes on this theory, and clearly favours, the consciousness-raising properties of memory. Memory makes conscious that which one sought to protect oneself from and that which one sought to render ineffective and dead. At the same time, it ruptures linearity, the false premise that life, and consciousness (and therefore narratives that represent life) can progress in an orderly fashion: one dead past becomes many living ones; one idea of self is proved to be false; one level of existence multiplies tangibly and visibly.

Ford’s theory of impressionism, consciously or unconsciously, owes much to George Eliot. Subsequent to the passage from *Middlemarch*, quoted above, comes the following particular and then general observation as to the function of human memory:

Into this second life Bulstrode’s past had now risen, only the pleasures of it seeming to have lost their quality. Night and day, without interruption save of brief sleep which only wove retrospect and fear into a fantastic present, he felt the scenes of his earlier life coming between him and

everything else, as, obstinately when we look through the window from a lighted room, the objects we turn our backs on are still before us, instead of the grass and the trees. The successive events, inward and outward were there in one view: though each might be dwelt on in turn, the rest still kept their hold in the consciousness. (pp. 663–4)

Regulation has broken down. Memory and desire, or fear, as the terrible face of desire is known, are shown to assail a human mind. Obstinate, the past, what is behind Bulstrode, forces itself into the present, taking over for the time. Ford's impressionist writer tried to see the same grass, from a proximate window. Here is the evidence of his debt to her ('impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through glass so bright that... you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you'). What was seen in the window could be liberating, part of the modernist representation of plural truths. Or it could be as terrible as that which looms in front of Bulstrode, plainly, or disguised. More often, perhaps because of what Ford had to remember, or couldn't, it was terrible.

One's ability as a writer depended, Ford thought, on being able to feel the shudders of revolution, to taste the bitter flavours and to suffer the quiverings that Eliot describes. It meant remembering. It meant, in another novelist's thoughts for the novelist's progeny, leaving behind something more than 'the colours and figures of his own hard-won creation'. That something more was 'the still voice of that inexorable past from which his work of fiction and their personalities are remotely derived'.⁸⁹ Manifesting Conrad's credo meant that the art of writing for Ford itself both demanded and provoked a refracted sense of self – for the personal narrative is never complete – as well as reflecting the truths of the modern world.

In 1937, two years before Ford's death, Lowell remembers Ford as always writing and writing! He was at work on his last book, *The March of Literature*, and re-reading the classics in their original tongues [...] writers walked through his mind and through his life – young ones to be discovered, instructed, and entertained, contemporaries to be assembled, telegraphed, and celebrated, the dead friend to be celebrated in anecdote, the long, long dead to be freshly assaulted or defended.⁹⁰

Writing was Ford's only constant amid a chaotic personal existence. It could be imagined, using my earlier analysis, that this was because Ford thought the rules of writing could ease the rules of living, because

regeneration was to be found in the novel. It must be understood slightly differently now. For Ford, it took great courage to write and, simultaneously, he could do nothing else; it provided the only true, modern, representations of life. But in order to write, one had to remember, and break apart one's own defences.

As Ford was recovering from his breakdown in 1903/4 in Basel, Switzerland, he stayed with a professor, a man who continually wept for the loss of a daughter (*Return to Yesterday*, p. 266). The professor had filled his house with clocks to disguise the silence; clocks of all kinds that struck at all hours in different ways. Reading his whole analysis of the time that he spent there, Ford's description of the omnipresence of the clocks seems to work on my memory as the reading of Kipling, amongst other things, has worked upon his. Two truths, two memories, come together. The first is the stay at Basel in a period of personal, portentous, fearful instability; he feels as though he is out of his mind, yet, surrounded by clocks, he is held by the space in between the pulses of the passing of time. This sense of being held can be imagined because of the second memory, his portrayal of the fictive, impressionist, acquisitive mind in *The Soul of London*, working in 'the breaks, in the marking time, [...] in the pause in the beat of the clock'. One memory reanimates, or sets the stage for, the other.

As the two, equally important, memories converge it can be seen how personal misery becomes entwined with fictional creativity, how intricately the most raw difficulties of a fragmented age are allied to the possibility of displaying them completely. What fragmenting modernism means, in Ford's hands, is seen too. Ford's belief in the novel is such that he can do nothing but try to remember 'uninterrupted agony' and write, to give the memory the recognition it, and his time, both demand.

Notes

- 1 T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (New York, Boni & Liveright, 1922), l. 430.
- 2 Stephen Spender, *Eliot* (Glasgow, William Collins, 1982), p. 9.
- 3 See the Introduction in this book.
- 4 T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in Frank Kermode (ed.), *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* (London, Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 41.
- 5 These debates form the parameters of Michael Levenson's analysis of modernism, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984). They were also prioritised by modernist writers

- themselves (think of Woolf advocating exploration of the inner life). See Randall Stevenson's summary at the beginning of Chapter 2 of *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Hemel Hempsted, Prentice Hall, 1998).
- 6 In the introduction to H.D.'s *Her* (London, Virago, 1984), p. vii. The 'Eliot-esque' experience of modernism is countered, McNeil suggests, by H. D.'s rewriting of these terrors.
 - 7 I use this phrase in a slightly tongue-in-cheek manner, after the fashion in which Ford would use such terminology. Nonetheless, Levenson writes of the 'doctrines' of modernism (*Genealogy of Modernism*, p. vii), including impressionism, and I am thinking here about Ford's theoretical statements on matters like impressionism.
 - 8 Readers interested in this aspect of Ford's career are referred to Nora Tomlinson's PhD thesis (this quotation is taken from p. 8), 'The Achievement of Ford Madox Ford as Editor' (Open University, 1995), which takes issue with his reputation as a great editor; it has lots of useful discussion.
 - 9 Saunders I, p. 242.
 - 10 It was made in a promotional circular, and is quoted by Violet Hunt in *I Have This to Say: The Story of my Flurried Years* (New York, Boni & Liverright, 1926), p. 26.
 - 11 For example, in texts already considered, there are the detailed contexts provided by *A Call* and *The Fifth Queen*, the archetypal journey that is *The 'Half Moon'*, and the multiple investigation of consciousness in *The Good Soldier*.
 - 12 Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (1934) (New York, Ecco, 1984), p. 64.
 - 13 The metaphorical motif of the wasteland in its transition through the works of Eliot and of Ford is part of the subject of Radell's study, *Affirmation in a Moral Wasteland: A Comparison of Ford Madox Ford and Graham Greene* (New York, Peter Lang, 1987). On the subject of communication between Ford and Eliot, Hugh Kenner has written, 'if Ford and Eliot talked it is not recorded (though they must have; surely they must have)'. Letters were exchanged between them in the 1930s. Hugh Kenner, 'The Poetics of Speech' in Richard Cassell (ed.), *Ford Madox Ford: Modern Judgements* (London, Macmillan, 1972), p. 169.
 - 14 Ezra Pound to Felix E. Schelling, July 1922, Letter 189 in D. D. Paige (ed.), *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1950), p. 180.
 - 15 Regarding Conradian 'fragments', he writes in the preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), on the task of the creative artist that 'to snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task. The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and

without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood'.

- 16 Henry James's conception of 'The Novel' as 'Art Form', his 'extreme reverence for the medium in which he worked' was what Wells disliked in him – Ford's notion is different, as we shall see. Christopher Gillie, *Movements in English Literature 1900–1940* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 6.
- 17 From May Sinclair's review of extracts of Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (published in the *Egoist* in 1918). Vassiliki Kolokotroni *et al.* (eds), *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 352.
- 18 Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad* (London, Constable, 1930), p. 19.
- 19 He published an essay called 'The Passing of the Great Figure' in 1909. It should be borne in mind that Ford may have had ambivalent feelings about this passing: the 'Great Figures' were those who in their Victorian majesty also made him feel threatened, and suffocated, and overwhelmed (see Chapter 5).
- 20 For the full exposition of Ford's argument, see *The English Novel*, pp. 10–34. Refer to the Introduction for my discussion of the historical basis for such an argument regarding faith.
- 21 Joseph Wiesenfarth (ed.), introduction to 'The Literary Life: A Lecture Delivered by Ford Madox Ford', *Contemporary Literature*, 30: 2, Summer 1989, p. 171.
- 22 In much more recent writing on the role of the novel, specifically in the eighteenth century, Ford's view of its sociological relevance is upheld: 'A lot of the pleasure available, especially to young readers, involved recognizable situations in the contemporary world where decisions about marriage and a course of life were practical ones no longer dependent just on the demands of parents or community; where individual needs and desires counted as much as convention and tradition.' The language J. Paul Hunter uses, of conventions and demands, and of the individual as opposed to society, evokes that which Ford employs to address *his* time and the role of the novel in it ('The Novel and Social/Cultural History' in J. Richetti (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century Novel*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 22–3).
- 23 Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (1923) (New York, Ecco, 1989), pp. 27–8.
- 24 Here some history of Ford's relationship with Conrad is necessary. Saunders describes their meeting at Edward Garnett's as 'the crucial literary event in both men's lives' (Saunders I, p. 100). Later in 1898 they began to collaborate, to write together (sometimes living together as well); though this tortuous, fascinating, energetic process produced joint novels,

- it more immediately affected and improved their individual work. Perhaps as a predictable outcome of the intensity with which they worked together, their relationship deteriorated seriously throughout 1909, and they ceased to see one another for periods. However, Conrad remained one of the three most significant men in Ford's life (in addition to Ford Madox Brown and Arthur Marwood).
- 25 Henri Bergson, French philosopher, published *Time and Free Will* in 1889. Peter Childs summarises an influential view of time given in this work as follows (influential particularly on modernist writers such as Woolf and Joyce): 'Bergson argued that psychological time was measured by *duration*, defined as the varying speed at which the mind apprehends the length of experiences according to their different intensities, contents and meanings for each individual' (*Modernism*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 39). Bergson's theories also impacted greatly on T. E. Hulme, who first appeared in modernist circles, in England, in 1907 (Levenson, *Genealogy of Modernism*, p. 39).
 - 26 Here, Marlow is considering the death of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*.
 - 27 Conrad is writing in imaginative ways of the 'flash-back', or speeded-up replaying in the visual imagination, of a life lived.
 - 28 The quotation is from Bradbury's definition of the term 'modernist' in Roger Fowler (ed.), *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).
 - 29 Conrad also asserts, in his preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (this preface can be taken as a statement of early modernism), that novels should aspire to the 'plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music'. Ford's attention to and development of these ideas have been seen in action throughout this book.
 - 30 Ford's interpretation of a modern breach in knowledge of the classics (*English Novel*, p. 19) is also assuaged in this way.
 - 31 Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern Times* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1947), p. 348.
 - 32 In an essay written seventeen years later, Mikhail Bakhtin proves that this thought pattern, regarding the capacity of the novel rather than the single-minded reassurance it offered in the nineteenth century, is still current: 'The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it' ('Epic and Novel', in M. Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 1986, p. 7).
 - 33 Ford Madox Ford, *Mightier than the Sword* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1938), p. 208.
 - 34 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Desert of Wyoming', quoted in Mike Jay and Michael Neve (eds), *1900* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1999), p. 251.

- 35 I have written an essay on this topic. Called 'Ford's Training', it will shortly be published by Rodopi in *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity* ed. Max Saunders and Robert Hampson.
- 36 Ford Madox Ford, *The Soul of London* (London, Alston Rivers, 1905), pp. 120–1.
- 37 Herbert Butterfield, *The Historical Novel* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1924), p. 24.
- 38 This image of an airing is a common one in Ford: 'Crowds of intelligent and wealthy people [...] go to that ballet-house to be made better men. They are made better men because the subsoil of their emotions has been vainly, irrationally, but very really disturbed. And any farmer will tell you that the most important thing in agriculture is to stir and aerate the soil beneath the crust. That is the real value of all the arts' ('The Critical Attitude', *Bystander*, 20 December, 1911, p. 639). Ford's use of the word 'disturb' is crucial to the discussion, and to his repetition of this metaphor.
- 39 Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894–1914* (London, Victor Gollancz., 1931), p. 4.
- 40 Joseph Frank, *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 59. Refer too to my analysis of 'On Heaven' in Chapter 6.
- 41 Peter Childs has described Flaubert's works as one of the 'literary roots' of modernism (*Modernism*, p. 14).
- 42 *English Novel*, p. 123. Saunders describes Flaubert as one of Ford's 'literary ancestors' (Saunders I, p. 17).
- 43 See H. Robert Huntley's article, 'Flaubert and Ford: The Fallacy of Le Mot Juste', *English Language Notes*, 4: 283–7 (June 1967), for another critical language here. He concentrates on Flaubert's use of 'chords' and the 'pitch of prose', of 'binary sentence structure' and 'syntactic construction', and how Ford uses and adapts it.
- 44 Ford Madox Ford, *The Marsden Case* (London, Duckworth, 1923), p. 88.
- 45 Ford Madox Ford, 'On Impressionism', *Poetry and Drama*, 2 (June and December 1914), p. 167. This essay is reproduced in full in the Norton edition of *The Good Soldier*.
- 46 Bakhtin's writing on the carnivalesque addresses the place of eating and drinking in human ritual. Feeding and laughing generates an energy that he defines as potentially revolutionary: no wonder Ford puts this scene underground. See 'Carnival Ambivalence' in Pam Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader* (London, Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 194ff.
- 47 Saunders describes the book's 'double perspective – reaching tentatively and painfully back across the devastated zones of memory to the hysteria of the war's eve' whilst it presents on the surface the post-war social scene (Saunders II, p. 111).

- 48 *The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion* (1915) (New York, Norton, 1995), pp. 119–20.
- 49 As I suggested in Chapter 2: so we are protected from the full force of this tragedy.
- 50 Frank Kermode, 'Novels: Recognition and Deception', *Critical Inquiry*, 1, (1974–5), p. 106.
- 51 This text is described by Ford as 'reminiscences of active service under a thinly disguised veil of fiction' (Saunders II, p. 357).
- 52 Ford Madox Ford, *No Enemy* (New York, Ecco, 1984), p. 200.
- 53 Susan Greenfield, The Brain Story II, 'The Mind's Eye', broadcast 1 August 2000, BBC2.
- 54 *Mightier than the Sword*, pp. 163–4.
- 55 P. Renny, *Golden Hind* 1: 38, July 1923.
- 56 Janice Biala, 'An Interview with Janice Biala' in Sondra Stang (ed.), *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford* (Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 223.
- 57 In a commentary on Picasso's 'Bowl with Fruit, Violin and Wine Glass' (1912), Brony Fer suggests that 'an aspect of contemporary life may be signified by the inclusion, or intrusion, of a "real" bit of newspaper, but the representation of modernity hinged also on the fragmentation of the whole'. Francis Frascina *et al.* (eds), *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993), p. 11.
- 58 See Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism*, pp. 48–62.
- 59 Ford Madox Ford, 'English Literature of Today – II' in *The Critical Attitude* (London, Duckworth, 1911), p. 102. This book is made up of the essays Ford wrote in a series of the same name in the *English Review* in 1908–9.
- 60 Ford Madox Ford, *Hans Holbein the Younger: A Critical Monograph* (London, Duckworth, 1905), pp. 159–60. Compare this with Ford's analysis of Rossetti, detailed in Chapter 5. In this earlier assessment of a painter, Ford isolates his unconscious – his 'underlying truth' – as that which paints.
- 61 Paul Wiley, *Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1962), p. 112.
- 62 Frank Macshane (ed.), *The Critical Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 150.
- 63 Christopher Gillie (*Movements in English Literature*, p. 4.) calls it Hebraism versus Hellenism, or 'conscience' versus 'consciousness', following Matthew Arnold's coinage in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Arnold identified two basic attitudes of mind, one moral and practical, the other cultural and aesthetic, to which he gave these names. Later debates harked back to Arnold's terminology, and to his analysis, even whilst developing them.

- 64 Anatole France's *L'Île des Pingouins* was reviewed by Conrad for the first edition of Ford's *English Review* in 1908. France himself contributed in 1909.
- 65 Irving Babbitt, *Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912) (Westport, CN, Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 345.
- 66 Ezra Pound, *Poetry* (June 1914), and 'Status Rerum', *Poetry* (January 1913), p. 125.
- 67 Quoted by Sondra Stang in her introduction to *The Ford Madox Ford Reader* (London, Paladin, 1987), p. xiv.
- 68 Ford, 'On Impressionism', in Stannard (ed.), *The Good Soldier*, p. 263.
- 69 In Stang (ed.), *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, p. xii.
- 70 Michela Calderaro, *A Silent New World: Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End* (Editrice Bologna, Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria, 1993), p. 13.
- 71 Stan Smith, *The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound, Yeats and the Rhetoric of Renewal* (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 142.
- 72 At the beginning of *The English Novel* (p. 6) Ford writes about stumbling across a painter creating an image of poppies which, from the painter's position, looked black. From another point of view they were 'dark-purple shot with gold'.
- 73 Philip Davis, *Memory and Writing: From Wordsworth to Lawrence* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1983), p. xvi.
- 74 Frank Macshane judges Ford's critical stance as 'anti-academic'; Max Saunders states that Ford's 'virtues are not academic ones' (I, p.vii).
- 75 Ford Madox Ford, *Outlook*, 33 (3 January 1914), p. 15.
- 76 *Mightier than the Sword*, p. 158.
- 77 Stang (ed.), *Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, p. xviii.
- 78 Ford Madox Ford, *The Spirit of the People* (London, Alston Rivers, 1907), p. 67.
- 79 Stang (ed.), *Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 223.
- 80 Many of the objections to Ford's 'abuse' of facts were full of invective. Contemporary examples are provided by Richard Aldington in *Life for Life's Sake* (London, Viking, 1941), p. 30 ff. Modern comparisons are found in Humphrey Carpenter's Pound biography, *A Serious Character* (New York, Delta, 1988), p. 110. Other critics relate this tendency to Ford's impressionism.
- 81 Susan Greenfield, *Brain Story* (London, BBC, 2000), p. 79.
- 82 H. Schneidau, *Waking Giants: The Presence of the Past in Modernism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 15–23.
- 83 In Stang (ed.), *Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 219. Ford himself said a writer must 'live with' his subject, for 'a long, long, time' before beginning a novel (*English Novel*, p. 140).
- 84 In Stang (ed.), *Presence of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 204.
- 85 Butterfield, *The Historical Novel*, p. 15.

- 86 The presence and absence of memory work in the same way: as signifiers of plurality in questions of identity. Personal narratives can be fractured by being made aware of the gaps in memory – refer to the discussions of war and psychoanalysis and their relationship with writing in the first chapters – as well as of the contradictory, many-layered nature of memory itself.
- 87 Joseph Conrad, 'Henry James', in *Notes on Life and Letters* (Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1921), p. 13.
- 88 George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1985), p. 663.
- 89 Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record* (London, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923), p. 24.
- 90 Robert Lowell, introduction to '*Buckshee*' (*Last Poems*) by Ford Madox Ford (Cambridge, MA, Pym-Randall Press, 1936), p. xi.