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Author(s): Elena Lamberti

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REAL CITIES AND VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES: FORD AND THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLIC OF LETTERS¹

Elena Lamberti

For the Art of Writing is an affair as International as are all the other
Arts – as International, as Co-operative and as mutually uniting.

Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel*

Historical Contingency and Forlorn Hopes

Some people pursue the same dream throughout their lives with a perseverance that makes it difficult to decipher whether to achieve that dream is the goal of their existence, or whether their life is shaped by that very dream, in a more or less conscious way. Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) spent his entire life dreaming of, pursuing and living in an (imaginary) ‘International Republic of Letters’, something that he seemed to have inherited through his hybrid ‘genealogy’. To the critic, he has left biographical and literary traces which seem to have been skilfully conceived intentionally to muddle up his dreams and the facts of his life;² they are, in fact, always ‘double traces’, which at once puzzle and seduce the reader, who is forced to investigate them more through personal and literary suggestions, than through rigorous and precise evidence.

The idea of an ‘International Republic of Letters’ (the ‘forlorn hope’ discussed here), that Ford often recalls in his critical essays (and especially in his editorials³), would certainly have appealed also to the Italian director Pietro Germi, who was emblematically born in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I. ‘Frontiers do not exist, they are man’s construction’ – Germi used to repeat – ‘And where there are frontiers, there are also men wearing uniforms’. Ford’s dream was precisely that of contributing, through the creation of literary works, to a world without frontiers, a new league of nations united in the name of the Arts and of Letters; a new world (a new Europe) no longer ruled by materialistic, commercial or political logic, but interested only in establishing peace and in achieving nobler standards of life for each

individual; a world in which the idea of nationality would be entirely reconsidered:

I never had much sense of nationality. Wherever there were creative thinkers was my country. A country without artists in words, in colours, in stone, in instrumental sounds – such a country would be forever an Enemy Nation. On the other hand every artist of whatever race was my fellow countryman – and the compatriot of every other artist.⁴

Although the historical moment was making it look more like an anachronistic mirage than a truly achievable goal, Ford defended his dream tenaciously. With the same force and perseverance which often distinguish Don Quixotes and dreamers from any period, he opposed his Republic to all those imperialistic politics which, in a short span of time, led to two World Wars and to the definition of new geographical borders that men wearing different uniforms insisted on defending for many years to come (the inescapable ‘historical contingency’). In 1924, a few years after World War I, when new and terrible nationalistic movements which led to devastating racial and xenophobic claims began to spread, Ford confirmed his hopes for a transnational and open community, and tried to turn it into reality by founding a new literary review. In Ford’s view, his *transatlantic review*, published at the same time in Paris, London and New York, was an ideal bridge linking various literary, artistic and cultural settings; a bridge which would unify nations in spite of all geographical borders and uniforms:

the transatlantic review, the first number of which will appear on January 7, 1924, will have two only purposes, the major one, the purely literary, conducing to the minor, the disinterestedly social [. . .] The first is that of widening the field in which the younger writers of the day can find publication, the second that of introducing into international politics a note more genial than that which almost universally prevails. The first conduces to the second in that the best ambassadors, the only nonsecret diplomatists between nations are the books and the arts of nations. There is no British Literature, there is no American Literature: there is English Literature which embraces alike Mark Twain and Thomas Hardy, with the figure of Mr. Henry James to bracket them [. . .] The aim of the Review is to help bringing about a state of things in which it will be considered that there are no English, no French – for the matter of that, no Russian, Italian, Asiatic or Teutonic – Literatures: there will be only Literature, as today there are Music and the Plastic Arts each having Schools, Russian, Persian, 16th century German, as the case may be. When that day arrives, we shall have a league of nations no diplomatists shall destroy, for into its comity no representatives of commercial interests or delimitators of frontiers can break.⁵

This league of nations, united in the name of the arts and for the good of the arts, pervades Ford's idea of an 'International Republic of Letters': it is a league that exists only in Ford's vision, and not in the real world, and seems to be the ideal projection of his dream; using today's terminology, it is possible to refer to it as to a sort of (proto) 'virtual community'. And yet, Ford tries to locate a 'real' capital city for this 'virtual' Republic, a real city that Ford, pursuing his dream, idealizes: the city of Paris. In post-war Europe, in fact, Ford opposes Paris to London, presenting the latter as a lost city: after the great expectations of pre-war years, when the artists of the Great Vortex had forged their artistic dreams against a lively setting, Ford describes post-war London as the capital-city of a new-forming and 'real' community that he dislikes, because it is ruled by lost diplomatists and delimitators of frontiers.⁶ In his editorials, London becomes the symbol of all that Ford stands against: the old imperialistic logic, which encourages the creation of barriers and borders, and the new capitalistic world, which subordinates frontiers to the market and to the needs of a new cast of powerful businessmen now ruling upon all politics. In contrast, Paris becomes the embodiment of a dream, a mythical (and idealized) place which offers a possible 'objective correlative', a sort of urban and architectonic model which gives hope to the making of Ford's Republic. Therefore, Ford's idea of the 'International Republic of Letters' seems to shift between two different, yet contiguous, levels, one real and one virtual. Real cities are turned into symbols of virtual communities giving shape to a peculiar, imaginary geography, anticipating some situations typical of the world today, as virtual communities become an increasingly tangible component of our own 'reality'. A reality which forces us to rethink some long-established sociological and anthropological paradigms.

Real Cities and Virtual Communities

It is, in fact, common to associate the term 'city' with that of 'city-planning': generally speaking, we want to know where a city is located, we want to know something about the architecture, we enquire about the related topography. Therefore, we tend to situate a city, or a town, to map it, to visually translate it into a physical reality. To fix a 'visual' correlative for a town is so important that we tend to work out models and schemes also for many of those 'ideal cities' conceived, in time, by various imaginative thinkers. Needless to say, the best examples are those offered by the perfect cities that Utopian writers have so carefully described, either through language or the

drawing of articulated maps, in so doing giving a shape to their ideal architectures. Yet, today the traditional idea of the 'city' appears to be a concept 'in progress': new technological environments tend, in fact, to encourage what could be perceived as a sort of 'semantic shift' of the original idea. In the electronic and digital world, the idea of a 'city' is less associated with that of city-planning, as traditionally understood, and more with that of a 'virtual community', a concept distantly related to the original implications of the Greek concept of POLIS. In the new 'web-geography', virtual communities group individuals across trans-national spaces whose architecture is extremely difficult to fix, to locate, and to map. The image of the NET, now used to define the World Wide Web, is, by its very nature, ethereal and shifting, a combination of fluctuating, electric intersections which reconfigure constantly. Therefore, the net presents itself as a virtual space, as a new electric city-plan, along which individuals move and (re)group on the basis of common interests, goals, and values. This is what enables a comparison between these newly-established ideas of community, cities, and Ford's vision of the 'International Republic of Letters'.

His vision questions exactly the geography established by Western Powers on the basis of materialistic logic, and aims at bringing people from different nations together by encouraging a reconciliation built upon respect for all cultural and artistic differences. Ford intends to create a 'network' of trans-national correspondences which move around the values of the Arts and Literature, values that he sees as universal and unbiased. He intends to encourage a widespread 'virtual' community of individuals sharing the same ethical and aesthetic project, no matter where they live. Needless to say, to the critic of today this may well appear to be an anachronistic, though fascinating, dream, or even a more forlorn hope: just while Ford is pursuing this vision, Europe is moving steadily in the opposite direction, both in terms of reinforcement of various barriers (geographical, commercial, political), and in its definition of new nationalistic politics. Yet today it remains a topical dream, as it seems to anticipate situations and needs which both Europe and the rest of the world have started to pursue only in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is therefore interesting to retrieve the unusual geography of Ford's 'Republic': as in the case of the new 'web communities', Ford's 'International Republic of Letters' is characterised by a sort of

'virtual geography', which superimposes itself on the real one and which includes intersections and crossroads shifting in time and in space. In fact, Ford located various real spaces onto which he mapped the territory of his 'Republic'; each of them became, in turn, the vital core, the 'capital-city' around which the community moved and grouped: pre-war London, that is the London of the Great Vortex illusion; post-war Paris, the fabulous melting-pot of various cultural and artistic experience; New York and Chicago in the 1930s. (This provided confirmation of the fact that, from that moment, North America became the new dominating culture.) At the beginning of the twentieth century, the best medium that Ford had at his disposal to spread his dream and to encourage the making of the 'International Republic of Letters' was still the literary review. From the end of the 1920s, and especially in the 1930s, when he was writer in residence at Olivet College, Michigan, Ford made use also of radio broadcasting, radio being one of the first electric media able to address (and therefore to bring together) people across nations and, significantly, do so simultaneously.

Therefore, Ford's idea of a 'Republic of Letters', as expressed in his editorials at the time of *The English Review*, and embodied as pre-war London (1908-1910), and defended also in those published in *the transatlantic review*, and embodied as post-war Paris, recalls and somehow anticipates the idea of 'virtual communities'. Ford envisages a community of artists and thinkers who do not share a limited common, geographical space, but, instead, share a common set of values, experiences, hopes, and move across nations in order to find each other. More importantly, they share a common goal, the establishment of a higher form of civilization through the assessment and maintenance of new trans-national artistic standards: in Ford's view, to be part of this ideal communal land, individuals must believe in the arts and literature as 'civilizing agencies', and, if writers, they must possess 'clarity of diction and earnestness of purpose',⁷ in contrast with all those literary and moral commonplaces which had characterized most late-Victorian and Edwardian productions.

Unfortunately, unlike many utopian writers, Ford never explicitly designed for his readers a visual model of such a community; he never overtly worked out its possible 'architecture' or 'structure': it remains a dream-Republic, without tangible shape. Yet, for a while, as I have suggested, he persuaded himself he had found this impossible Eldorado here on Earth: after having been deceived by post-war

London, in the early Twenties, Ford moved to continental Europe, and looked to France as a possible ‘common land’ for all imaginative thinkers and artists, and to Paris as its natural capital. Ford came to make use of a ‘true’ geographical reality to give shape to his dream and to implicitly suggest a model for his Republic; he chose France because of ‘*toutes les gloires de la France*’, something that he presented as a communal, European heritage.

‘The Second Country’

Finally as to affairs inter-tribal! There was a United States naval officer who once said: ‘My country right or wrong!’ France being the second fatherland of every human being [...] the Review will have but one motto: Our Second Country right; Our Second Country wrong; but right or wrong our Second Country. This because of *toutes les gloires de la France* [. . .] It is only in France that you will find the Art of Peace esteemed above science and warfare’.⁸

In order immediately to signify the importance of Paris in the development of his idea of a new ‘inter-tribal’, that is trans-national, culture, Ford chose the coat of arms of the city of Paris as a logo for *the transatlantic review* – a ship upon waves – and explained his choice to his readers:

What about Paris? ‘*Fluctuatur nec mergitur*’. You read that device below her coat of arms. Her emblem being a ship upon waves. ‘She has her vicissitudes, but does not sink’. So the transatlantic review takes for her motto the word ‘*Fluctuatur*’. She has – she will have – her vicissitudes. May she one day add: ‘*Nec Mergitur*’. That is your affair.⁹

Ford uses that emblem to challenge his readers; in turn, post-war Paris became the perfect setting encouraging new forms of civilization. In Ford’s imagination, Paris became the ‘sun’ capable of enlightening all other ‘satellites, the sun triggering a true understanding among nations’:

It was not merely Paris that was alive to the Arts: it was the whole world [...] So communication should be established between that Sun, Paris, and the furthest satellites, and between them and Paris. St. Louis, Mo., must be told what Picasso was doing and Picasso and Mr. Joyce must be enlightened as to the activities of Greenwich Village. And Lenin reading of these deeds in his palace in Petrograd would be moved to give the Arts a higher place in his body public. It was a fine idea. (*JWN* 282-3)

And, yes, indeed, it was a fine idea. But, unfortunately, it too was no more than an idea, a dream, a 'Fordian vision'. Representatives of the Lost Generation have left several accounts of Paris in the 1920s, and, apart from the great communal excitement following the end of World War I, and the will to retrieve some enthusiasm for life in all its possible 'manifestations', the sense that one gets when reading those memoirs is that of a deep trauma, of a barely hidden 'malaise' for which Paris offers a convenient setting.¹⁰ Certainly, expatriates in Paris made the city 'alive to the Arts' and turned it into a sort of impromptu trans-national community; but, it is important to recall that it was precisely in Versailles, a few kilometres South of Paris, that the new Europe was born on June 18, 1919. A new Europe where national frontiers mattered more than ever before.

Ford's idea of an International Republic of Letters, of a community of virgin minds united for the good of nations, is something that one should try to hold in mind when dealing with his work, as it forms the basis of his poetic, and constitutes a subtle leitmotif which affects all his discussions on life, art, literature and politics. And this is because, in Ford's view, there was a precise link between the cultural and the political crisis of his time. It is this kind of thinking that renders Ford more a European than a British writer or, at least, a writer whose poetic encourages a European communal vision, well ahead of his time.

Ford's 'Republic'

The idea of an 'International Republic of Letters' is first suggested in the editorials published in the *English Review*; it is in these editorials that readers find some interesting clues pertaining to Ford's Republic. Trickily enough, however, they are all 'indirect clues', because, as previously suggested, Ford never describes the Republic in a direct way, he never presents it as a well defined cultural project based on an artistic 'manifesto' or a given 'architecture'; instead, he implicitly forces his readers to imagine his ideal community by means of oppositions, by means of contrasts, that is by 'indirect means'. That's why he makes use of two different paradigms and, implicitly, invites his readers to use them as complementary touchstones in order finally to give some shape to this imaginary Republic. By pointing at what this Republic is not, he ends by providing a clue of what it could possibly be; this is a strategy which is somehow typical of Ford, who was in favour of 'suggestions' and against 'dictates',¹¹ who wished to

encourage a 'critical attitude' in his readers and who more than once admitted that education and knowledge are better achieved through indirect means.

The two touchstones, or paradigms, for our consideration are respectively the city of London, that Ford uses metonymically as a symbol for a wider, philistine and materialistic Anglosaxondom (something that, in Ford's view, opposes his idea of an International Republic of Letters), and Plato's 'Republic', a classic, philosophical model that Ford sees as one of the major causes leading to contemporary materialism, and, therefore, to 'materialistic London'.

Ford's *English Review* editorials are meaningfully grouped under two different titles: 'On the Functions of the Arts in the Republic' (Dec. 1908-March 1909), and 'The Critical Attitude' (until Feb. 1910). I say 'meaningfully' because these two titles complement each other: in fact, according to Ford, the major function of the Arts in the Republic is precisely that of inducing people to adopt a critical attitude, something that he considers to be a fundamental antidote to a growing materialism. Indeed, the virtual minds that inhabit Ford's Republic should first of all possess a critical attitude. In this respect, Ford's Republic perfectly opposes Edwardian England, at least as this latter is presented by Ford himself: 'Anglosaxondom' is seen by Ford as the land of 'accepted ideas', a nation ruled by 'unfortunate opportunists, who whether they like it or not, are at the mercy of innumerable daily godlets'. These poor rulers take a firm hand in manipulating a practically illiterate 'man of the street' through new media and, therefore, in homogenising, to their favour, the multitude: '. . . we are coming nearer and nearer to government by panic. The governing class appeals more and more to sensationalism in order to obtain its end'.¹² Ford perceives the newly reforming mass-society as a by-product of its cultural attitude, and as the result of a much broader crisis, both of which are linked to the loss of ancient values and to the acquisition of a new, appealing style of life fomented by new forms of communication which turn original thinking into subliminally controlled commonplaces. London, and by extension Anglosaxondom, is presented as a dying land, as a place in which freethinking is perceived as the greatest of crimes; London is a grotesque theatre where small groups of philistine rulers control a growing mass of passive puppets; puppets that can be directed and fomented by what Ford calls 'fugitive organs', or also 'the half-penny press'. What, some years afterwards, T. S. Eliot will describe in *The*

Waste Land as the living-dead flowing over London Bridge, Ford somehow anticipates in his editorials when he writes:

The fact is that what humanity desires, passionately and almost before all other things, is a creed. It craves for accepted ideas; it longs more for a mind at rest [...] All questions have become so exceedingly complicated, there is so little opening for moral fervour that the tendency of the great public is more and more to leave all public matters in the hands of a comparatively few specialists.¹³

The situation that Ford had already reported in the *English Review* editorials becomes more serious in the post-war period: 'A social system had crumbled. Recklessness had taken the place of insouciance. In the old days we had esteemed that we had ourselves well in hand. Now we were drifting towards a weir' (*IWN* 63). Furthermore, 'after the war Authority itself became an offence to the Realm [...] Life became a perpetual round of petty annoyances and the once faithful servants of the public a horde of petty spies in the hands of contemptible dictators (*IWN* 69).

After World War I, Ford felt that he no longer belonged to England: he denounced the way in which his home country was becoming an increasingly closed system, isolated from the rest of the 'civilized' world, favouring illusory and corporate myths, and celebrating a sterile nationalism which tended to deny all forms of cultural interaction to the advantage of cultural standardization. Ford tried to fight this deleterious spiral with the only weapons that he could use: critical attitude, literature and the arts, and the new literary review that he founded in Paris and used to launch his cry for a new trans-national culture. After the war, in fact, to return to the old imperialistic logic would mean to run the same risk twice:

We fought to preserve a land fit, not for heroes, but for imaginative writers. Having done it most of us set to work to extirpate them. We seek to extirpate them for being more decent than ourselves; more frugal; more educated – but that is the national, the racial, the Anglo-Saxon 'we'. The We of the transatlantic review exists, as a just man in Sodom, if possible to redress the balance.¹⁴

The 'we' Ford employs stands for a trans-national 'we', not a 'national', 'racial' 'we' in the sense politicians tended to imply; in fact, according to Ford's analysis, the latter is a false 'we', an instrumentally corporate idea which fosters separation and boundaries, and is based on established and blind forms of individualism. Ford's 'we' is about starting from one's own culture and moving always to

embrace new ones: it is only through a mutual sharing and understanding that progress (cultural, social and political) can be achieved. Therefore, Ford's 'we' does not deny differences, but, on the contrary, takes them as a resource to process, through comparison, new knowledge in any culture. In particular, Ford seems to blame the individualism of the English men of letters for the lack of progress on that side of the Channel, as this is something which reinforces the segregation of society itself and accelerates cultural and political decay. Ford is quite explicit in his analysis and writes:

There is an inherent individualism in the English man of letters; there is an inherent shame in him which makes him desire to be regarded as anything but a man of letters. His aspiration is to be always a social figure, a philanthropist, a preacher, a fisherman, or a 'man of action'. The actual practice of his craft thus loses its cohesive force, so that it is almost impossible to find in England what is found in almost every other European capital – a society of men eagerly discussing their Art, sinking personal jealousies in the thirst for mutual sharpening of the wits, in the divine curiosity to discover how things are done. The English man of letters of any distinction lives apart, dotted over the face of the country, each one isolated, as it were, upon a little hill.¹⁵

By contrast, Ford's Republic should be seen as a community formed by a brotherhood of artists and imaginative thinkers joyfully co-operating for the good of the nation by the communal development of their arts and craft. More a brotherhood than an elite of artists segregated in a closed *Academe*, because in Ford's view, as in T. S. Eliot's: 'no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone'.¹⁶ Ford's ideal artists and imaginative thinkers should not live isolated on little hills, nor should they pretend to possess the truth and therefore impose their moral biases on the community; instead, they should sit 'in the corner of bars and places, and . . . listen; they don't take the centre of the stage; they are Private Persons'.¹⁷ These virtual minds humbly serve the Republic, act more as apprentices in open art-shops, live their time in full and try to put their fellow-citizens into contact with the true spirit of their time. They try to encourage a critical attitude in their community: they are, at once, artists and social historians.

The second paradigm Ford implicitly refers to comes to mind, once again by contrast, when reading the title he gave to some of his editorials: 'On the Functions of the Arts in the Republic'. The use of the very term 'Republic' in this context, and the fact that Ford points explicitly to 'the functions of the arts' in such a Republic, polemically

subverts the canon as established by the Greek philosopher, Plato. In later years, Ford distinguished Plato the Poet from Plato the Philosopher, a difference clearly stated, for instance, in *The March of Literature*, a book which serves to bring into focus Ford's formation of the Republic of Letters.¹⁸ If Ford tends to support Plato the Poet because of his clear and simple prose (which appears to be in tune with Ford's impressionist tenets), he dramatically condemns Plato the Philosopher for the exclusion of all poets and artists from his Republic. Plato's 'Res-Publica' is, in fact, a carefully conceived state structured upon different classes (the workers, the warriors, the philosophers), but ruled by an aristocracy of philosophers – aristocracy meaning here the 'dominance of the best ones'. Plato sees the philosopher as someone who possesses true knowledge, as someone who has managed to come out of the dark cave and must now show others the right way. On the contrary, in his essays, Ford assigns this very role to the artist who, alone, can show his fellow men and women where they stand. It is evident that Plato and Ford give a different meaning to the concept of 'art': for the Greek philosopher, art is simply an imitation of the sensible world which, in turn, is an imitation of the world of ideas, that is of truth; therefore, art imitates something which is itself an imitation of something else. Instead, for Ford, who speaks to a 1920s audience, art is the only 'civilising agency which is at work today',¹⁹ and it is also impossible to have 'a business community of any honesty unless you have a literature to set a high standard'.²⁰ Arts and letters are perceived as the only possible antidote to present day materialism, to the loss of a necessary critical attitude. In his essays, Ford's opposes 'imaginative writers' to 'Intelligentsia', the latter being a corporate caste of intellectuals supporting the Establishment and thereby fomenting an uncritical attitude.

In Ford's view, as he formulates it in *The March of Literature*, it was Plato who started it all, precisely by banishing arts from the Republic, therefore opening the path to a sterile way of thinking that cannot but bring men back to the cave:

As sentimentalists, realists and Empiricists, our hatred and suspicion of Plato the philosopher may be boundless. We may well see in him the root of all evil [. . .] Having no basis at all, his philosophy abounds in completely self-destructive contradictions. He will banish poets from his ideal republic and yet he will say that his ideal republic begins to go to pieces when education consists of the dry study of law, rather than the consumption of the sweet

fruits of the muses [. . .] In short, in the long arguments as to whether a creative artist can ever be a man of intelligence, those who oppose that theory may well acclaim Plato as their greatest instance.²¹

Among Plato's champions, it is interesting to note that Ford includes Professor Jowett of Balliol College, Oxford, a man who, in Ford's words, 'was reported to have exclaimed: "Here I stand, my name is Jowett / What there is to know I know it. / I'm the master of this college / What I know not is not knowledge"' (ML 153). Professor Jowett provides a perfect example of that *Intelligentsia* that Ford attacks in his editorials, both in the *English Review* and the *transatlantic review*, an *Intelligentsia* that, following what Ford perceives as Plato's sterile philosophy, can exist 'with perfect equanimity in a vacuum':

the difference between the arts and these pseudo-intellectual movements lies precisely in this, that the arts draw their being from humanity and can never be perfectly unaffected by the vicissitudes of surrounding mankind, whereas the other side battens solely on scraps of paper and could exist with perfect equanimity in a vacuum.²²

In his editorials, Ford insists on the difference between the 'Intelligentsia' and imaginative writers, and asserts that the latter possess a social honesty that the former deny:

The ambition of the writer is to cast light; to make clear. His purpose is to make man, above all, clear to his fellow men; the purpose of the *Intelligentsia* is to suppress all such illuminations as they do not conduce to rendering more attractive their own special class [. . .] Literature exists for the Reader, and by the Reader [. . .] The quite natural tendency of the *Intelligentsia* is to make of literature as unconsumable a thing as may be, so that, acting as its High Priest, they may make mediocre living and cement over an unlettered world. It is an ambition like any other, but more harmful than most.²³

In particular, Ford points out the dangerous effects which accompany the co-operation between this caste of 'pseudo-intellectuals' and the Establishment: it is precisely this caste, enslaved to power, that foments an uncritical attitude among readers; it is this caste that makes use of the new 'half-penny press' to control, through sensationalism, the masses, therefore encouraging a false idea of nationalism which denies a true understanding among nations and plays into the hands of those governments which sustain *Intelligentsia* itself. In this regard, Ford mentions the case of the historian Mommsen in pre-war

Germany: in Ford's analysis, Mommsen used both his prestige and his studies of the Roman Empire to encourage a war-mongering spirit which contributed to the outbreak of World War I.²⁴ Similarly, in England, men of the Establishment like Professor Jowett have been instructing those doomed to wear the new uniform of the British Empire:

Fortified, no doubt, with the maxims of Plato, Jowett turned out from Balliol College, Oxford, so many consuls, pro-consuls, governors-general, and viceroys for the British dominion overseas that the British Empire has been called Jowett-land. (*ML* 153)

It is against this logic that Ford fought all his life; given these premises, the 'International Republic of Letters' becomes the symbol of his personal war, as an artist and as a man, against the new world in progress.

Anglosaxondom, Jowett-land, the country of accepted ideas: these are all synonyms in turn used by Ford to represent the England of his time, a perfect example of what his Republic should not be. More than anything, it is the isolationism of England that Ford opposes, the rigidity of a given paradigm which combines the lowering of cultural standards and narrow-centred policies, and which leads to what Ford often defines as a 'hopeless standard of life'. By contrast, Ford's Republic appears as an ideal and wide-spread community, which dwarfs cities, overlaps geographical boundaries and groups individuals across nations.

NOTES

- 1 A version of this paper appeared first in *Interpreting/Translating European Modernism: A Comparative Approach*, ed. Elena Lamberti, Bologna: COTEPRA, 2001, pp. 43-60.
- 2 The title of Max Saunders's biography, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2 vols, 1996, clearly defines the strong interrelation which exists between 'fact' and 'imagination' (impressions) in Ford's life, something which, inevitably, conditions and pervades many critical works on and investigations of Ford.
- 3 Ford was the founding editor of two literary reviews: *The English Review*, published in London from December 1908 to February 1910 under his editorship; and *the transatlantic review*, published in Paris from January to December 1924.

- 4 Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (1933), New York: The Ecco Press, 1984 – henceforth referred to as *IWN*; p. 74.
- 5 B. J. Poli, *Ford Madox Ford and 'the transatlantic review'*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1967, pp. 37-39.
- 6 See Brian Groth's essay in this volume for further discussion of Ford's changing view of London.
- 7 See Ford's announcement of *The English Review*, quoted in N. Tomlinson, *Ford Madox Ford and 'The English Review'*, MA dissertation, Hatfield Polytechnic, January 1986.
- 8 B. J. Poli, *Ford Madox Ford and 'the transatlantic review'*, p. 40.
- 9 Ford, *transatlantic review*, 1:1, January 1924, 77-78.
- 10 See Caroline Patey's essay in this volume for further discussion of Paris as the setting for *the transatlantic review*.
- 11 See Ford, *The English Novel: from the earliest days to the death of Joseph Conrad* (1930), Manchester: Carcanet, 1983, p. 24.
- 12 Ford, 'The Critical Attitude', *English Review*, 2, April 1909, 139.
- 13 Ford, 'The Critical Attitude', *English Review*, 4, December 1909, 102.
- 14 Ford, *transatlantic review*, 1:4, April 1924, 200.
- 15 Ford, *English Review*, 1, March 1909, 797.
- 16 T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *The Sacred Wood*, London: University Paperbooks, 1920, p. 49.
- 17 J. Wiesenfarth, 'The Ash-Bucket at Dawn: Ford's Art of Poetry', *Contemporary Literature*, 30:3, Fall 1989, 247.
- 18 Ford, *The March of Literature: from Confucius to Modern Times*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1939.
- 19 Ford, *transatlantic review*, 1:4, April 1924, 169.
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