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Isabelle Brasme

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The Imprint of the War in Ford Madox Ford's Critical Writings

Isabelle Brasme,

Univ Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, EMMA EA741, F34000, Montpellier, France

Université de Nîmes

isabellebrasme@gmail.com

About the author

Isabelle Brasme is Senior Lecturer in British Literature at the University of Nîmes, and a member of the EMMA research centre at the university of Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3. She has published various essays on Ford Madox Ford and modernism, as well as a monograph entitled: *Parade's End de Ford Madox Ford: vers une esthétique de la crise* (PULM, 2016). She has co-edited *The Humble in 19th- to 21st-Century British Literature and Arts* (PULM, 2017) and has edited a collaborative volume in French of translations and essays on writers and war, entitled *Les Artistes et la Guerre* (Houdiard, 2017). She is currently editing a collaborative volume entitled: *Homo Duplex: Ford Madox Ford's Experience and Aesthetics of Alterity*, to be published in 2020 (PULM). She is currently working on First World War writing.

Abstract

Ford Madox Ford said of the year 1914 that it 'seem[ed] to be cut in half' by the First World War.¹ This phrase, one may argue, also largely applies to Ford's personal timeline. Both his private life and his literary career were profoundly disrupted by the global conflict. In the early months of World War One, Ford wrote prolifically about the future of literature and on a broader scope, of civilisation and human psychology; in his 'Literary Portraits' that were published in *Outlook*, he showed remarkable prescience when it came to the consequences that the war would bear on the arts and on what he termed 'the mind'.

Yet when one examines the chronology of Ford's non-fictional writing, and indeed of his literary work, one can sense a sharp dividing line that coincides with the moment when Ford enrolled in the British army in 1915, and was no longer a spectator from afar, but a direct

¹ 'Literary Portraits – LXIX. Annus Mirabilis', *Outlook*, 35, 15.

witness of the unprecedented mass killing that was taking place on the front. His pre-war assertions gave way to questions; and as was the case with many other writers who took directly part in the hostilities, a decade elapsed before Ford succeeded in rendering his war experience in a novelistic form, through the *Parade's End* tetralogy.

This paper aims to examine Ford's critical writing during the First World War, and to analyse the way in which he attempted to come to terms with the representational aporia that was triggered by his first-hand experience of battle. This study focuses on Ford's aforementioned 'Literary Portraits'; the pair of essays 'A Day of Battle', written in the Ypres Salient, and 'War and the Mind', composed shortly after Ford's return from the front; and the dedicatory letters to *No More Parades*, *A Man Could Stand Up*— and *Last Post*. These allow us to explore how the impressionist technique which Ford started to theorise before the war, came to be renewed and refined in his post-war writing, as a means to render the inexpressible experience of the war.

Keywords

Ford Madox Ford, critical writing, literary impressionism, modernism, World War I.

Résumé

Ford Madox Ford estimait que l'année 1914 « semblait être coupée en deux » par la Première Guerre mondiale ; cette expression s'avère également pertinente dans la chronologie personnelle de Ford. Sa vie privée comme sa carrière littéraire furent de fait profondément bouleversées par le conflit mondial. Durant les premiers mois de la guerre, Ford produisit des essais prolifiques sur le futur de la littérature et, à plus large échelle, de la civilisation et de la psychologie humaine. Dans ses « Portraits littéraires » publiés dans la revue *Outlook*, il anticipa de manière remarquable les conséquences que la guerre aurait sur les arts et sur ce qu'il appelait « l'esprit ».

Cependant, il suffit de se pencher sur le détail des essais comme de la production littéraire de Ford dans les années 1910 pour constater une coupure nette qui coïncide avec l'entrée de Ford dans l'armée en 1915, et son changement subséquent de statut : non plus un spectateur et un commentateur lointain, mais un témoin direct de la tuerie de masse qui se déroulait sur le front. Ses affirmations d'avant la guerre laissèrent la place à des questions ; et comme ce fut le cas de nombreux auteurs qui participèrent directement aux hostilités, une décennie s'écoula avant que Ford ne parvînt à transcrire son expérience de la guerre sous une forme romanesque, à travers la tétralogie *Parade's End*.

Cet article a pour objectif d'examiner les essais critiques de Ford durant la guerre, et d'analyser la façon dont il s'efforça de composer avec l'aporie représentationnelle qui fut provoquée par son expérience directe du combat. Le corpus de cette étude est formé des « Portraits littéraires » susmentionnés ; des deux essais « A Day of Battle », rédigé sur le Saillant d'Ypres, et « War and the Mind », écrit par Ford peu après son retour du front ; ainsi que des lettres dédicatoires en exergue de trois volumes de *Parade's End : No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up—et Last Post*. Ces différents textes permettent d'explorer la façon dont la technique impressionniste que Ford commença à théoriser avant la guerre en vint à être renouvelée et approfondie dans son écriture d'après-guerre, dans sa tentative de rendre l'expérience indicible de la guerre.

Mots-clés

Ford Madox Ford, essais critiques, impressionnisme littéraire, modernisme, Première Guerre mondiale.

Ford Madox Ford was born in 1873, and was in his forties when the First World War broke out. His literary career was already well under way, and he was in the process of writing what is considered one of his masterworks, and is undeniably his best-known novel, *The Good Soldier*, which was published in 1915. The main topic of this novel – adultery – seems at first sight to be remote from the war; however, its title, the context in which it was published, as well as the date of the Fourth of August that keeps recurring fatefully in the text, and which is also the date when the United Kingdom declared war on Germany, are all tokens of the immense weight that

the war in fact bears on the narration. *The Good Soldier* can thus largely be read as a diagnosis of the dysfunction of Western civilisation in the early twentieth century, and as a strikingly clairvoyant exercise in some of the ways in which literature would be profoundly transformed in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Likewise, the other series of novels that Ford is best known for, his *Parade's End* tetralogy that was published in the 1920s, revolves explicitly around the First World War and its impact on the civilisation inherited from the nineteenth century. This extensive saga was acclaimed as one of the most important contributions to British First World War literature: Malcolm Bradbury regarded it as “the most important and complex British novel to deal with the overwhelming subject of the Great War” (Bradbury xii); Samuel Hynes likewise considers *Parade's End* to be “the greatest war novel ever written by an Englishman” (Hynes 1986, 140).

One may therefore be inclined to infer that the war came to be integrated seamlessly within Ford's fiction. However, when taking a closer look at Ford's non-fictional writing, a sharp dividing line emerges, that coincides with the moment when Ford enrolled in the British army in 1915, and was no longer a spectator from afar, but a direct witness of the unprecedented mass killing that was taking place on the front. His pre-war assertions gave way to questions; and as was the case with many other writers who took a direct part in the hostilities, a decade elapsed before Ford succeeded in rendering his war experience in a novelistic form, through *Parade's End*. Even though we can easily date the onset of a radical redefinition of the arts before 1914, Ford acknowledged that the war constituted a watershed in the way the world could be apprehended and represented, writing: “The world before the war is one thing and must be written about in one manner; the afterwar world is quite another and calls for quite different treatment”.² This paper will examine how this rift between Ford's pre-war and post-war writing can be delineated in Ford's non-fictional writing during the First World War, and how Ford managed to come to terms with the representational crisis that was triggered by his first-hand experience of battle.

1. Early War Writings

² Letter to T.R. Smith, 27 July 1931, quoted as epigraph to the second volume of Max Saunders' *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*

Ford said of the year 1914 that it was “cut in half” (Ford 1915a, 15). Such an assertion can also be used to describe Ford’s own literary career and personal life, which were profoundly disrupted and transformed by the war. Britain declaring war on Germany had a particular resonance for this man who was English on the maternal side and German on the paternal side, and whose birth name was Ford Hermann Hueffer (he only adopted the Ford Madox Ford penname in 1919); for this cosmopolitan artist who was passionate about bridging the gap between English, French and German cultures, but who was also deeply patriotic. From the start, Ford’s stance was therefore marked with singularity. He had an unusual perspective on the conflict as his dual origins led him at first to distance himself from the Anglo-German antagonism that was then being fuelled; but he also became fully involved in the war effort, first writing for British propaganda, and later enlisting in the British army. Overt patriotism became all the more necessary as Ford was suspected of spying for the enemy due to his paternal origins; he therefore started writing articles for the British War Propaganda Bureau, which was headed by his friend Charles Masterman. These were collected in 1915 into two books: *Between Saint Dennis and Saint George* and *When Blood is Their Argument*. Ford’s propaganda is, unsurprisingly, highly individual, and has been analysed by Zineb Berrahou in her PhD thesis, which was defended in 2016: *La Grande Guerre de Ford Madox Ford : de l’histoire à la fiction*. We will however not focus here on the political and patriotic dimension of his writing, but on the views on literature that he also shared in the essays he wrote during the war. At a much deeper level than propaganda, indeed, Ford sensed very early on, and with striking prescience, the far-reaching impact that the war would have on Western civilisation, on humanity, and subsequently on literature.

The start of the war triggered an outpour of non-fictional writing on the part of Ford, notably through his “Literary Portraits” that were published weekly in *Outlook*. The magazine’s strapline was “The Outlook: In Politics, Life, Letters, and the Arts,” thus emphasising an interweaving of arts and politics. In this vein, Ford used his “Literary Portraits” not only as a place to reflect on literature, but as a platform to express his views on the world. As early as August 1914, he reflected on the future of literature, the psychological consequences of mass combat, and the future of humanity at a time when technological progress was used towards the systematic destruction of human beings, against the Enlightenment ideal of a humanity forever bent on learning in order to improve itself and its condition. On the 8th of August, only 4 days after Britain declared war on Germany, Ford thus pondered:

What is the good of writing about literature – the “edler Beruf”, the noble calling? There will not be a soul that will want to read about literature for years and years. We go out. We writers go out. And when the world again has leisure to think about letters the whole world will have changed. It will have changed in morality, in manners, in all human relationships, in all views of life, possibly even in language, certainly in its estimates of literature. What then is the good of it all? I don’t know (Ford 1914b, 174).

This question will be at the heart of Ford’s fictional and nonfictional writing throughout the rest of his literary career. In contrast with this feeling of helplessness or even uselessness, however, and in the same early days of the war, Ford formulated what he felt was a writer’s “job” or even “mission” in the face of the war:

I think that our job in life – the job of us intellectuals at this moment – is to extract, for the sake of humanity and of the humaner letters, all the poetry that is to be got out of war. I, at any rate, have no other mission at this moment (Ford 1914d, 71).

This notion of the poet as endowed with a mission seems to bear the echo of Wordsworth’s Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, and Ford indeed “prophesied” there would be a “Neo-Romantic movement” after the war (Ford 1914c, 207). The ethical dimension of literary creation pervades Ford’s writing during and after the war, and far exceeded his task as propagandist, as it encompassed a feeling of duty to humanity as a whole.

Nonetheless, and in contrast with his prolific nonfictional output, Ford confessed to feeling “absolutely and helplessly unable” (Ford 1914e, 334) when it came to writing literary pieces in relation to the war, despite his receiving requests from several editors and his considering such writing as his duty. The reasons he gives for what he describes as “sheer impotence” are crucial, since they stand in complete adequacy with Ford’s aesthetics principles as exposed before the war; but they also allow us to understand the fundamental crisis that these principles met with during the war, and the turning point enacted by the conflict in Ford’s representational mode:

It is, I think, because of the hazy remoteness of the war-grounds; the impossibility of visualising anything, because of a total incapacity to believe any single thing that I read in the daily papers. [...] [T]he roots of poetry draw their nourishment from seeing and from beliefs. Here I see nothing. . . [...] This present war is just a cloud – a hideous and relieved pall of doom.

[...] that is how I see poetry about war or about anything else. I want something to stir my emotions and something sharply visual to symbolise them. I want a gesture, a tone of the voice, a turn of the

eye. I don't think I could make a poem out of fine words like avenging slaughtered saints or unsheathing freedom's sword. I cannot see things in that way. (Ford 1914e, 335)

The whole article offers a definition of Ford's literary impressionism that is redolent of the articles he published in *Poetry and Drama* in June and December 1914; but here rephrased to take the context of war into account. When he developed his theory of literary impressionism before the war, in the wake of pictorial Impressionism, and in collaboration with Conrad and his famous doctrine of the "make you see" (a phrase Conrad coined in the preface to the *Nigger of the Narcissus*), Ford posited visuality at the centre of literary creation.³ In late 1914, Ford argues he is unable to render the war because he is far from action, unable to *see* the war and thus to make *us* see it. Beyond the visual dimension, the aim of literature to Ford is to make a scene – or a character – wholly present to the reader though creating flashes of feeling – through recreating in the reader the impression of the writer. The question is therefore whether Ford did manage an impressionist rendering of the war once he was on the front.

2. "A Day of Battle"

In 1915, Ford enrolled in the British army, despite his age (he was then 42), and a fragile physical and psychological health. Interestingly, in a letter to his publisher John Lane, he associated enlisting with renouncing literature: "I have had to give up literature and offer myself up for service to George Five" (Ludwig 61); although this letter being also written to claim the money that was owed him on the publication of *The Good Soldier*, and Ford applying the principle of "impressionist" truths to his whole life, one is allowed to doubt whether this was meant definitely.

Ford contributed to organising the transport of the 9th Battalion of the Welch Regiment in the Bataille of the Somme, and though he was stationed just behind the front line, he was caught in an explosion, wounded and shell-shocked, with a thirty-six-hour memory loss. He was then posted at Ypres. Despite his stating that he was renouncing literature, Ford never stopped writing when he served in France: he wrote a preface to a novel by Violet Hunt; several poems that remain among his most celebrated and that were collected in a volume entitled *On Heaven and Poems Written on Active Service*, published in 1918; as well as many letters and essays. He did not, however, write any fiction. Ford's first-hand experience of the war caused a rift in his

³ For an in-depth analysis of visuality in Ford's writing, see Laura Colombino.

creative process. His war writings show a constant tension between the feeling of a duty to bear testimony to the war, and that of a helpless speechlessness in the face of indescribable horror. This rift and this tension are at the core of the whole of Ford's writing during the war, and equally of much of his post-war writing.

I wish here to focus on a particularly significant essay that was written on the Ypres Salient in the fall of 1916, and that engages in the experience of the Somme. This essay is entitled "War and the Mind" and was paired up with a second essay under the collective heading of "A Day of Battle." Outwardly, and as its title implies, this essay deals with the psychological dimension of the war experience; but it is manifest from the very first lines that the effects of mass fighting on the psyche are inseparable, for someone who is also an inherent author, from the effects on his writing. Indeed, through a paradoxical *mise en abyme*, Ford here *writes* a whole essay on his very inability to *write* on the psychology of war. The reflexive and metatextual quality of the essay positions it at the core of modernism's concern with its own process of creation. Despite Ford's often being considered as a marginal modernist, partly due to his being seen as one of '*les vieux*', partly due to his highly individual aesthetics, this essay unmistakably partakes of modernist self-consciousness.

As a matter of fact, the essay can be analysed as an *ars poetica* in reverse, describing as it does the way in which the very foundations of Fordian writing are undermined by the traumatic experience of the Front. Ford starts by reminding us of his pre-war ability to conjure up highly visual tableaux, using Conrad's famous phrase: "I could make you see the court of Henry VIII; the underground at Gower Street; palaces in Cuba; the coronation – anything I had seen, and still better, anything I hadn't seen" (Ford 1916, 36-7). The lexical field of sight is prevalent throughout the essay, and is inseparable from that of writing. To answer the question we asked earlier, Ford's inability to write on the war from afar does not at first appear to be solved once he is directly involved in action, since this essay expresses the inability to render the *impressions* of the war, or as Ford phrases it, to "put into words" the "extraordinarily coloured and exact pictures" of the war that he can see "behind [his] eyeballs":

But, as for putting them – into words! No: the mind stops dead; and something in the brain stops and shuts down. [...] As far as I am concerned an invisible barrier in my brain seems to lie between the profession of Arms and the mind that puts things into words. And I ask myself: why? And I ask myself: why? (Ford 1916, 37)

Alan Munton considered this particular passage to be a self-diagnosis of war neurosis:

Brain, mind, words, repetitive self-questioning: the incipient breakup is clear [...]. The block on writing is [...] a real mental event. [...] This closed-down mind exists, for Ford, in a landscape, and for him [...] it is the Observation [114] Post, or OP, that is the point of entry through which the troubled Subject enters the landscape. (Munton 113)

Madness becomes invested with a mythical and metaphysical dimension when Ford implicitly quotes *Macbeth* further on: “it all seemed to signify nothing” (Ford 1916, 40). The use of punctuation, always so peculiar in Ford’s prose and poetry, is especially eloquent in this text: the initial strong question or exclamation marks, which imply a powerful presence of the writer, are gradually replaced with suspension dots that become increasingly pervasive – sometimes as many as six in a row – as well as with dashes, which express the “stopping dead” of the brain. Ford’s text thus appears visually perforated, strafed, and threatened with silence: “It is a feeling of an anger an anger.... a deep anger! It shakes you like a force that is beyond all other forces in the world: unimaginable, irresistible” (Ford 1916, 41). The suspension dots enact the hollowing out of articulate discourse which results from the loss of articulate consciousness within the subject. The subject appears to escape from the text in an attempt to preserve his integrity: meaning evades the text, and seems to be taking refuge in the unspoken.

This threat of silence, however, stands in stark contrast with the extremely detailed description of the factual minutiae of war, through a plethora of military titles and acronyms, numbers, location names, or technical military terms. On the one hand, this excess of precision can be analysed as a way to repress trauma – putting shock at bay by focusing on smaller elements pertaining to fighting or to army life: fragmented, manageable elements of the war. On the other hand, the use of military acronyms and highly technical words in the text endow the description with a degree of abstruseness for the common reader: the excess of detail thus voids itself and generates an opposite effect of vagueness. We find here an illustration of Ford’s impressionist theory, which opposes facts with a deeper, more authentic truth. In Ford’s fictional and nonfictional work alike, the truth lies in impressions; conversely, the most factual report will prove the least effective in rendering life.

In his work *A War Imagined*, Samuel Hynes reads “A Day of Battle” and argues that Ford’s “imaginative vacuum” (Hyne 1990, 106) is due on the one hand to the sheer burden of a soldier’s repetitive and incomprehensible tasks, and on the other to the immeasurable vastness that was specific to WWI:

The war was too vast to be understood. Parts of it, like the territory that he saw from his hilltop, might be *described* – the places named, the numbers of men estimated – but the war itself could not be *imagined*. For to imagine it would be to discover its significance; and as Hueffer looked down at it, “it all seemed to signify nothing” (Hynes 106).

The war can only be apprehended through fragments, but cannot be envisioned as a whole. That is why it appears impossible to Ford to render his experience through a narrative form, which would attempt to vectorise the war in some way or other, and imply a causality between the events – or indeed, infer that they should “signify”. In “A Day of Battle”, the shock of the war is only approached through fragments, and peripherally, with a process of defamiliarisation of the extreme violence of constant bombing.

This deadlock is also at the heart *No Enemy*, which was written at the Front and in the few months following the end of the war. This hybrid, half non-fictional and half fictional work, delineates Ford’s difficulty in finding a proper literary form to represent the war. The Envoi of *No Enemy*, which was written in French, is particularly salient:

Je vous présente ces considérations en forme de lettre, mon cher... j’aurais voulu plutôt écrire un essai, soigné, balancé, bien pensant. Mais il m’est impossible de ciseler de la prose ces jours-ci. « Que voulez-vous, » – comme disent nos Tommies, – « c’est la guerre ! » J’ai passé vingt-cinq ans à chercher des cadences, à chasser des assonances, avec une rage acharnée, comme celle du bon père Flaubert. Mais aujourd’hui je n’écris que des lettres, – longues, diffuses, banales (Ford 2002, 149).

Although he never stopped writing, Ford felt an acute inability to write what he considered a truly literary prose at the contact of the war.

3. Towards *Parade’s End*

However, and its claiming an apparent failure to express the impressions of the war, the essay “War and the Mind” hinges on a major paradox. Although it posits that the psychological void caused by the trauma of war is responsible in turn for a representational vacuum, there is no denying that the text does ultimately manage to render an impression of the war, culminating in a quintessentially Fordian vignette, both highly visual and musical:

Yes, I have just one War Picture in my mind: it is a hurrying black cloud, like the dark cloud of the Hun schrapnel. It sweeps down at any moment: over Mametz Wood: over the Veryd Range; over the grey level of the North Sew: over the parade ground, in the sunlight, with the band, and the goat shining like silver and the RSM shouting: “Right Markers! Stead a.....ye!” A darkness out of which

shine – like swiftly obscured fragments of pallid moons – white faces of the little, dark, raven-voiced, Evanses, and Lewises, and Joneses and Thomases..... Our dead! (Ford 1916, 42)

This fragment bears a strong poetic and impressionist intensity; in addition, the simultaneity of the dark murkiness associated with the German bombing and of the sparkle associated with the British army finds a striking echo in the narration of *No More Parades*, particularly in the last few pages emphasising the contrast between the general sense of “darkness” and of a “cloud” sitting over the British army throughout the volume, and the “shining”, “polished”, “varnished” cook-houses (Ford 1925, 247-8), handled by “white tubular beings” (247), and inspected by General Champion who is repeatedly described as “shining” (220, 247, 248). Even more interestingly, this “cloud” was already present in Ford’s aforementioned “Literary Portrait” from 12 September 1914, when he considered he didn’t have a clear enough view of the war to be able to write about it in literary terms: “this present war is just a cloud – a hideous and unrelieved pall of doom” (Ford 1914e, 335). The cloud certainly seems to have acquired some substance through the direct experience of war; but this echo, bringing together an essay from the early war, a piece written on the Front, and *No More Parades*, may invite us to reconsider the sense that Ford had of a sharp dividing line between pre-war and post-war writing. It does seem that the seeds of what was to become Ford’s literary mode after the war were already planted before his arrival at the front. Of course, in a typically Fordian paradox, the very sparks of this renewed narrative form emerge out of the murky, uncertain outlines of a cloud.

At the beginning of “Arms and the Mind”, Ford remarks that the great war narratives tend to be written by authors who did not experience the fight first hand:

the great books of the psychology of war (such as Stephen Crane’s *Red Badge of Courage* or even the *Débâcle* of Zola) [were] written by civilians who had never heard a shot fired or drilled a squad. [...] It was not Hector of Troy – it wasn’t even Helen! – who wrote the *Iliad*: it wasn’t Lear who wrote *Lear* [...] Lookers on see most of the Game: but it is carrying the reverse to the queer extreme to say that one of the players should carry away, mentally, nothing of the Game at all (Ford 1916, 37).

Indeed, very few novels narrating the fights of the First World War were produced by authors directly participating in the action. Ford’s *Parade’s End*, published from 1924 to 1928, was one of the first novels written by a war veteran, several years before the wave of war novels including Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the West Front*, and Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, or autobiographical works such as Robert Grave’s *Goodbye to All That* and

Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, all published in 1929 and 1930. It seems a decade was needed for these authors to come to terms with the trauma of the Great War in a manner that would allow them to produce a literary narrative out of it.

However, the process was unquestionably initiated on the Front as far as Ford was concerned. Ford's dedicatory letter to *No More Parades*, the second volume of *Parade's End*, offers us an interesting insight into the slow gestation of the tetralogy. Ford here asserts that the idea for the novels originated as he was on the Ypres Salient:

Few writers can have engaged themselves as combatants in what, please God, will yet prove to be the war that ended war, without the intention of aiding with their writings, if they survived, in bringing about such a state of mind as should end wars as possibilities.

[...] Casting about, then, for a medium through which to view this spectacle, I thought of a man [...] with whom I had been very intimate and with whom [...] I had at one time discussed most things under the sun. He was the English Tory.

Even then – It must have been in September, 1916, when I was in a region called the Salient, and I remember the very spot where the idea came to me – I said to myself: How would all this look in the eyes of X.... – already dead, along with all English Tories? [...]

To this determination – to use my friend's eyes as a medium – I am adhering in this series of books (Ford 2011 a, 4-5).

The genesis of *Parade's End* thus coincides exactly with the writing of the aforementioned essay, "War and the Mind," also written on the Salient in September 1916. This set of four novels, which along with *The Good Soldier* is considered as Ford's masterpiece, demonstrates indubitably that Ford was able to come to terms, albeit through a long and difficult process, with the aesthetic numbness caused by the war. At the end of his essay comparing Ford and Wyndham Lewis's responses to war experience, Munton states: "What Ford learned from the texts preparatory to *Parade's End* – particularly 'True Love' and *No Enemy* – was that a record of outright mental disturbance could not deliver what needed to be said" (Munton 125). One may argue that this realisation was already dawning at the front, in "A Day of Battle", written from within the immediacy of war. Most crucially, it seems this very text, which was written as the idea for *Parade's End* started to germinate, constituted a turning point in Ford's helplessness: the very act of expressing the inability to express allowed him to update his impressionist mode of representation, through fragmentation and defamiliarisation. This development in fact heightened literary impressionism: it strengthened the validity of its methods against the test of war; and it even enriched it with the ethical dimension of making

the impression of the war present and vivid in the civilians' minds. The double paradox at the heart of "War and the Mind" is thus not merely that Ford ultimately does manage to write about the very impossibility to represent the psychological effects of the war; but that he does so in such an expressive manner, one that heralds the rich prose of *Parade's End*. Aesthetic innovation and inspiration appear to stem directly from Ford's stance as a writer-combatant. Updating and heightening the technique of literary Impressionism thus allowed Ford to fulfil the duty that he sensed behoved the artists of that time to bear testimony of the war to the rest of the world. This testimony had a twofold aim for Ford: it was a tribute to all who died in it, and a means to convey horror in such a way that no one would want to reiterate such a large-scale conflict: to "end war as possibilities". Whilst the latter goal failed, we are however indebted to Ford for keeping the memory of the war and of its dead vivid in the minds of twenty-first-century readers.

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