Visions in colour; religious visions

According to the analysis in the last chapter, as William Sorrell travelled through the realised realm of his unconscious, what had been repressed in him was gradually translated into glorious action. His journey culminated, in the ‘real’ world of the text, in a poised harmony where talk, trust and fantasy, and the professional demands of publishing, could co-exist. (Feminine) nature and (masculine) civilisation were united. In *The New Humpty-Dumpty*, as Emily Aldington and Count Macdonald made love, they did so in a way that both signified the continuing power of nature in a world dominated by conceptions of ‘civilised society’, and celebrated the ‘dark forest’ as an image of female physicality.

Overall, as Ford investigated the legacies of the Pre-Raphaelites and his father in *Ancient Lights*, and revealed aspects of his creative unconscious in these positive fictions, Sorrell’s and Aldington’s self-expression was seen to have its mirror in Ford’s own psychological reclamation. I interpreted his visions and memories as betraying not the typically modernist experience of ‘fractured, divided sensibilities’, but as a version of the more general, and positive, rediscovery of ‘chains and networks of desires and fears’ that modernism can also provide. In *Ancient Lights*, Ford’s greatest energy, his greatest visionary power, was related to his own unconscious psychological processes. The results of these processes, the stuff on the page, often constructed in scenes (like that of the doves) to be viewed by the imaginative reader, bespoke what had been forgotten, or repressed. Taken together, all these texts were seen to provide many such examples that were of collective significance, not just of significance to Ford. Modernism in the sense as applied in the last chapter, then, was closely tied to its atavistic tendencies, to its alliance with psychological discovery, and to its narrative techniques (whereby the past can be brought into the
present and maintained there, or where exploration in time and space can occur).

The ‘chains and networks of desires and fears’ between the ‘Old World and the New’, were analysed in that chapter as formed partly of archetypal imagery, intended to counter repression, the deadening of instinct and the theological drive to defeminise the religious spirit. So the chains were various, complex and richly wrought. They were multiplicitous, but not fragmenting. Indeed, the plurality of the chains was actively sought by Ford, who evidently sometimes revelled in the fallout when the onward rush of the twentieth century was forcibly halted (perhaps by a train crash), so that what had been forgotten could catch up and re-establish a tangible, visible, knowable hold. In the material for consideration in this new chapter, that onward rush is still delayed, and the resulting hiatus further explored.

In this chapter concentration will remain on the enriching aspects of modernism as employed by Ford: on multiplicity and reclamation. Important though it was in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, still greater focus here will be on how the action of ‘seeing’ (and also the experience of ‘being seen’) in Ford allows him to develop his devotion to these enriching aspects. Not for the characters here Dowell’s ‘mortifying’ experience of having Leonora’s ‘lighthouse’ glare turned upon him;² not for these characters either Ford’s experience of looking at himself ‘from outside’ as a result of his grandfather’s portrait of him as William Tell.³ Indeed, this chapter could be considered as the culmination of the attention this book has given to the visual aspects of Ford’s writing (and the modernist image of the kaleidoscope makes another appearance in *The Young Lovell*⁴). Ezra Pound wrote in his obituary of Ford that he ‘was almost an halluciné . . ., he saw quite distinctly the Venus immortal crossing the tram tracks’; Ford certainly thought he was, writing in 1915 that ‘I see myself visions, every day of my life’.⁵ This chapter will investigate what this capability means in Ford.

Like previous protagonists of the positive fictions, Lovell is subject to visions. His consciousness is stretched by Ford in a new attempt to visualise human imagination, human desire and the nature of love. Ford’s climax to this latest text, in which the seer becomes the seen, is related, in important ways to do with this reversal, to the long poem Ford wrote at the same time, ‘On Heaven’. This poem is investigated as a comparative text here. Central to Ford’s representation of heaven in the poem is the reflecting, ‘lonely old moon’, which seems to threaten its existence. As the chapter proceeds, the moon’s watchfulness is
reconstructed as part of Ford’s fantastical solution to the fragmenting experience of the divided self.

**The Young Lovell**

*The Young Lovell* was written and published in 1913; it was the novel before *The Good Soldier*. Though Saunders writes that both these texts are ‘studies of the power of desire to enrapure and to endanger and of the conflicts between sexuality and society, passion and morality, pagan worship of desire and renunciation’, the earlier of them is set in Northumberland in 1486 and concerns a young knight.6 After wrestling his way through these conflicts and enjoying, in different ways, both sexuality *and* society, passion *and* morality, the knight finds he doesn’t, ultimately, have to choose between them. More concerned with the power of desire to ‘enrapture’, the knight is different from the protagonists of *The Good Soldier* amongst whom that power ultimately wreaks havoc. The later of these studies is set in more contemporary times, of course, and is European, and in addition has nothing enriching to say about the power of passion and sexuality. As this is so, it is, perhaps, important to acknowledge that Ford had recently fallen in love again when he began *The Young Lovell*.7 The ‘curiosity, desire and hope’ of this protagonist is quite possibly that felt by his creator at this time.8 The text, though, provides clues to more interesting ways of sourcing the positive nature of this positive fiction.

**La belle dame sans merci/the white goddess**

According to Caroline Gordon, *The Young Lovell* is the climax of Ford’s explorations into the mythical imagination; it is the best Fordian example of this kind of novel. She likes it mainly because the pictures it paints are convincing. She conflates two Fordian/Pre-Raphaelite representations of woman in her analysis of the novel, indentifying a *femme fatale* who means the credible departure of the eponymous hero from the ‘real world’: ‘Ford’s “Belle Dame Sans Merci” is as beautiful and as without mercy as any White Goddess needs to be in order to convince us that a man turned his back on the real world and followed her over hill and dale’.9 Deliberately evocative of Graves’s terminology, and also of the (romantic and) Pre-Raphaelite inheritance that was the focus of the previous chapter, this quotation draws attention to the depiction of gender in the debate between the real and fantasy worlds. According to Gordon’s perspective on this text, fantasy = colourful
woman, and man hovers on the border between that womanly world and the real one he unthinkingly inhabited before she came along. But once he sees her, he has no choice but to follow. Gordon also concentrates on the necessity for the wilful suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader, and isolates as the catalyst for this, as well as for Lovell’s action, the extreme power in beauty and mercilessness of the female archetype. In her argument, the sight of the woman, as initially described by Ford (‘on a green hill there stood a pink temple, and the woman on the back of the white horse held a white falcon. She smiled at him with the mocking eyes of the naked woman that stood upon the shell in the picture he had seen in Italy’) is needed to convince the reader of the protagonist’s entry into fantasy.

Astute as Gordon is in much of her analysis, I don’t agree with her interpretation of the white goddess’s function here. Lovell, as portrayed by Ford, has already crossed that border into fantasy, in a manner that disguises its existence, before seeing the white goddess. Similarly, Ford begins work in the first lines of the text, pre-white goddess, to persuade the reader to make a leap of faith. His method is more subtle than those employed in the other, recently examined, texts. The dramatic train crash of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* and the heavy Catholicism of the witch-like seductions of *The ‘Half Moon’* are unnecessary here. For the first time in the discussion of myth, the desire to exploit and make fluid the border between fantasy and reality, and to employ and to know all the many layers of the mind, come from within the hero. Lovell is alert, conscious and shown to be in command of his diverse patterns of behaviour. Using him, Ford proves that deep and complex self-realisation does not have to be thrust upon his male protagonists, by white goddesses or by train crashes, but can be sought by them.

**Vigil**

Lovell is on the threshold of becoming a knight. In the time-honoured fashion, he appropriates this burgeoning to push himself first to the limits of his physical endurance. His decision to keep painful vigil (though traditional) is carefully shown to be his own. Lovell is a stern task-master, and yet late in the night he does break his vow: ‘In the darkness Young Lovell of the Castle rose from his knees, and so he broke his vow. Since he had knelt from midnight, and it was now the sixth hour of the day, he staggered; innumerable echoes brushed through the blackness of the chapel; the blood made flames in his eyes and roared in his ears’ (p. 1). These are the first words of the text. They
imply, in the ‘blackness’ and the ‘flames’, that Lovell will be punished for his lack of integrity, for his precipitate act. But Ford isn’t interested in the morality of the case, and what would perhaps be more usually inferred as a failed end (to devotion, to prayer and to knighthood) is shown instead to be a wild and magnificent beginning. Lovell ceases his devotional posture as the dawn breaks, and as he becomes conscious of the great physical and mental strain that has beset him, as his senses regain their feeling, and the blood starts to flow, he begins to recall the events of the night. His recollection comes in its full vigour only as a result of his decision to break his vow.

Lovell’s transgression, then, the breaking of the vow and the flooding return of his life’s blood, mean he returns to the powerful things he has seen in the night, things that must then be of some worth:

Visions had come to him [...]. He had seen through the thick walls, Behemoth riding amidst crystal seas, Leviathan who threw up the smoke and flames of volcanoes. Mahound had passed that way with his cortège of pagans and diamonded apes; Helen of Troy had beckoned to him, standing in the sunlight, and the Witch of Endor, an exceedingly fair woman, and a naked one, riding on a shell over a sea with waves like dove’s feathers. (p. 1)

It doesn’t end here, for further sights are listed over another three pages; the vibrant, vivid fantasies of the night are relived in their entirety, after the fact. Ford wants Lovell to know, to remember and to profit from these sights, sights that he presents as only available to Lovell’s conscious mind because he has interrupted his vigil before day has broken. Interpreting them, it would appear that what Ford wants them to teach Lovell is to do with his instincts, with the discovery of his buried self (it is no accident that these visions come at night).11 Beautiful, naked women call to him; powerful, essential masculinity tempts him into playing god. Ford also wants Lovell, and this is more significant, to act on the instincts that the visions stir. To these ends, he both emphasises his freedom of choice (Lovell chooses to watch, he chooses this chapel and he chooses to break his vow) and simultaneously tempers the pervading aura of whirling dervishes and terrible demons. They are powerful, but not vanquishing; they bring not death, but freedom.

Ford illustrates Lovell’s ability to intellectualise that which he has seen as proof that he will not be overwhelmed by it; he shows no terror. As indicated above, he can name those things that he has encountered, somehow divesting them of their most dreadful power. Though he is
inhabiting a subliminal world, located in a haunted chapel, his consciousness assailed by many visions, none of these things is experienced as, say, Ford experienced, and visualised, the suffocating giants of the Victorian age.\textsuperscript{12} Lovell explains the inexplicable with absolute surety; it is to be inferred that he will prosecute any further opportunity with equal vigour. Lovell fantasises, therefore, but he acts as well.

Lovell does not return to his vigil; rather he proceeds into the half-light of dawn, where the white goddess waits to join him on the new path he has chosen (having abandoned the devotional). Far from needing her to explain his journey, though, as suggested by Gordon, Lovell has shown that within his normally functioning psyche there is a vital, visual sensitivity to fantasy that would always make him susceptible to making such a choice. This remains true for the way in which he is seen to experience and to explain his world. Whilst the aura of eruption (for as a result of the sudden rise to his feet he staggers, and the blood rushes in his head) does in some ways echo that established by the disorientating, catalytic accident in \textit{Ladies Whose Bright Eyes}, Lovell seeks no comparable excuse for what follows. He is more immediately at home in his environment even than Sorrell. Lovell ‘fumbles’ at the bar of the door, physically weak after his watch and his meeting with spirits, but he recovers his equilibrium immediately, and ‘cast the door open, stepping out’ (p. 5).

\textit{Seeing in colour}

Lovell then disappears from the reader’s immediate view, travelling with the white goddess, whilst Ford deals with the historical meat of the novel. (There is a kind of dual narrative that Ford manages brilliantly. Lovell does disappear, but edges into the action from time to time in a ghostly manner.) In his absence, his castle is overtaken by his brother, who is also knighted in Lovell’s place whilst disguised, and betrothed to the Lady Margaret, Lovell’s intended. Lovell is thus dispossessed in all materially imaginable ways. When he comes back into sight, however, it is in order that Ford can show his dispossession to be of no significance, because of a new and unique visual relationship to the world which he has formed.

In his absence from the main thrust of the text, Lovell has added to his imaginative and visual skills the ability to see in colour in particular ways. The colours will be familiar to readers of the last chapter:

He considered the sleeve of his scarlet coat that was very brave, being open at the throat to shew his shirt of white lawn tied with green ribbons.
He saw that the scarlet was faded to the colour of pink roses. He looked before him and, on a green hill-side, he was aware of a great gathering of men and women bearing scythes whose blades shone like streaks of flame in the sun. Also, at their head, went priests and little boys with lit censers and lit candles. The day was so clear that, though they were already far away, he could see the blue smoke of the incense. (pp. 52–3)

This is like painting by numbers. Having pushed aside other more mundane ways of interpreting, or being successful in, the world (through familial or political power, or knightly prowess, for example), Lovell seems to work rather with a simplistic set of coloured keys. These keys are both symbolic (of love: the pink roses; of innocence: the white shirt) and brilliantly ordered (below: the green hillside; above: the blue smoke). Seemingly oblivious to a realistic apprehension of the dull greys and khakis, colours that don’t appear in his kaleidoscopic spectrum, Lovell sees only in colours that mean something. In addition, everything he sees is distinguishable from its surroundings: no aspect of this world is hidden.13 His perspective is long, though true. Thus he reveals his visual existence to be made up both of perfect perspective and coded apprehension. He paints a complete, interpretable, picture as he sees, simultaneously proving that Leviathan and Mahound no longer stand for his instinctual life. The white goddess will now do so instead.

The colour codes in operation, which support the act of his seeing, are partly religious ones (‘For the Young Lovell had talked always . . . of the Mother of God as the mystic rose, of the Tower of Ivory, and of the dish that had the most holy blood of God’14 (p. 128)). They are also partly related (via religiosity) to the chivalric code. However, they obtain in their greater part to his more recent experience of love, and even the religious aspects are often ‘corrupted’, as it were, and become equally applicable to sexual significations (‘in short [the white goddess] was all white and gold save for her red and alluring lips that smiled askant, and he thought that he had never seen so bright a lady . . . His heart at the sight of her beat in great, stealthy pulses’ (p. 47)). Although it is true that Lovell’s visual and fantastical imagination was emphasised from the outset of the text, at this point he didn’t see much in colour. Leaving the chapel having broken his vow, ‘it was grey; the sea grey and all the rushes of the sands’ (p. 5); even during his recollection of his nightmares, colour is not significant. Approach to the white goddess changes that: ‘he had a sense of brown, of pearly blue, of white, of many colours; of many great flowers as large as millstones’ (p. 11).
‘White’ can stand for the absence of colours; it can also, and does here, stand for the sum of them all. The white goddess stands for the summation of all colours, then, and for their emotional equivalents too.

From the point when he encounters her, all that Lovell sees is translated into startling, nursery, Pre-Raphaelite shades of primary colours. Even his military procedures come to him in pictures with these shades: ‘As he rode through the fields … the siege of the Castle grew clear to him and like a picture, red and blue and pink’ (p. 103). His experience of love, then, Ford suggests, enacts nothing more important in the Young Lovell than an explosion of visual capability across the spectrum, a capability that crucially includes a coded, interpretable apprehension at an elemental level. There are those in the text who do not have access to this way of seeing, and they tend to be removed entirely from the secular life. These incapables are reminiscent of the fearful men of previous chapters (they fear the ‘fairy’ women whom they catch at the windows of their monkish cells), and act as a distinct foil to Lovell’s colourful vision. Ford shows them bathed in the light that Lovell uses to such positive ends, but unable to apprehend it: ‘at last, towards its setting, the sun shone blood red through all those windows of colours, ruby, purple, vermeil, grass green and the blue of lapis lazuli. All those colours fell upon the tiles of the floor that were hewn with a lily pattern in yellow of the potter. Twenty colours fell upon the figure of the Bishop, laying all in black upon his bed’ (p. 206). The colours here, coming as they do at the end of a diatribe against women, show the variety of life, its richness, which have recently been miscalled and are being repressed.

Eventually, Lovell does recapture his castle, and is reunited with Margaret. Yet this is not the focus of the story, nor its point. And despite the way in which Lovell’s coloured view of things develops the appreciation of Ford’s positive fictions (how relaxing it must be to be able to see and understand the world with so little effort; how powerful is this conception of love), it is in another of its aspects that this text contributes most to my analysis of modernist multiplicity in Ford. Here, it is in the experience of being seen, rather than in the act of seeing, that my interest lies.

**Being seen**

Lovell is a more complex character than he has appeared to be so far. What is usual to Ford, a diagrammatic split between an experiential
self, and one which is critical (think for an example of the way Tietjens’s mind is displayed at the point of his breakdown) is present in this text, though muted. Lovell may be a lover, but he is a religious man too. What is less immediately obvious, in comparison with those fictions previously studied, is the battle between these aspects of the self. Whereas Robert Grimshaw in *A Call* experiences a nervous breakdown due to the conflict between what he wants and what he thinks he should want, Lovell seems to suffer no such struggle. In addition, for the majority of the text, he seems to manifest no concept of guilt (after all, he has abandoned Margaret to a marriage with his brother, and his mother to imprisonment). *A Call* is a significant text here, partly because of the issues it raises in comparison with Lovell, but also because it is contemporaneous with Ford’s foray into myth. What Grimshaw remains without, however, Lovell finds. The object of that search is an elusive one. Ford suggests it is the experience of being seen in one’s complex, contradictory, wholeness; it is this that can make Lovell different from other men.

As Lovell rose to his feet in the chapel of his vigil, for a moment he lost his self-control. Ford’s representation of this struggle (brief as it was) is crucial. At the second that Lovell becomes fully aware of his physical weakness, he becomes aware too of ‘eyes . . . peering into the chapel . . . watching him’. They are ‘kind eyes; eyes unmoved’, and they make his heart ‘beat enormously’ (p. 4). These eyes project him into unexpected action. He stands, ‘reeling and stretching out his arms, with prayers that he had never prayed before upon his lips’, compelled to communicate himself in ways not to do with fantasy or desire. To whom do these eyes belong? Perhaps they are the eyes of judgement that beset the four protagonists of *The Good Soldier*? Perhaps they are the eyes of the white lady, waiting for him to join her? Neither of these options is convincing; the eyes make him want to backtrack, not to go forward. I think, rather, that they are the briefly glimpsed eyes of his faith. ‘Unmoved’, they don’t seem human; ‘kind’, they bespeak Christian charity; rousing, they bring him to prayer like he has never prayed before. He cannot hide from these eyes; they see all, including him in the dark. In this sense of being seen and known, either by Christ or by Lovell’s projection of his own religious faith, there is a comfort. Lovell wants to be seen, he decides in this moment, in his doubtful yet fantasy-fuelled confusion, rather than to be a seer.

Despite the strength of this experience, and the new kind of desire to which it introduces him, the struggle passes. Lovell argues himself out of
his sense of guilt and regret, and reattaches himself to fantasy over religiosity: ‘prudence came into his heart and he argued with himself. It was to himself and to no other man or priest that he had vowed to watch above his harness from midnight to dawning’ (p. 5). Lovell reminds himself that he is beholden to no one and that the concept of devotional failure is of no account. The instant, the prayer and his feeling of being watched are all subsumed by the continuation of the action, and by his journey out into the kaleidoscopic light of the white goddess. Although the reader forgets these early aspects and progresses with the hero, it later appears the part of him they signified has not been fully vanquished. At the end of the text, once Lovell reclaims his castle, something occurs within him that reawakens the voice of guilt. It precipitates a similar examination of conscience as did the breaking of the vow. It both suggests that there is, conversely to what I have argued so far, a choice to be made about fantasy, and returns attention to the significance of being seen.

Ralph Griffiths characterises the fourteenth century as one of ‘burgeoning interest in mystical and devotional writings, most of them in English from the latter part of the century [. . .]. The writers were frequently solitary figures commending the contemplative life to their readers’. Lady Margaret is a proponent of the ‘contemplative life.’ Her reward for her purity, and for her self-reflection, is an extensive one:

The Lady Margaret awakened from a slumber, and the sun had climbed far around in the heaven. Then she perceived a lady watching her through the trees and smiling. So beautiful and smiling a lady she had never seen. She stood between the stems of two white birch trees and leaned upon one, with her arm over her head in an attitude of great leisure. The Lady Margaret rose from her mattress and went towards that lady; she had never felt so humble, nor had her eyes ever so gladdened her at the sight of the handiwork of God. (pp. 154–5)

Margaret’s experience is similar to that of Lovell at the outset of the novel; she, too, is seen by beneficent eyes. But she is more immediately able to profit from it. The signs are clearer to her, more comprehensible and enduring (the birch, for example, symbolically ‘plays a protective role, it is the means by which heavenly influences come down’); consequently she feels humbled, aware of her place in the scheme of things, and close to God. The notion of purification out of contemplation was at the heart of Lovell’s initial decision to stand vigil before his knighthood. And yet he cannot take it far enough at first. At the end of the text, he can.
Lovell’s sense of guilt for his abandonment of his knightly path and his betrothed reasserts itself as his mission is accomplished. The bright colours and the sense of exhilaration are edged aside in their turn by the voices of conscience and of religiosity that he silenced in the chapel. Though Lovell is fresh from the battle to retake his castle, this part of him requests the provision of a place to do penance for his sins, and by way of answer he is approved as inhabitant of a hermit’s cell by an ‘old monk’ (p. 305). Without pomp or circumstance, without even the attribution of his name, Lovell enters the cell from which he will never emerge in his lifetime. The doubt as to his chosen course, his love for a woman of the spirit world, and his unchivalrous behaviour, are all to be atoned for. Lovell kneels before the monk and confesses. Having abandoned his fantasy life, and the white goddess, watched by the monk Francis, he is bricked into the ‘kennel’ by stone masons (p. 305).

So where is the experience of being seen? In a way, it is part of his confession: he lays himself open to the priest who can help him to atone; and it is part of Francis watching him disappear behind the masons’ stones. But this is only the half of it. Ford manipulates this apparent finality with an astounding simplicity that both privileges complexity, not the necessity of singular choice so far suggested by the conclusion, and develops the idea of being seen. In the final pages of the novel Ford indicates that the hermit’s cell does not complete his vision in this positive fiction: the ascetic half of his protagonist has a companion. Lovell’s contemplation will be rewarded (though in a more pagan fashion than the Lady Margaret’s), and his burden of choice removed.

As the rain falls upon the roof of the hermit’s cell, the earthly confinement of Lovell’s physical existence, the narrative suddenly shifts, to where the sun simultaneously shines on the Elysian fields in which his spirit shall always roam. Ford provides little further elucidation. In the first edition of the novel there is simply a sense break between paragraphs, and then the narrative proceeds: ‘In a very high valley of Corsica the mistress of the world sate upon a throne of white marble’… (p. 306). The colours return, bronze and blue, scarlet and white. The self that embarked upon a journey into fantasy is pictured in a pagan celebration of all that is hedonistic whilst, simultaneously, the ascetic self is assuaged by permanent pensiveness, penance and self-castigation. Ford wrote to his publisher about the date and setting of the novel in March 1913. He stated that although it was ‘running up to the beginnings of the Reformation’, it was not ‘in that sense concerned
perhaps the sense in which it is concerned with religion is in the dualistic realisation and manifestation of religious affiliation by the body and the mind. Two ‘places’, answering different needs, have been attained which will, in their equal status, render the need for further travel unnecessary. They are only put together, and made whole, by the reader of this text. Acting like the Venus of Lovell’s imagination, the reader sees him whole, in his complex contradictoriness, enacting the awareness of his complete state that must be denied to him. Here is the essence of the positive fiction in this case.

Ford’s modernist attention to the divided self thus culminates in the premise that each component must be given its own resolution, its own place for expression. There must be an individually tailored solution to the demands and the needs of each ‘nature’, to use Grimshaw’s word. Critically for Ford, too, these components, or natures, must be separate: ‘that knight [in pagan bliss] thought never upon the weariness of Northumberland or upon how his mortal body lived in the little hermitage not much bigger than a hound’s kennel’ (pp. 309–10). Cognitive silence between one self and the other is of the essence, perhaps to quell the battles between the two that would ordinarily occur. Someone, somewhere, though, must see it all together to make it work. Someone must be in possession of all the fragments; in this case, it is the responsive and aware reader.

*The Young Lovell* is an achievement because it presents the logical conclusion to some of Ford’s metaphysical explorations. ‘On Heaven’ is the poetic attempt of the lover to find just such a conclusion. Arthur Mizener states that *The Young Lovell* ‘represents an existence not unlike’ that of this poem. Yet the dual vision of a pagan heaven and an ascetic haven is augmented by the poem’s quest for a place of peace, for a time of silence, in which the various parts of the self are answered and contained. Such a place, such a time, would serve to instil equilib-rium in this new Fordian speaker, a speaker unbalanced in some familiar ways.

‘On Heaven’

‘You say you believe in a heaven’, Violet Hunt challenged Ford, ‘I wish you’d write one for me’ (Saunders I, p. 395). And so he did, probably in the first months of 1914. It was a ‘plain, workaday heaven’ she wanted, without beauty and without optimism. This perhaps encouraged Ford to produce what became a clear part of the modernist project.
in its attention to ‘precise descriptive detail’ rather than to transcen-
dence;\(^{25}\) it also makes it sound like a very different project from his positive fictions. And yet in what it became it is not so different from those other texts investigated in my recent chapters (perhaps because Ford ended up writing not just a heaven for Hunt, but one for Brigit Patmore, and ultimately one for himself as well). The fantasy is present, rubbing up against, and transforming, the realist materiality of a heaven that includes a ‘swift red car’, driven, one must assume, by Hunt.\(^{26}\) Also present is Ford’s concentration on the visual sense as the most powerful way of investigating aspects of consciousness, real or fantastic.

Lovell’s dual existence is maintained, \textit{ad infinitum}, by the power of Ford’s pen and by the regard of the reader. As an important part of the conclusion to the text, it is made clear that there will be no communication between his active spirit (living out his fantasy) and the religiously contemplative mind in his body. In ‘On Heaven’, Ford attempts a more adventurous representation of what the multiple nature of the human spirit might look like. ‘On Heaven’ is a projection of a working heaven operating as an equation, balancing interspersed measures of fantasy and reality. If approached either as an attempt to escape reality or as an acute ear to the calling of time, the poem would fail. It is both, sometimes at the same time. The essence of it lies in the osmotic movement of Ford’s words, of the speaker’s memories and his hopes:

That day the sunlight lay on the farms;  
On the morrow the bitter frost that there was!  
That night my young love lay in my arms,  
The morrow how bitter it was!

The voice which begins the poem in these lines is located not on one side or the other of these emotional landscapes, but on both sides at once. The rhythm of the lines, and the repetition of words, creates a boundary between them that is easily permeated, a kind of membrane through which bitter/happy osmosis can occur. Derek Stanford has called the poem ‘not so much a time progression as a time continuum’,\(^{27}\) noting its tendency not to travel anywhere, but rather to exist as a series of layered elements which pass into and feed one another.\(^{28}\) In this resistance to linear progression, too (a different kind of resistance from that of Lovell’s conclusion), ‘On Heaven’ can be approached as an essentially modernist text.\(^{29}\) The voice in this first stanza rejects
inhabitation of one stratum or another, one time or another; grief and loss are almost immediately present even as touch and light are savoured. Exclamation marks, almost surprised at themselves, answer in their activity the impression of temporary joy.

The voice moves on to allude to the mythical incentive for this mixed geographical and psychological location, and then it alters, as the tangible narration begins. At this point the lilting, hypnotic beauty of the opening is temporarily lost; equilibrium falters, and the reader crashes through the membrane that has been part of the poem’s balancing act, into reality. Heaven retreats.

The speaker is waiting; waiting in a place outside chronological time yet imbued with the trappings of somewhere he loves dearly. He is surrounded by the most comforting of stereotypical portrayals of ‘small-town folk’, when his beloved’s red car, a powerful symbol of the twentieth century, interrupts the simplicity of his nursery rhyme existence to test his perception of heaven. And finds it wanting. The speaker is shown to have taken his ‘Englishness’ – his peculiar consciousness – to his heaven, and his lover cannot join him in a wild abandonment of earthly prudence, but can only try to remind him what heaven could be, were it not for himself. The consciousness that counters their joyous reunion is not transformative, nor is it even particularly acute. Unlike that of other characters from the positive fictions, it is also directed away from the self. It functions like that of the typical, nineteenth-century, realist narrator in omniscient mode:

And the wrinkled old woman who keeps the café,
And the man
Who sells the *Libre Parole*,
And the sleepy gendarme,
And the fat *facteur* who delivers letters only in the shady
Pleasanter kinds of streets;

The speaker watches, therefore, but he does not engage, or deliver a sense of another consciousness. His gently described sights do not mean anything to him. In love, in *his* fantasy, Lovell is shown what he must do by colour; there is the red of passion and the blue of reflection, and the bronze and silver of combat. All of it impacts directly on him. At this point in ‘On Heaven’, sights cannot be interpreted like this and are merely endured; the speaker seems both bored by his omniscience, and light years away from the truthful, modernist epistemological struggle that will be Dowell’s territory. Indeed, in a parody before the event of that text, the old woman touches him on the wrist to coax the
speaker, ‘Why do you linger? – / Too many kisses can never be kissed!’
Doing the interpretative work for the speaker (and thus helping him to avoid the modernist morass in which Dowell is left), the old woman thus also reminds the reader that ‘Englishness’, as conceived of here, can be as crippling as Dowell’s American Puritanism.

If the aim of this heaven is not action, then perhaps it is to escape such outdated omniscient consciousness; perhaps this will be how equilibrium is restored. Possibly, yes. Once the lover descends from the car and looks around (and now there is less of the bored omniscient narrator and more of the complex modernist consciousness in action), and the speaker joins her, spurred by the old woman, heaven comes back into view. The speaker looks inward, and starts to think about sex, realising that, despite his Englishness, his suppressed, ‘forgotten’, desires are now ‘awake’. To act on them, he needs heaven to help with a different kind of forgetting: heaven must provide a sanctified moment to ‘wash away past years’. The speaker’s conception of his tainting past must be exorcised, and his painfully English consciousness dealt with, to leave him with only the physical, sexual experience of the now with his beloved. This is what he wants. But wouldn’t that mean that the osmotic process, one that challenged the need to choose one time over another, one emotion over another (one that was so beautifully displayed in the opening lines), would be lost? It would, along with the sense that fantasy and reality must be interspersed. Ford doesn’t let this happen.

With typical Fordian irony (and as simultaneously as the fact that the lines are written on a page will allow), the speaker is made aware instead that the memory of his ‘past years’ is necessary to him. It must come to remind him of what it is he has gained, of how it is he has moved, emotionally and psychologically, in order to be in heaven. Without that memory, Ford implies, heaven would fade. This need for complete vision is part of what makes this poem such a frustration, and so real. The perfection of the split between the ascetic and the aesthetic witnessed in Lovell, one that Ford has previously been seen to idealise in his perception of Christina Rossetti (see Chapter 5), is not on offer. In a much more realistic, and brave, approach to heaven, the speaker will not be able to ignore any part of himself. Ford will make him see it all. This necessity is managed by Ford in a different way from that in which he manages the same necessity for Grimshaw, say. His purpose here is not the same: Ford is experimenting with a new understanding of heaven, not trying to torture his poetic voice or simply display a
fragmented soul. This new understanding is based on the fact that the experience of heaven is owed to the human, difficult, complex means of getting there, not to the ability to forget. In this way, in its attention to detail and its attention to the past, the poem again stakes its claim in the modernist tradition.

‘You are conscious always of great pain’, Ford writes, signifying the new understanding, ‘Only when it is over / And shall not come again’. This kind of speech pattern belongs to the opening of the poem. It describes an osmotic equation in which the present must be made open to the past. Great pain, it suggests, can only be dealt with in the joy to which it gives way. Existence in heaven necessitates reapproaching the past. The feeling of release from past selves is then paradoxically and inextricably bound up with the remembering of them. Fantasy has its roots in human reality; therefore these roots cannot be ignored. In keeping with the complex movements of the poem, the speaker is as yet unable to recognise this truth. He returns to his quest to forget what has come before.

Voice answers voice, qualification builds upon qualification as the words attempt to burrow into themselves to where the past self does not matter. The moment of togetherness, of unification with his lover, is all that there must be, if his attempt is to succeed:

And, thank God, we had nothing any more to think of,
And, thank God, we had nothing any more to talk of;
Unless, as it chanced, the flashing silver stalk of the pampas
Growing down to the brink of the Rhone,
On the lawn of a little chateau, giving on to the river.
And we were alone, alone, alone...
At last alone...

Each ‘alone’ is employed as a hammer, beating against what is a ‘monstrous heap’ of past reality, of old selves with their old responsibilities, coming back to haunt these two in heaven. That reality consists of their combined personal and familial entanglements (‘in England’ there is a husband, a wife, children and parents, uncles and grandparents), and when the ‘alone’ cannot beat any more it collapses, typically, into continuation dots. The hammer is unsuccessful in its task: the ‘unless’ of the third line represents the stubborn refusal of past selves – as of his acutely conscious ‘Englishness’ – to retreat. The speaker looks, as he celebrates the vacuum of no-memory, of no-speech, at the silver pampas as it flashes in its own momentary, dazzling glory. He looks to it, and as he does so he places himself outside the vacuum: his moment
is no more. This movement of continual undercutting in which each point of arrival holds within it and suggests its mirror image (the day the night, the touch the bitterness, the present the past) is the basic nature of the poem. The resultant pressure seems to threaten to collapse it completely – and would, were it not for the strength of each apposite expression, the exquisite balance of the verse. Ford also anchors the poem in two ways I will go on to discuss (in addition to the time/space continuum he creates in his verse). Both represent recourse to externalities (by this I mean images or characters that skirt the confines of heaven). Both, in different ways, encourage the speaker to experience heaven in the complex form that is Ford’s intention here, helping him finally to focus his attention on his past, on the opposed aspects of his self, as well as on his present.

**Technique**

Ezra Pound described ‘On Heaven’ as ‘the best poem yet written in the “twentieth-century fashion’”,31 high praise indeed, but not surprising considering its combination of epic-resistant, imagistic, impressionistic style and technique. But Humphrey Carpenter challenges Pound’s ‘puff’ in his reading of the poem: ‘Ford was doing no more than putting into a nominal verse form (for ‘On Heaven’ is not very far from prose) the impressionistic narrative style he was developing in his fiction’.32 The poem is impressionistic (and this is part of what Pound would have been celebrating33), but I disagree with Carpenter’s reductive reading of this technique. In its search for the incandescent moment, one unmolested by the tides of human consciousness, ‘On Heaven’ is reminiscent of the fragmented Victorian lyric of Matthew Arnold (Stanford too mentions the lyrical effect of the lines, p. 111). In the honesty of concern for what exactly it is that gets in the way, and the dedication to presenting it, one can see the progression from ‘The Buried Life’ to the ‘twentieth-century [impressionist] fashion’ for accuracy. Narrative would not cope easily with the plethora of multifaceted, contradictorily self-conscious and diversely located counter-attempts at unselfconsciousness in love found here. It certainly could not cope with the speed at which the vision alters in this poem. Ford’s ‘dreary, lonely old moon’ is both the first of the externalities that serve to anchor the poem, and an object of Ford’s lyric.34
The moon

(That night my young love lay in my arms. . .

There was a bitter frost lay on the farms
In England, by the shiver
And the crawling of the tide;
By the broken silver of the English Channel,
Beneath the aged moon that watched alone—
Poor, dreary, lonely old moon to have to watch alone,
Over the dreary beaches mantled with ancient foam
Like shrunken flannel;
The moon, an intent, pale face, looking down
Over the English Channel.

But soft and warm She lay in the crook of my arm,
And came to no harm since we had come quietly home
Even to Heaven; [. . .]

Ford almost separates the moon, the Channel and England from heaven, but he does not quite do this. Though the moon does indeed ‘watch alone’, these lines of the poem hold it, what it sees, and heaven all in an uneasy proximity. If they did not, we might feel that the speaker had, like Lovell, found a place for pure indulgence. Yet the ‘But’ of awareness, in the last section quoted, signifies the speaker’s consciousness of the moon. He watches the moon as it watches, from not such a very great distance, the beaches and the Channel, but also the realm that has been appropriated for love. It is a painful image. One possible interpretation of it would be in keeping with earlier analysis of the poem: the moon helps to undercut their love-making, disrupting their pleasure by a livid display of alternative and excluded consciousness. It sees all unrelentingly; the ultimate and unavoidable reminder of the speaker’s past in the specification of its longevity, it reflects his past back at him. In this interpretation the moon would be said to echo part of the speaker’s own nature in the poem – the ‘broken silver’ that it sees is related to the ‘flashing silver’ of the pampas – and the moon must be read indeed as partly a vision of himself. But not like this.

This image of the moon is not a disruptive one, not one that removes their pleasure. It is a painful one, yes, of an ageing and lonely act of witness. It is a vision by the speaker of himself, looking over his past life, in England, across the ‘broken silver’ of the Channel. (Ford’s depiction of heaven is as a real place, a ‘little town near Lyons’, so it is not surprising that the Channel, one means of attaining it, should figure here.) The moon sees, and reflects, the ‘monstrous heap’ of
reality that is in ‘England’, sees and shows all, in fact. But, crucially, this vision of himself in his old age, this externalised image of his older self, also gives to the speaker, bequeaths to him, what he enjoys now, in the present. Its age, and its loneliness, serve to validate his current joy and union. Yes, it is a ‘poor, dreary, lonely old moon’, but ‘soft and warm’ she is also lying in the crook of his arm. The word ‘but’ signifies awareness, as suggested above; it also signifies a concomitant attention to the matter at hand. And so the image of the moon serves to instil in the undercutting, regressive movement of the poem some kind of sense. In the speaker’s age and his infirmity there is also life and love. The moon manifests some of the speaker’s attributes and reflects them back to him, but some of them it allows his youthful self to keep, and to use, for now. Still challenging the concept of linearity, the moon and the lover exist together, one conscious of the other, presenting alternative perspectives. The presence of the moon shows that he is complete, altogether, but free to manifest his constituent parts.

The second of the externalities Ford uses in this poem, that of the continually evoked ‘God’, is also significant because of what, and how, he sees.

God
Returning to Derek Stanford’s analysis of the poem, he says that it is, ‘for the most part’, the present – a beautiful God-given present – which dominates one’s sense of happenings in the poem; and this is why, in one respect, it comes closest to conjuring the idyllic element in a love-idyll. In equating the idyllic with Heaven, Ford has transformed the pagan background of the idyll into one which is specifically Christian. ‘Heaven’, spelt with a capital, obviates any ambiguity or synonymous use of the word for a more mundane scene or state of peace. (Stanford, p. 117)

The poem does stretch toward the idyllic, and it does equate the idyllic with ‘Heaven’. However, the prominence Stanford donates to the ‘present’ in this reading is questionable. Until the final lines of the poem, this present is most noticeable by its absence for, as I have stated, the longed-for, peaceful, unconscious moment, sought for in love, doesn’t ever really arrive (‘you are conscious always of great pain/ Only when it is over / And shall not come again’). And nor should it, if my analysis up to this point has been right. The psychological factors which prevent the achievement of modified peace are those same factors which preclude existence in the desired present. However, there
is a kind of active peace in this poem, one that is suggested by the above quotation. And there is also a kind of present. Stanford is accurate in his use of the phrase ‘God-given present’, for Ford’s vision of God within the poem is that which ultimately provides both peace and a critically modified form of the present tense. God in this poem is Lovell realised in another, more complex, form:

For God is a good man, God is a kind man,
And God’s a good brother, and God is no blind man,
And God is our father […]

And God’s a good mother and loves sons who’re rovers,
And God is our father and loves all good lovers.

In these new equations, wonderful in the simplicity of their plurality, multiplicity is enshrined. The present is found, or, rather, many presents are found and are fixed as the speaker celebrates, instead of retreats from, this different idea of family. In his fantasy, God replaces the cloying familial past that stood in the way of maintaining heavenly existence, but at the same time evokes that past, because of the forms in which he appears: the father, the mother, the brother. Without being partly a projection of himself, then, and with clearer potential in regard to what the speaker can see (of which more shortly), God echoes the function of the moon in the poem. God is one entity, and he is another as well: Ford barrages his reader with the certainty of it. And with God’s realist, rather than transcendental, aspects (it is possible that Eliot’s ‘hooded’ Christ in The Waste Land is a homage to this earlier, ‘cloaked’, presentation of the grounded God). In this vision of God, formal manifestations can be infinite, but the speaker’s existential equilibrium can remain intact in the face of them. Poetic time, hierarchically resistant, as established by Ford, seems to support the vision in the way that one thing ‘is’ at the same time as another.

Interestingly, Robert Grimshaw’s priest is familially linked, though less obviously so than Ford’s God. The priest displays an immediate and then laudatory knowledge of Grimshaw’s maternal family, and of his mother in particular: “I knew her,” the priest said. “She was a very good woman. You could not have had a better teacher”.35 Once this knowledge has been revealed, Grimshaw’s paralysed confusion in the face of this priest recedes: the priest adopts the role of teacher, given the right by Grimshaw’s religious and filial respect. Grimshaw needs him, and his knowledge of ‘other’ parts of him, because no other agent will make him effectively, rather than destructively, see himself: ‘It was
pleasant to him to come into contact with this representative of an unseen world – to come for a moment out of the ring, very visible and circumscribed, in which he moved. It gave him, as it were, a chance to stand upon a little hill and look down into the misty “affair” in which he was so deeply engaged’ (p. 221). As epitomised here, religious figures can provide stable visibility in Ford; they allow Grimshaw to step outside himself and look with a placid eye.

In the poem, God brings all of the speaker’s past into the present and contains it effortlessly. He is more significant still in what he, in turn, sees. God’s most important offering in ‘On Heaven’, in terms of the debates in this and previous chapters, is based on knowledge, on sight and understanding, as well as more simply on quiet – God smiles beneficiently and beatifically but is silent until the final lines. He evokes, in his majesty, the ‘kind eyes’ that looked down on Lovell in the chapel; he represents a next stage in the use of the reader as possessing all Lovell’s fragments; the ultimate seer, he obviates the need for self-discovery, and thus induces an aware and active peace:

Nor does God need to be a very great magician
To give each man after his heart,
Who knows very well what each man has in his heart:

Conspicuously different from the ‘heart’ as it appears in *The Good Soldier*, where it either threatens an attack, or conceals sexual desire or a lover’s secrets, the heart here is known in its completeness, in its details, by God. Obviously a significant notion for Ford, this idea is developed in *Parade’s End* when Christopher Tietjens has a vision of ‘the Almighty’ as a ‘great English Landowner, […] knowing all about the estate down to the last hind at the home farm and the last oak’.36 This would include sight, and knowledge, of Christopher himself. In ‘On Heaven’ the speaker’s God knows him, sees him; he has his life history in the palm of his hand.

The speaker does not actually meet God until towards the end of the poem. When he does, he mistakes him first for a priest and then for a lover. Within the context of this discussion, God is obviously both of these in the same way that he is able to incorporate, peacefully and simply, all those psychologically demanding and disturbing elements by which the speaker has found himself to be plagued. The crucial link between the images of the priest and the lover, in Ford’s creative mind, is the ability to know peace of different kinds – as borne out by Lovell’s dual climax. But God experiences, and communicates, both kinds.
Ford has come closer in the writing examined in this chapter to finding and knowing God’s peace as embodied, and offered, by a priest, than to finding and knowing the peace posed by perfect communion with a lover. In the completeness of the multiple knowledge which the priest, or God, can reflect and provide, there is an active kind of peace. In the balance between the areas of that knowledge, there is the same kind of peace too. Lovell’s monk gave him a cell. His need for asceticism and piety is thus silenced; his conflicting selves are divided and rendered powerless to torture him. In the poem, God’s knowledge provides a peace-inducing sanction, forgiveness without the need for confession:

For God’s a good mother and loves sons who’re rovers
And God is our father and loves all good lovers.
He has a kindly smile for many a poor sinner;

This knowledge is without judgement, and it implies sexual leniency on the part of God. As the poem closes, God approaches the table where the lovers sit, in silence. With his arrival, the poem ends.

Robert Grimshaw, seated in a churchyard next to Katya Lascarides, perceives the peace of God all around him. It is in the light, in the place, in his silence with Katya. A spoken misunderstanding disrupts his train of thought; his contemplation ceases, and the ‘peace of God’ (p. 136) is dispersed. In _The Spirit of the People_, a non-fictional work, Ford is discovered in his own encounter with that elusive entity, one which causes wonder, one which elicits a silent response: ‘The priest has uttered the beautiful sentence which begins: “The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts…”’. And then an absolute silence falls – a silence that seems to last a lifetime, an utter abandonment, a suspension of life. Words work as little more than symbols in the shaping of that which cannot be identified. This force takes Ford out of himself, defeats time and simultaneously allows all of his consciousness, his past, to come forward. The peace of God, this lifetime’s silence and abandonment, is that for which he is continually aiming; if he cannot achieve it as a lover, he can achieve it as one who listens to what is deep within, and far beyond, at the same time. It would appear that the essence of that ‘which passeth all understanding’ comforts most strongly him who is most conscious. (Eliot, too, searches for it in _The Waste Land_, finding it in a translated rendering: ‘shantih’. ) _The Young Lovell_ and ‘On Heaven’ have severally isolated ways in which consciousness can be organised to render effective that
same essence, one that does not always have to pass understanding. This organisation challenges linear notions of time and space, and creates ‘that sense of sudden [though hard fought for] liberation; that sudden freedom from time limits and space limits’ that was dear to Pound, to Eliot, and to Ford also.³⁸

In Chapter 7, my last chapter, having left behind the consideration of Ford’s positive fictions and the more self-evidently modernist depictions of human consciousness and human suffering examined in earlier chapters, I move to focus instead on his non-fictional considerations of the world around him. I examine his modernist credentials, such as impressionism, in more formal terms, and also consider his belief in writing as a method to combat the experience of fragmentation: social, psychological and existential.

Notes

2 The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion (New York, Norton, 1995), p. 29. Dowell chooses his words advisedly; the look is ‘mortifying’ because it sees to the depths of his asexual, dead, soul. I discuss this moment in The Good Soldier in Chapter 2.
3 See Chapter 5.
4 See the Introduction for discussion of this central modernist image as employed by Ford.
6 Saunders I, p. 382.
7 With Brigit Patmore, originally a friend of Violet Hunt, and married to Coventry Patmore’s grandson, Deighton.
10 An obvious reference to Botticelli’s Venus.
11 Helen of Troy and the Witch of Endor are fairly common significations of desirable womanhood, and function as such here. Behemoth, the ox in the Book of Job, has been said to symbolise the ‘animal, the brute force of the beast’; Leviathan (the ‘monster that should not be aroused’) features in the same book, and in Revelation and the Psalms. The name Leviathan is derived from Phoenician mythology, which applied it to a monster of primeval

12 Refer here to the early discussion in the last chapter.

13 As for Grimshaw, the ability to stand on a hill is important to Lovell. He has more permanent success at it though, often finding himself on ‘high spots’ from which to make sense of his world. (See the beginning of Chapter 5, and the end of this chapter, for a discussion of this attribute in Ford.)

14 Along with the tower of David, the ‘Tower of Ivory’ appears in the Litanies of Our Lady.

15 Kandinsky discusses the colour white: ‘White is like the symbol of a world in which all colours, in so far as they are properties of physical substances, have vanished … White acts upon our souls like absolute silence … This silence is not something lifeless, but replete with life-potential … It is a nothingness filled with childish happiness or, in better terms, a nothingness before birth, and before the beginning of all things’. One of Ford’s most oft-repeated mantras to the women with whom he fell in love was ‘du bist die Ruh’ (‘you are my rest’). Kandinsky’s view (quoted in the *Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*) comes closer than usual to what Ford would have meant by this I think.

16 I would suggest that the significance of these colours is also related very closely to Ford’s experience of his grandfather’s and Rossetti’s use of them. See the discussion of Ford’s emotional and psychological debt to Ford Madox Brown and Rossetti in the previous chapter.

17 And how essentially opposed to the experience of women by Edward Colman, by Dudley Leicester (for whom Etta’s red and black colourings signify only a particularly frightening beast, see Chapter 3), by Dowell, and by Tietjens, pre-Valentine.


19 See the entry in the *Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 86.


21 In psychoanalytic terms, it is as though Lovell’s *superego* and *id* have been externalised and realised in appropriate surroundings.

22 Crucial here are my earlier discussions of the fragmentation of modernism, and of the more common experience of the unresolved dissolutions of the self in modernist fiction (think of *Heart of Darkness*, say, or
Prufrock, or Mansfield’s Bertha Young in the short story ‘Bliss’ (1918)).


24 Refer to Saunders’s biography (I, p. 590, note 12) for a full discussion of the debate surrounding the dating of this poem. After posing summer 1913 as a possible date for it, Saunders, using Ezra Pound as the final authority, suggests the poem was completed by the beginning of March 1914. Despite the evidence for him writing it with Hunt in mind, Brigit Patmore was staying at Hunt’s cottage at Selsey with Ford and Hunt as Ford wrote it.

25 This is how Michael Levenson analyses the poem (A Genealogy of Modernism, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 113), emphasising its reality – proof of Ford’s impressionism as Levenson defines it.


28 Once again, Ford’s exposure of narrative levels is witnessed. Compare my analysis here with Levenson’s comments on The Waste Land: ‘the fragments in The Waste Land merge with one another, pass into one another’ (Genealogy of Modernism, p. 189).

29 See Allyson Booth, Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 112–17 (she discusses Ford’s technique in particular in this section); Joseph Frank, The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 56–9; and Woolf’s use of time in Mrs Dalloway, for example.

30 This signal is of course an important one. It is how Leonora tries to show Dowell that Edward intends to have an affair with Dowell’s wife (refer to my discussion of this scene in Chapter 2).

31 Ezra Pound, Poetry, June 1914.


33 Though Pound defined imagism in opposition to both symbolism and impressionism in 1914, he also praised Ford at this time for his ‘insistence on clarity and precision’ and his ‘vivid impression’ (‘Vorticism’, Fortnightly Review, XCVI (1914), p. 461; ‘Ford Madox Hueffer’, New Freewoman, 1 (15 December 1913), p. 251). Here, as elsewhere, the devel-
opment of modernism is seen to be difficult to trace without uncovering inconsistencies.

34 As J. Hillis Miller points out in an essay on Conrad, the light of the moon has already been once refracted and thus fragmented: ‘In Conrad’s parable of the moonshine, the moon shines already with reflected and secondary light. Its light is reflected from the primary light of that sun which is almost never mentioned as such in Heart of Darkness’ (‘Deconstruction’ in Ross C. Murfin (ed.), Heart of Darkness, Boston, 1996, p. 212).


36 Ford Madox Ford, Parade’s End (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1988), pp. 365–6. This image is developed to include the rest of the Trinity, Christ and the Holy Spirit, complete with different perspectives on the world-as-estate.
