THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE FICTION OF FORD MADOX FORD: THEORY AND PRACTICE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

DENNIS BAUMWOLL

Norman, Oklahoma

1964

THE FICTION OF FORD MADOX FORD: THEORY AND PRACTICE

APPROVED BY

Alphonse J. Fritz

J. T. Kendall

C. L. Hamner

William H. Nagel, Jr.

C. A. Elsmere

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am especially indebted to Dr. A. J. Fritz, for introducing me to the work of Ford Madox Ford and for the invaluable aid and encouragement he contributed both as friend and as director of this dissertation. I am grateful also to Dr. Victor A. Elconin, Dr. Calvin G. Thayer, Dr. Jack L. Kendall, and Dr. William H. Maehl, Jr., who graciously accepted the burden of serving as a reading committee and from whose teaching and personal friendship I have profited immeasurably throughout my graduate studies.

PREFACE WITH A NOTE ON THE CRITICISM

Granville Hicks once described Ford as "a man who has been in the thick of every literary fray and yet is ignored by the literary historians, a man whose individual books have, as they appeared, been greeted as unusual achievements but whose work as a whole has made little impression on the contemporary mind. In several rather detailed studies of modern literature his name is not even mentioned, and no one, so far as I know, has ever made an effort to estimate his importance. Everyone knows he exists--it would be rather hard, all things considered, to ignore the fact--but there are few people who could accurately tell you what he has done." Hicks wrote those words in 1930,[1] and he repeated them in 1942;[2] there is little in the passage that requires revision to bring it up to date. Despite his own achievements as an author and the almost incalcuable shaping influence he exerted on two generations of writers, Ford is still neglected by literary historians and is still relatively unknown--even among quite literate people. It is true that during the past two years three full length studies of his

---

[1]Granville Hicks, "Ford Madox Ford--A Neglected Contemporary," Bookman (N.Y.), LXXII (December, 1930), 364.

[2]Granville Hicks, "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7 (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942), p. 444.

novels with glances at most of his poetry and non-fiction have been published,[3] thus satisfying Hicks' implied plea that someone consider Ford's work as a whole. But against that gain we may set the loss since his death in 1939 of Ford's almost monotonously regular output which annually brought his name before the public, at least in the columns of reviewers. Not only did Ford produce more than thirty novels (counting his collaborations), a dozen volumes of verse, some thirty books of non-fiction, and literally innumerable periodical essays but also he founded and edited what were incontestably the two most distinguished literary magazines of the first quarter of the century and was connected in one way or another with almost every significant literary figure who lived between 1880 and 1939. And now, less than twenty-five years after his death, having mentioned his name, one almost automatically feels compelled to add "modern British novelist . . . editor of the English Review . . . died in 1939," or some such identifying phrase.

Even if Ford were not a consummate artist himself (and he was), one would expect literary historians to pounce upon him as a subject simply because of the associations he had. His maternal grandfather was Ford Madox Brown, the Pre-Raphaelite painter; his father, Dr. Franz Hueffer, was for many years the music critic of The London Times and himself a librettist and a considerable scholar; William Rossetti was his uncle by marriage, and Dante Gabriel and

---

[3]Richard A. Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961); John A. Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962); Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1962).

Christina thought of him as a "connection." Both his father's and his grandfather's houses were constant gathering places for the Victorian Great, and as a child Ford came into close and constant contact with Swinburne, Ruskin, William Morris, Burne-Jones, Holman Hunt, the Rossettis, the Garnetts, Watts-Dunton; and he at least met Turgenev and Franz Liszt. His associates as a young man present us with an even more impressive panorama. He was on terms of intimacy with Henry James, Stephen Crane, W. H. Hudson, Ezra Pound, H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy, and, of course, Conrad, with whom he collaborated. And he knew well Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennet, Shaw, Wyndham Lewis, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, D. H. Lawrence, Max Beerbohm, Walter de la Mare, Lady Gregory. After the war new but no less impressive names clustered around Ford: Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Hemingway, Dreiser, Katherine Anne Porter, Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams--to mention considerably more than a few. And almost every one of these writers has gone out of his way at one time or another to pay Ford tribute as writer, critic, editor, or mentor. Still, one adds almost automatically "modern British novelist . . . died in 1939."

Ford seems to have all of the attributes that would make a man attractive to the literary historian. When we turn, however, to V. S. Pritchett's The Living Novel,[4] or Arnold Kettle's An Introduction to the English Novel,[5] or Richard Church's The Growth of

---

[4]V. S. Pritchett, The Living Novel (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947).

[5]Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel (2

the English Novel,[6] we discover that his name fails even to appear in any one of those "basic texts." William York Tindall in his Forces in Modern British Literature, 1885-1956[7] is more generous; he finds it in his heart to give Ford one paragraph and two footnotes. Samuel C. Chew in his section of A Literary History of England disdains to waste any of his text but does manage one footnote in which he lists a few of Ford's titles and then edifies us with the information that "his fiction has failed to take a lasting place."[8] Wagenknecht laments his lack of space but does give Ford a paragraph in the appendix to his Cavalcade of the English Novel--a paragraph in the first sentence of which he informs the world that Ford was the son of "a German physician,"[9] a fact that would have come as a great surprise had he lived to read of it to Franz X. Hueffer, Ph. D., Göttingen University. Similarly, Joseph Warren Beach, who mentions him several times in connection with Conrad, regrets that he simply does not have space in The Twentieth Century Novel[10] to give Ford the attention he deserves. Ernest A. Baker, although he lists sev-

---

vols; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

[6]Richard Church, The Growth of the English Novel (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1951).

[7]William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, 1885-1956 (New York: Vintage Books, 1956).

[8]Samuel C. Chew, "The Nineteenth Century and After," A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), p. 1553.

[9]Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the English Novel. 1954 Edition (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1954), p. 554.

[10]Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1932).

eral of Ford's early novels in both his Guide to the Best Fiction in English (1913)[11] and his A Guide to Historical Fiction (1914),[12] cannot find room for him among the ten volumes of The History of the English Novel, except to identify him as D. H. Lawrence's first publisher and as Conrad's collaborator.[13] Brooks and Wimsatt make a number of passing references to Ford throughout their Literary Criticism: A Short History and credit him and Conrad with developing the technique of the time-shift,[14] but again there is no extended treatment of him or of his works; and the same is true of William C. Frierson's The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940.[15] One could extend the list indefinitely.

That he has been slighted by literary historians, however, does not mean either that Ford is primarily interesting to us because of his literary friendships or that he has ever lacked champions. The fact is that Ford has always enjoyed what has been termed a "subterranean reputation," and this chiefly among other creative writers. Conrad, of course, had a great admiration for him and his work; H. G. Wells thought him "too much neglected"[16] and hailed The Good Soldier

---

[11]Ernest A. Baker, Guide to the Best Fiction in English (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), pp. 211, 274-75.

[12]Ernest A. Baker, A Guide to Historical Fiction (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1914), pp. 41, 42, 59, 118, 172, 215.

[13]Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel (10 vols; London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1924-1939).

[14]William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 685.

[15]William C. Frierson, The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940 (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942).

[16]H. G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography (New York: The

as a great book;[17] Galsworthy always thought him a great writer. Ezra Pound could never praise him enough either as a critic, or a poet, or a novelist. He begins a review of Ford's Collected Poems written for Poetry in 1914 by saying:

> In a country in love with amateurs, in a country where the incompetent have such beautiful manners, and personalities so fragile and charming, that one can not bear to injure their feelings by the introduction of competent criticism, it is well that one man should have a vision of perfection and that he should be sick to the death and disconsolate because he can not attain it.

And, a little later in the same article, he declares first that "Mr. Hueffer is the best critic in England, one might say the only critic of any importance," and then that "he has given us, in On Heaven, the best poem yet written in the 'twentieth-century fashion.'"[18] And thirty years later he wrote to William Carlos Williams: "I did Fordie as much justice as anyone (or almost anyone) did--but still not enough! . . . Fordie knew more about writing than any of 'them' or of 'us.'"[19]

The next generation of writers, those that flourished after the war, had equally glowing tributes to offer. William Carlos Williams was willing to say of the Tietjens novels that, "Together they constitute the English prose masterpiece of their time";[20] and

---

Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 525.

[17] In a letter to G. K. Chesterton quoted in Maisie Ward, Gilbert Keith Chesterton (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1943), p. 411.

[18] Ezra Pound, "Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse," Poetry, IV (June, 1914), 111, 112, 114.

[19] Cited in Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 114.

[20] William Carlos Williams, Selected Essays of William Carlos

he as well as E. E. Cummings and Robert Lowell saw fit to write eulogistic poems to him.[21] Graham Greene hailed Ford in 1935 as "the most able living novelist,"[22] and later, in 1951, as "the best literary editor England has ever had."[23] Allen Tate says in his essay "Techniques of Fiction":

> The only man I have known in some twenty years of literary experience who was at once a great novelist and a great teacher . . . was the late Ford Madox Ford. His influence was immense, even upon other writers, today, who have not read him. For it was through him more than any other man writing in English in our time that the great traditions of the novel came down to us.[24]

In a very similar vein Katherine Anne Porter asserts that, "His influence is deeper than we are able to measure, for he has influenced writers who never read his books; which is the fate of all masters."[25] Thomas Wolfe was willing to concede that although he and Ford were "at different ends of the writing stick," he had "read some of Ford's books, and deeply respected the craftsmanship and skill that was in

---

Williams (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 316.

[21]William Carlos Williams, "To Ford Madox Ford in Heaven," Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950), p. 60; E. E. Cummings, "possibly thrice we glimpsed," Poems, 1923-1954 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954), p. 434; Robert Lowell, "Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1938 [sic]," Kenyon Review, VI (Spring, 1955), 22-23.

[22]Graham Greene, "The Dark Backward: A Footnote," London Mercury, XXXII (October, 1935), 564.

[23]Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951), p. 90.

[24]Allen Tate, "Techniques of Fiction," Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. William Van O'Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), p. 35.

[25]Katherine Anne Porter, "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7 (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942), p. 479.

them, because they contained so much that I myself could wish to attain."[26] And Sherwood Anderson would insist that "we shall never have enough Fords."[27] Once again, the list could be extended indefinitely although I have purposely omitted statements of gratitude from the incredible number of writers that Ford discovered or encouraged or helped to find publishers. His indefatigable efforts on behalf of other writers, especially young writers who needed help of one kind or another, is a recurring theme both in virtually every book of literary memoirs that deals with Paris of the Twenties[28] and in the symposium entitled "Homage to Ford Madox Ford," which attracted more than twenty well known writers and was published in New Directions in 1942 in a volume that not only included the symposium but also was dedicated as a whole to his memory.[29]

It remains to be remarked that Ford's work has not failed entirely to command the attention of critics. Literally since the beginning of the century articles have been written concerning his books, but almost without exception they have dealt only with specific works, and until very recently their appearance has been

---

[26] In a letter to Marjorie C. Fairbanks dated May 4, 1938, Thomas Wolfe, The Letters of Thomas Wolfe, Collected and Edited, with an Introduction and Explanatory Text by Elizabeth Nowell (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 755.

[27] Sherwood Anderson, "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7 (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942), p. 457.

[28] The number of books and articles in which Ford receives praise for his efforts on behalf of other writers is too great to list here. For most of the significant references see the bibliography of secondary sources at the end of this study.

[29] "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions Number 7 (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942), pp. 441-491.

sporadic. They in no way undermine the validity of Hicks' contentions that Ford's "work as a whole has made little impression on the contemporary mind," and that "there are few people who could accurately tell you what he has done." Nor do they alter the fact that most literary historians have, for reasons difficult to determine and probably impossible to justify, chosen to exclude Ford from their surveys.

Despite all that I have said Ford has in the past ten years come to receive more and more serious attention. Although he cannot yet command anything like a chapter to himself, he is more frequently mentioned and discussed at greater length by most recent historians of fiction.[30] Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., who in 1951 was one of the first modern critics to give Ford his due, takes as one of his major theses in Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry that too much emphasis has been placed on Hulme's importance as an influence on Pound and the Imagists and not nearly enough on Ford's.[31] Periodical articles on Ford are no longer rare; in fact they are now rather frequent. English Fiction in Transition has published both checklists of Ford's works and extensive bibliographies of writings about him, and David Dow Harvey has just

---

[30]See, for instance, Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958) and John McCormick, Catastrophe and Imagination: An Interpretation of the Recent English and American Novel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1957) in which Ford receives serious consideration. However, in the most recent history of the novel that I have seen, Lionel Stevenson, The English Novel: A Panorama (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), he gets the usual passing references as Conrad's collaborator and Lawrence's first publisher and a single paragraph for his own work.

[31]Coffman, pp. 114, 119, 138-39, 154-55, et passim.

completed a monumental bibliography of his own which lists 1,053 items.[32] Several doctoral dissertations have recently been done on him, and there is promise now of both a critical biography--badly needed to replace Douglas Goldring's woefully inadequate South Lodge and The Last Pre-Raphaelite[33]--and an edition of collected letters.[34]

Even the book trade seems to be awakening to the possibilities of Ford. Both The Good Soldier and Portraits from Life are now out in paperback editions.[35] The Parade's End tetralogy, "remaindered" though it was in Knopf's 1950 edition,[36] has recently

---

[32]Frank MacShane, "Ford Madox Ford: Collections of His Manuscripts, Periodical Publications by Him, Prefaces and Miscellaneous Contributions to Books by Others," EFT, IV, 2 (1961), 11-18; Helmut E. Gerber (ed.), "Ford Madox Ford: An Annotated Checklist of Writings About Him," EFT, I, 2 (Spring-Summer, 1958), 2-19; Frank MacShane, "Ford Madox Ford: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him: Supplement with Additions and Emendations by Helmut E. and Helga S. Gerber," EFT, IV, 2 (1961), 19-29. David Dow Harvey, Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1939: A Bibliography of Works and Criticism (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962). Also, Modern Fiction Studies has issued a special Ford Madox Ford number, IX, 1 (Spring, 1963), which includes a customary checklist of selected works and criticism.

[33]Douglas Goldring, South Lodge (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1943) and Douglas Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite (London: Macdonald & Co., 1948). See also his Reputations (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1920) for passing references to Ford in the English Review days.

[34]A critical biography by Frank MacShane and a collection of letters by Richard M. Ludwig were both reported in progress in EFT, I, 1 (Fall-Winter, 1957), 21. More recently, however, it has been widely announced that Arthur Mizener is to be Ford's official biographer with the consent and support of Janice Biala, who owns most of Ford's letters and other private papers.

[35]The Good Soldier (New York: Vintage Books, 1957); Portraits from Life ("A Gateway Edition"; Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960).

[36]Parade's End (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950).

been offered as a book club selection.[37] And in 1962 two volumes--including the whole of the Fifth Queen trilogy, The Good Soldier, and Selected Memoirs--of The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford, edited and introduced by Graham Greene, were released. Not much, perhaps; but there certainly seem to be signs of what--had he ever been popular before--we might style a Ford Revival.

I have purposely delayed discussion of the most important developments in Ford studies: the appearance within the last two years of Richard Cassell's Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels, John Meixner's Ford Madox Ford's Novels, and Paul Wiley's Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford. In a general way the common purpose of all three of these books is very similar to my own: that is, to assess Ford's value as a novelist against the background of his total canon. My own study had been under way well over a year before even Cassell's book--the first full length study of Ford[38]--was published, so that most of my critical judgments had been formed before it and the others became available to me. Each of these books is, in its own way, valuable; and each has in some measure caused me to revise some of my initial judgments. But I have found far more with which I disagree in these studies than with which I concur. In many instances I do not so much disagree with these critics as I feel that they have misplaced their emphases. My practice will be

---

[37] Mid-Century Book Society.

[38] Cassell was preceded of course by Kenneth Young, Ford Madox Ford ("Writers and Their Work, No. 74"; London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1956); but Young's forty-three page monograph is certainly less than a full length study.

to treat these books as I would any other secondary source: to acknowledge the insights they have given me and to dispute their conclusions when dispute promises to serve a valuable end.

It is my intention to present as clear and as full a view as I can reasonably compass of Ford Madox Ford's achievement and significance as a man of letters in general and as a novelist in particular. The emphasis will be on Ford as a theoretician and practitioner of the art of fiction, but I will, of course, draw heavily on his non-fiction in the construction of a frame of reference in which to examine his novels and his critical theory. With his poetry I will have little concern except when it helps to elucidate his fiction or when it bears particular biographical interest. Since the details of Ford's life are not generally known even by most specialists in modern fiction, I will provide as much biographical information as seems reasonable in a work not essentially biographical in intention.

There will be four major divisions. The first will be biographical, in a very broad sense of that term. I will try to suggest how his physical circumstances influenced his attitudes of mind and--since such relationships are always reciprocal--how the development of his ideas bore upon the sort of life he led. Since Ford's memoirs are notoriously undependable, I will whenever feasible accept his word only when it is corroborated in the writings of others. No such special problem appears in Ford's discursive writing, where, so far as I can determine, he is always absolutely sincere, and remarkably self-consistent. I will not discuss in

Chapter One Ford's literary theory, which will be reserved for expanded treatment in Chapter Two. Chapter Three will consist of a survey of Ford's pre-World War One fiction. Chapter Four will deal with his post-war fiction, including an intensive analysis of the Parade's End tetralogy. Parade's End is to have practically a chapter to itself for two reasons: first, because I think it is incontestably Ford's greatest achievement as a novelist and deserves careful examination; second, because such an examination will, I hope, offset to a degree the inherent weakness--that of spreading one's critical sense too thin--in a study which intends to remain reasonably brief and still consider the total canon of a writer as prolific as was Ford.

The divisions I propose will not be entirely exclusive; there will necessarily be a great deal of overlapping and obscuring of boundaries. In Chapter Three I will, while giving some attention to all the novels, necessarily be selective. The Good Soldier will, of course, receive close scrutiny. Others, The Portrait, for instance, will barely receive mention; still others, like The "Half Moon," for example, though hardly entitled to much consideration on the basis of intrinsic merit, will engage our interest because they are particularly illustrative of some aspect of Ford's literary theory or because they employ fictive techniques which Ford was later to use with more success. I will be especially anxious to remark devices and themes which appear in the earlier fiction that later function significantly in Parade's End.

The four chapters taken together are calculated finally, in Hicks' phrase, "accurately [to] tell you what he has done."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE FICTION OF FORD MADOX FORD: THEORY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER I

TRAINED FOR GENIUS

> Good letters, in the Flaubertian sense, were to him more important than king or country, wife or mistress.
>
> --Violet Hunt[1]

In a rare instance of understatement Ford says in Ancient Lights, "my childhood was in many respects a singular one."[2] It is one of the few assertions in his memoirs that no one has thought to contest. From his birth he was surrounded not only by relatives who devoted their lives to the arts but also by their friends and associates, who as a group included virtually every well known writer, painter, musician, and critic of the late nineteenth century. Along with his cousins, the children of Lucy and William Michael Rossetti, he was brought up, again to use his own words, in "the hothouse atmosphere of Pre-Raphaelism where I was being trained for a genius."[3] Although Ford insists that he had so little idea of "meddling with the arts" that he prepared himself for a career in the Indian Civil Service,[4] we may doubt that he seriously considered any course but following in the footsteps of his elders.

---

[1]Violet Hunt, I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926), p. 139.

[2]Ford Madox Hueffer, Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1911), p. 40.

[3]Ibid., p. 195.

[4]Ibid., p. 156.

They certainly took it as a foregone conclusion that "Fordie" would become an artist: his grandfather, who seems to have exercised the greatest single influence on his childhood attitudes of mind, not only encouraged him to become an artist but threatened to turn him out of his house should he "go in for any kind of commercial life."[5]

In order to provide a context in which to examine Ford's life it would seem desirable first of all to review briefly his family background. Ford Madox Brown, his maternal grandfather, by the time Ford was born in 1873, enjoyed a considerable reputation in London both as an artist and as a host. He had known very hard times and was to know them again before his death, but during the Seventies and Eighties, when Ford was growing up, he was prosperous and highly regarded. His house in Fitzroy Square was the regular gathering place of the Victorian Great, and it was there that Ford first encountered most of the towering figures that were to overshadow his early years.

Madox Brown had settled in England after studying painting in a number of European art centers, and had almost immediately attracted the attention and admiration of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who so admired the first painting of Brown's he saw that he promptly wrote to Brown and asked to become his pupil. Although they remained intimate friends until the ends of their lives, Rossetti deserted Brown's studio for Holman Hunt's after only a few months in the summer of 1848. It was at precisely this time that the scheme for the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was

---

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

being concocted by Hunt and Millais; Rossetti, of course, embraced the plan, becoming one of the original brethren, and it was through him that Brown met the members of the group.[6]

That Brown never became an official member of the short-lived brotherhood is certain. Whether he was asked and declined is another matter. Hunt claims that he was never asked. Ford insists in The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that he was offered and refused membership.[7] But Ford is characteristically inconsistent on the point, having declared ten years earlier in Ford Madox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work that he was "inclined to agree with Mr. Hunt that Madox Brown was never asked to become a P.R.B."[8] Although he never became a brother, he was identified by outsiders with the group, and when they founded The Germ late in 1849 as an official Pre-Raphaelite organ, he wrote for it and contributed a group of etchings.

By the time Brown had come to London he had already formulated his own aesthetic based on the realism he found in Holbein--an aesthetic not identical with but certainly sympathetic to the expressed Pre-Raphaelite creed. Both Brown and the brethren were in open revolt to the academicians who dominated the art of the first half of the century and who were concerned chiefly with dupli-

---

[6]In addition to mentioning it throughout his memoirs, Ford deals at length with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in three books: Ford Madox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896); Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, n.d. [1902]); The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Critical Monograph (London: Duckworth & Co., n.d. [1907]); all were published under the name Ford Madox Hueffer.

[7]P. 22.

[8]Pp. 64-65.

cating the effects achieved by the old masters. Both Brown and the brethren were almost fanatically dedicated to popularizing an art that derived not from the study of time-honored paintings but from the study of the life about them. Why he never became a member of the brotherhood is largely irrelevant to this study; what is important is that he made friends with the original seven--Holman Hunt, J. E. Millais, Thomas Woolner, Charles Collinson, F. G. Stephens, D. G. and William Michael Rossetti--and a number of outsiders who revolved around the group including Alfred William Hunt, Coventry Patmore, and John Ruskin. Of the friendships he formed among these artists and writers the two most significant and enduring were with the Rossettis. Dante Gabriel, as I have already indicated, remained a particularly intimate friend until his death in 1882; and William Michael became his son-in-law, marrying his older daughter Lucy.

In The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood Ford insists on the distinction between the Pre-Raphaelites and what he calls the Mediaeval-Aesthetic School.[9] Although Ford himself is guilty sometimes of confusing the two by using the term Pre-Raphaelite indiscriminately, the distinction is worth maintaining. Ford, in 1907 at least, decried the application of the term as a reference to anything but that conscious movement that was born in 1848 and died in 1853. It sought a mid-Victorian modernity, and, this is the central point, was not the product of a fin de siècle impulse. That the term Pre-Raphaelite came to be applied to the Aesthetes is understandable perhaps because they too represented a rebellion against academic

---

[9]pp. 7-11, et passim.

respectability and because they too centered in the singularly romantic person of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Moreover, the members of the more recent group did nothing to combat the confusion, finding a certain distinction in being identified with the earlier brotherhood, whose principles they admired in a superficial way. I insist on distinguishing between the two here because the aesthetic and critical creeds of the two movements were in fact poles apart, and when we come to deal with Ford's own aesthetic principles, we will observe that he approved in a general way of the earlier group and as a serious artist despised the Aesthetes.

Madox Brown's connection with the Aesthetes is easier to establish than his official position among the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren and is far more germane to our concern with Ford Madox Ford. For these were the celebrities who in the Seventies and Eighties roared through his grandfather's house and dominated his childhood. It was once again through D. G. Rossetti that Brown was to come into contact with the founders of a movement; this time he joined it. Rossetti had met Swinburne and Morris and Burne-Jones at Oxford, where he had gone to paint some frescoes while they were undergraduates there. When they came up to London, they sought him out and found Madox Brown as well. Brown's association with them was much more intimate and much more enduring than had been his earlier association with the original Pre-Raphaelites. Hunt and the others, excluding the Rossettis, had never considered him one of the inner circle, as much as they admired his work. With Swinburne and Morris it was different: Brown was one of the founding members of the firm of Morris and Co., and as I have already

pointed out, they used his house in Fitzroy Square as a regular gathering place. Moreover, where the original seven Pre-Raphaelite Brothers had all been born in the 1820's and were thus Brown's contemporaries, the Aesthetes were all a decade younger and accorded Brown, who had been through a number of philistine wars while they were still undergraduates, a measure of veneration as a senior artist.

Madox Brown's younger daughter, Catherine Enerly Brown, herself an artist of sufficient talent to have exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy while still a girl, married in August, 1872 not one of the Aesthetes but Dr. Franz Xavier Hueffer, music critic of the London Times. Ford's description of him (which tallies with biographical references by Douglas Goldring, Violet Hunt, and others) is as follows:

> He had a memory that was positively extraordinary and a gift of languages no less great. Thus whilst his native language was German he was for a long course of years musical critic to The [London] Times, London correspondent to the Frankfurter Zeitung, London musical correspondent to Le Menestral of Paris and the Tribuna of Rome. He was, I believe, in his day the greatest authority upon the troubadours and romance languages, and wrote original poems in modern Provençal; he was a favourite pupil of Schopenhauer and the bad boy of his family. He was doctor of philosophy of Göttingen University, at that time premier university of Germany, though he had made his studies at the inferior institution in Berlin.[10]

To this we may add that during his tenure as music critic of the Times--from the early Seventies until his death in 1889--he was the unflagging champion of the new music of Wagner and that he wrote a number of original opera libretti. In 1878 he published The

---

[10] Ancient Lights, p. 42.

Troubadours: A History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages, derived from his doctoral dissertation. He seems also to have founded a periodical called The New Quarterly Review, which, according to Ford, "caused him to lose a great deal of money and to make cordial enemies amongst the poets and literary men to whom he gave friendly lifts."[11]

What precisely prompted him to leave Germany and settle in England is not clear, but, of course, that need not concern us here. (Goldring suggests that Hueffer, being a pronounced agnostic, was not welcome in his own family, who were devout Catholics and of some prominence in their native Westphalia;[12] but Ford suggests elsewhere that Hueffer had incurred the disfavor of certain unnamed German authorities and made a tactical retreat from his homeland.)[13] Whatever the reason for his departure, he arrived in London supplied with letters of introduction to literary circles and settled first in Chelsea, "halfway between Rossetti and Carlyle, who were both... very much attached to him."[14] Through Rossetti he met Ford Madox Brown and, of course, his younger daughter Catherine, who married him in August, 1872 and presented him with a son, Ford Hermann Hueffer, on December 17, 1873.

Although references to his father are very scarce among Ford's memoirs, those that appear are invariably commendatory.

---

[11] Ancient Lights, p. 43.

[12] Douglas Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite (London: Macdonald & Co., 1948), p. 26.

[13] Ancient Lights, p. 43.

[14] Ibid., p. 44.

Francis Hueffer appeared to his son as the type of the Just Man, and although they were never very close, Ford credits him with having inspired his own love for Provence.[15] Ford also recalls that his father habitually referred to him as "the patient but exceedingly stupid donkey";[16] but except to report this and a very few family anecdotes Ford almost never mentions him. In It Was the Nightingale he admits:

> I never knew my father well. He died whilst I was still a child and, as I was sent to a boarding school at the age of eight and he, during the summer holidays, was usually at Bayreuth, I have hardly any memories of him.[17]

What I wish especially to note is that regardless of the nature of their personal relationship his father's professional position necessarily increased the number of the Victorian Great whom Ford encountered as a child.

Whether Ford the future artist profited from his unusual childhood is an eminently debatable matter. Apparently there were advantages and disadvantages. A childhood in which one can recall having offered a chair to Turgenev, having been to dinner with Tennyson and Browning, having seen in concert and having been introduced to Franz Liszt; a childhood in which the names Rossetti, Swinburne, William Morris, Burne-Jones, Ruskin were household words--such a childhood would seem on the surface to be entirely salutary to the development of the future artist.[18] But there were unfortunate

---

[15] Ford Madox Ford, It Was the Nightingale (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1933), pp. 138-39.

[16] Ancient Lights, p. ix. [17] p. 137.

[18] Ford records these memories in Ancient Lights. He repeats

consequences attendant upon being the grandson of Ford Madox Brown and the darling of a generation of artists for art's sake. Thus in Ancient Lights Ford laments:

> In those days, as a token of my Pre-Raphaelite origin, I wore very long golden hair, a suit of greenish-yellow corduroy velveteen with gold buttons, and two stockings of which the one was red and the other green. These garments were the curse of my young existence and the joy of every street-boy who saw me.[19]

Whether Ford is accurately describing here the details of a costume which actually existed and which he actually wore is irrelevant. In the dedication of Ancient Lights he warns his readers that "this book...is full of inaccuracies as to facts, but its accuracy as to impressions is absolute."[20] And, the impression that he conveys of his childhood includes a great number of painful experiences.

What is more important, though, than the ridicule of street-boys is the sense of his personal insignificance that constant company with the Victorian Great generated.

> To me [Ford wrote to his daughters] life was simply not worth living because of the existence of Carlyle, of Mr. Ruskin, of Mr. Holman Hunt, of Mr. Browning, or of the gentleman who built the Crystal Palace. These people were perpetually held up to me as standing upon unattainable heights, and at the same time I was perpetually being told that if I could not attain to these heights I might just as well not cumber the earth. What then was left for me? Nothing. Simply nothing.[21]

This theme--the fear and trembling inspired by the gods of his

---

most of them elsewhere, as he repeats throughout his writings often verbatim a great number of biographical details and a great many of his convictions. When indicating references for quotations or ideas, my practice will be to cite only a single source unless a definite purpose is served by recording more than one.

[19] p. 70.

[20] p. xv.

[21] Ancient Lights, p. xi.

youth--constantly recurs in Ford's memoirs; it would be a simple matter to list literally dozens of examples of its expression. In Thus To Revisit, published ten years after Ancient Lights, he puts the matter as follows:

> For myself I was always so dreadfully afraid of these brilliant ones that they taught me nothing. I had been cowed by the Pre-Raphaelite poets [more precisely Aesthetes] at the age of eight, so effectually that, when at nineteen I published my first novel, I blushed like a youth at his first ball if any one of the brilliant ones hove even distantly into sight.[22]

But it is clear that his own assertion, which I have italicized above, that he learned nothing from the Pre-Raphaelites is true only in a limited, perhaps technical, sense. For it was from them that he acquired the attitudes toward the significance of art that were to shape his entire life. It was from them that he acquired his sense of the sacred vocation of the artist, the idea that there are only two kinds of people in the world--those that practice the arts and those that are the stuff to fill graveyards.[23] He records in Ancient Lights:

> When I was a little boy, there still attached something of the priestly to all the functionaries of the Fine Arts or the humaner Letters. To be a poet like Mr. Swinburne, or like Mr. Rossetti, or even like Mr. Arthur O'Shaughnessy, had about it something tremendous, something rather awful.[24]

He would lament in the essay "The Passing of the Great Figure" not that there did not exist in the twentieth century anyone worthy of

---

[22] Ford Madox Hueffer, Thus To Revisit (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921), p. 200. Italics mine.

[23] Ancient Lights, p. 264. The idea and the phrase occur in most of Ford's non-fiction and in some of the novels.

[24] P. 95.

the adoration that Tennyson or Browning or Ruskin had known but that there was so little concern among the great mass of men for what was being done in the arts that the literary great figure had permanently passed from the earth.[25] He could recall personally that "there was a time--yes, really there was a time!--when the publication of a volume of poems was still an event--an event making great names and fortunes not merely mediocre."[26]

That Ford would declare late in his life that "the only human activity that has always been of extreme importance to the world is imaginative literature"[27] or that "the only occupation fitting for a proper man in these centuries is the writing of novels"--[28] that Ford would thus assert his dedication to art in such uncompromising terms seems to me directly attributable to the circumstances of his childhood. And it might be well to mention here (although I will develop the point at length later) that one of the reasons for Ford's passion for France and especially for Provence was that in those regions the poet was still held in reverence.[29]

---

[25]Ford Madox Hueffer, "The Passing of the Great Figure," The Critical Attitude (London: Duckworth & Co., 1911), pp. 111-30. This essay like the others in the book first appeared in the English Review.

[26]Ancient Lights, p. 38.

[27]Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1931), p. 181.

[28]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924), p. 175.

[29]This notion is so prevalent in Ford's thinking that it appears in almost every book he wrote. For a particularly striking example see Ford Madox Ford, Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), p. 237.

The corrolary to the conviction that the artist pursued a sacred calling was that he must unselfishly aid his fellow artists in the desire to further the cause of Art. Ford speaks of his "inherited flair for--a certain sense that is a duty to forward--the recognition of young men with . . . individualities, practising one or other of the arts."[30] It was this impulse largely that was responsible for his founding first the English Review and later the transatlantic review. And it was this impulse that led to his indefatigable efforts to help les jeunes of whatever movement seemed to him to be sincere. That Ford labored mightily on behalf of other writers is amply attested to by the encomiums I have already quoted in my preface. To those we might add Samuel Putnam's testimonial:

> I have never known a man of letters who was more genuinely eager to be helpful to newcomers with any promise whatsoever, or who had more of a passion for literature as a great and fine art and was more desirous of furthering it through the uncovering of new talent;[31]

and George Stevens':

> What particularly strikes me as I think over the career of Ford Madox Ford is his enormous value as a catalytic agent in the production of contemporary literature;[32]

and Herbert Gorman's description of him as:

> "the good soldier" of literature, the understanding officer who encourages, suggests, and pushes his men forward.[33]

---

[30] Thus To Revisit, p. 136.

[31] Samuel Putnam, Paris Was Our Mistress (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 122.

[32] George Stevens, "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7 (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942), p. 487.

[33] Herbert Gorman, "Ford Madox Ford, A Portrait in Impressions," Bookman (N.Y.), LXVII (March, 1928), 58.

Ford had also observed as a child the beneficial results for the individual artist and for the great cause of Art of artistic fellowships. The impact of a Movement on the apathy of the body politic is far greater than that which an individual can ever hope to achieve. As he puts it:

> A solitary thinker will take two aeons to make his voice heard: seven working in concert will forty-nine times shorten the process. And Movements make for friendships, enthusiasms, self-sacrifice, mutual aid--all fine things![34]

Moreover, it is an incalculable advantage to the individual artist to be able to discuss the aims and techniques of his art with his fellows. Indeed, to Ford such discussion was a necessary condition for the progress of the arts. As he saw it, the absence in England of a meaningful tradition in the novel was the result of the failure of the English man of letters to view his art seriously enough to discuss its possibilities and then to force its claims upon the public.

> For it is one of the saddening things in Anglo-Saxon life that any sort of union for an aesthetic or for an intellectual purpose seems to be an impossibility. Anglo-Saxon writers as a rule sit in the British Islands each on his little hill surrounded each by his satellites, moodily jealous of the fame of each of his rivals, incapable of realizing that the strength of several men together is very much stronger than the combined strengths of the same number of men acting apart.[35]

In the Paris of Flaubert and Maupassant and Turgenev it had been different; there aims and techniques had been discussed endlessly, and there modern fiction had been born. For, "Paris, as should never be forgotten, is sufficiently south for men to be able to sit

---

[34] Thus To Revisit, p. 64.

[35] Ancient Lights, p. 23.

in companies out of doors and speculate aloud or think. That is a condition without which arts and civilization are impossible."[36]

Judging from the statements of those who knew him as well as from what he tells us himself, Ford never tired of discussing literature, especially the subtleties of technique. And, it is interesting in this connection to observe that he rarely found sympathetic ears among specifically English writers. As a young man his literary companions were the four "foreigners"--three Americans and a Pole--James, Crane, Hudson, Conrad. Later he was attracted to young Americans, especially young mid-Westerners, who shared his concern for what he called the "how" of literature.[37] H. G. Wells, who represented for Ford the typical English man of letters with all his sins against art and to whom he referred scornfully as the Eminent Novelist, offers in his autobiography a revealing statement of the contrast between his own attitudes and those which Ford held:

> All this talk that I had with Conrad and Hueffer and James about the just word, the perfect expression, about this or that being "written" or not written, bothered me, set me interrogating myself, threw me into a heart-searching defensive attitude. I will not pretend that I got it all clear all at once, that I was not deflected by their criticisms and that I did not fluctuate and make attempts to come up to their unsystematized, mysterious and elusive standards. But in the end I revolted altogether and refused to play their game. "I am a journalist," I declared, "I refuse to play the 'artist.' If sometimes I am

---

[36] Provence, p. 233.

[37] He remarks in several places that it is characteristic of American writers, as opposed to English, to care about technique. See, for instance, Thus To Revisit, p. 69. This may explain in part the frequency of his associations with American and the rarity of his connections with British writers of the younger generation.

> an artist it is a freak of the gods. I am journalist all the time and what I write goes now--and will presently die."[38]

It was during these years, from about 1897 to about 1904, that Ford, imitating the brilliant ones who used to gather at Fitzroy Square, talked endlessly about literature to James and Conrad and Crane and formulated the principles of his art. He never stopped talking about techniques and purposes until he died.

I will discuss the collaboration with Conrad later, but it is worth remarking here that Ford found the constant association with a dedicated writer and the opportunity for endless debate on the "how" of fiction the most valuable chapter in his development as a writer. He was under no illusion that the collaboration had produced any great issue.

> But [he insisted] that the labour itself was worth while for us I have no doubt at all. I at least learned the greater part of what I know of the technical side of writing during the process, and Conrad certainly wrote with greater ease after the book [Romance] had been in progress some while.[39]

His singular childhood, then, seems to have taught him more than he was willing to own. That "the hothouse atmosphere of Pre-Raphaelism" was stifling, that the presence of the Victorian Great with their ponderous moralisms was oppressive, that being "trained for a genius" had its painful aspects--these things are incontestable. But it was under these conditions and by these men that Ford was inspired with the sense of selfless dedication to a sacred calling that directed his life as an artist.

---

[38] H. G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), pp. 531-32.

[39] Return to Yesterday, p. 192.

Another attitude that he "imbibed from my earliest years" was a profound contempt for academicism, for "what is called in Germany Philologie."[40] He does not deprecate scholarship as such; he sees it as a necessary first step to proper understanding. As an end in itself, however, it is worse than useless; it is tyrannous. "The philologist may possibly be a good servant; he is certainly the worst imaginable master."[41] At the close of his life he was to define his position more precisely:

> It is of course absurd to decry scholarship. Accuracy of mind and a certain erudition are as necessary to the imaginative writer as is native genius. But I was born in the days of the full desert breath of the terrible commercial scholarship of Victorian times. In these days it was sufficient to have prepared--say in Goettingen [sic]--a pamphlet about "Shorthand in the Days of Ben Jonson," "Shakespeare's Insomnia, Its Cause and Cure" or "A Tabulation of the Use of Until as Against That of Till in Piers Plowman"--and you were at once accorded the right to improve the prose of Daudet, correct the use of similes by Shakespeare and bury to the extent of a page to a line the poems of Chaucer and Arnaut Daniel beneath your intolerable annotations.[42]

He hated unqualifiedly the schoolmasters who, by making a chore instead of a pleasure of the reading of literature, had turned his friend Marwood irrevocably from the beauties of Shakespeare. Moreover, Ford declaimed, Marwood's was not a special case:

> The ana that our "English" Masters, our University Professors, and our Typical Critics, force upon our children, our undergraduates, and our adults, have killed the taste, have engendered a nearly vomiting distaste, for Poetry in these nations.[43]

---

[40] Ford Madox Hueffer, When Blood Is Their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1915), pp. vii; 263.

[41] Ibid., p. 264.

[42] Provence, p. 222.

[43] Thus To Revisit, p. 221.

Obviously for Ford learning was never properly an end in itself; it must be viewed not as a "master" but as a "servant" to aid one in the understanding of his fellows and in the appreciation of beautiful things:

> The first province of philosophy is to throw a light upon life; the first province of an historian is to throw a light upon how men act in great masses; the first province of learning is to render the study of beautiful things attractive and practicable for proper men. But all these things have secondary and higher provinces. The higher province of philosophy is to lead the individual man to pass better and saner lives; the higher province of an historian is to lead those large bodies of men which are called nations so to learn from the experience of the past that in the future they may avoid what in the past were national crimes; and the higher province of learning, which is the highest province of all and the noblest function of humanity, is so to direct the study of beautiful things of the past and the present that the future may be filled with more and always more beauties. The true and really high function of our professors is to teach us so to read the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes that more such poems may be written by our children for our children even to the furthest generations. And until a civilisation shall arise whose professors can do this no civilisation has a right to claim world-dominance.[44]

Ford's education, like so many aspects of his life, was highly irregular; and although he was astonishingly erudite, the formal instruction he received was rather scanty. He was, however, extremely fortunate in the informal instruction that he received at home as a child. By the time he was sent to boarding school at the age of eight he had already learned French from his grandfather and German from his father. He asserts in <u>When Blood Is Their Argument</u> that "for as long as I can remember . . . I have been accustomed to think indifferently in French, in German, or in English."[45]

---

[44] <u>When Blood Is Their Argument</u>, p. xviii.

[45] P. viii.

From his aunt Lucy Rossetti he received instruction in the classics from the time he could speak. Thus armed with French, German, some Latin and Greek, and probably some Provençal and Italian he was sent to Praetoria House in Folkestone to be educated. He remained there for about eight years; upon the death of his father in 1889 he was withdrawn, for reasons not entirely clear. He returned to London and attended University College School as a day student for a year. At various times he claimed also to have attended Westminster, Eton, London University, the Sorbonne, the University of Bonn. According to Douglas Goldring, however, the eight years at Praetoria House and the year at University College School constituted the whole of his formal education;[46] my own research has turned up nothing to corroborate Ford's claims or to cast doubt on Goldring's denial.

Ford's lack of formal instruction certainly did not prevent him amassing a great deal of information; he was, in fact, despite his repeated attacks on academicians, very proud of his learning and enjoyed playing the pedant, a role in which he was assisted by an incredibly retentive memory.[47] In addition to a fluency in most modern languages and a familiarity with a number of literatures he had a scholar's knowledge of Latin. His performances in _When Blood Is Their Argument_[48] and _Between St. Dennis and St. George_[49]

---

[46] _The Last Pre-Raphaelite_, p. 33.

[47] It is interesting to note in the light of his vociferous anti-academicism that after receiving an honorary degree from Olivet College in 1937, Ford signed his work for the short remainder of his life with D. Litt. appended.

[48] This was the first of his propaganda books written in 1915.

[49] Ford Madox Hueffer, _Between St. Dennis and St. George: A_

are brilliant displays of a thorough understanding of modern European history and politics. And, the ambitiously titled The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our Own[50] is, among other things, a tour de force of historical criticism.

It was at Praetoria House that he met Miss Elsie Martindale, the daughter of the eminent chemist Dr. William Martindale. (The school was theoretically a boys' school, but the directors, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Praetorius, had permitted a few of their female pupils to follow them from the girls' school they had formerly run in London's West End.) When Elsie was still seventeen and Ford only twenty, they eloped according to a plan masterminded by Ford Madox Brown and were married in Gloucester on May 17, 1894. Once the marriage had become a fait accompli, the Martindales, whose objections to it were based exclusively on the couple's extreme youth, accepted the situation and helped them to settle into a cottage in Kent. The ten years that followed constituted what was in many ways the happiest period in Ford's life.

Ford, then, left London in 1894, and he did not return except for brief excursions for almost ten years. By the time he did return in 1904, he had come of age as a man of letters. For it was during this decade that he came into contact with the men who were permanently to influence his literary theory, and it was during this decade that he attained to his mastery as a writer of prose. These were the happy and fruitful years of his association

---

Sketch of Three Civilisations (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915).

[50]Ford Madox Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our Own (New York: The Dial Press, 1938).

with Stephen Crane, Henry James, W. H. Hudson, Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, and pre-eminently with Joseph Conrad.

This is not to say that he did not think of himself as a writer before he left London. Indeed, he had already published three volumes of children's stories, some rather unprepossessing verse, and a very bad first novel.[51] While there are promising passages among them, none is the production of a highly conscious artist, and none merits very serious attention for its intrinsic value. Even his biography of Ford Madox Brown, which was published in 1896, after he left London but before he met Crane and Conrad and the others, is unimpressive.[52] It is little more than a biographical tribute to a man who certainly deserved one. Beside Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance,[53] which Ford wrote nearly thirty years later, it is pedestrian, barely readable.

Even before Crane and Conrad came along, it was a happy time for Ford. He took to gardening and other country pursuits, spending his time almost exclusively in the company of farmers and

---

[51]The volumes of fairy tales were The Brown Owl (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), The Feather (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), The Queen Who Flew (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894); the novel was The Shifting of the Fire (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892). All four were published under the name Ford Madox Hueffer. The volume of verse, The Questions at the Well (London: Digby & Co., 1893), appeared under the pseudonym Fenil Haig.

[52]Ford Madox Brown. But we should note that it is remarkably well documented.

[53]Such a contrast is, however, not entirely fair since Ford states in his preface to the Conrad book that he is deliberately setting out to be entertaining and will use all of the tricks of the novelist even if the result is a loss of factual accuracy. This does not, of course, vitiate my point that the later book is a better book.

farm laborers; and he thrived on it. In light of his later belief that the world could be saved for decency only by means of a return to the frame of mind of the small producer,[54] this is an interesting period in his life. He was at the time sympathetic to a William Morris back-to-the-earth brand of Socialism, and these years in Bonnington, the North Downs, and Winchelsea provided his first real opportunity to engage in country living. He was soon to abandon the gospel of William Morris, but he never lost his love for small gardening and peasant field workers.

As late as 1931, having long since deserted England for Provence, in Return to Yesterday he recalled with pleasure his years in Kent and the people he had known there:

> There were Meary Walker and Meary Spratt and Ragged Ass Wilson and Farmer Finn of Bonnington Court Lodge and Parson Cameron and Mus Rainer of the Corner and Mus Diamond who still wore a smock frock and a white beaver top hat and Shaking Ben who had been ruined by the bad gels of Rye. And there were a whole countryside more.[55]

His favorite among them was Meary Walker, of whom he said in several books that "this was the wisest and upon the whole the most estimable human being that I ever knew at all well."[56] But he loved them also in the aggregate:

> Upon the whole . . . those brown, battered men and women of an obscure Kentish countryside come back to me as the best English people I ever knew. I do not think that, except for the parson and the grocer, any one of them could read or write but

---

[54]This is another idea that occurs in a number of books. See especially Provence and Great Trade Route (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937) where in both cases it is the book's major thesis.

[55]Pp. 139-40.

[56]Return to Yesterday, p. 143.

> I do not believe that one of them ever betrayed either me or even each other. If, as I undoubtedly do, I love England with a deep love, though I grow daily more alien to the Englishman, it is because of them.[57]

This seems also to have been a period of great domestic tranquility--a rare thing in the life of Ford Madox Ford. He was on very good terms with the Martindales and very happy with his wife. He was never to have the son he always wanted, but he did have two daughters with Elsie--Christina, who was born in 1897, and Katharine, who was born in 1900--to whom he was extremely devoted.

Largely because he was himself contemptuous of facts and took little trouble to record precise dates in his many volumes of memoirs, the chronology of Ford's life is often difficult to establish. It seems clear, though, that he met first Stephen Crane and then Conrad late in 1897. Both were introduced to him by Edward Garnett at Limpsfield, where Ford lived briefly between long stretches of inhabiting Pent Farm. By the autumn of 1898 he had agreed to collaborate with Conrad, and it was while they were struggling with Romance at Pent Farm that W. H. Hudson turned up to pay his respects to Conrad. This must have occurred some time in 1899, shortly before Ford and Conrad paid their first visit to Henry James, then resident at Rye.

With Crane installed at Brede Place, James at Rye, Hudson at New Romney, and Conrad at the Pent all within easy distance of one another Ford enjoyed for a short time in the south of England the community of letters he desired above all things. While H. G.

---

[57] Ibid., p. 141.

Wells, according to Ford, "was conscious of a ring of foreign conspirators plotting against British letters at no great distance from his residence, Spade House, Sandgate,"[58] Ford saw in them and their work the one great hope for English literature. In Return to Yesterday, he declares:

> Taken together they were, those four, all gods for me. They formed, when I was a boy, my sure hope in the eternity of good letters. They do still.[59]

And, though drawing a very different conclusion from the premise, for once he agrees with Wells that England had been invaded by foreign agents:

> For, indeed, those four men--three Americans and one Pole--lit in those days in England a beacon that posterity shall not easily let die. You have only got to consider how empty, how lacking a nucleus, English literature would today [1931] be if they had never lived, to see how discerning were Mr. Wells' views of that foreign penetration at the most vulnerable point of England's shores.[60]

It is not the province of a brief biographical sketch such as this to deal in detail with the nature of the Ford-Conrad collaboration, but there are aspects of their association which ought here to be noted if we are to gain anything approaching a whole picture of Ford's interests and activities during his years in the south of England. (The literary theory he and Conrad evolved will be described in Chapter II; the novels they produced will be discussed in Chapter III.)

It used to be fashionable, especially among admirers of Conrad, to take the view that Ford was little more than Conrad's amanuensis, and, what is more, paid for the privilege. As John Hope

---

[58] Ibid., p. 20. [59] Ibid., pp. 31-32. [60] Ibid., p. 21.

Morey puts the case, "ever since the publication in 1924 of A Personal Remembrance, people have viewed Ford as an egotistical parasite who chose to feed on Conrad's reputation."[61] Such a view is no longer tenable. It is clear now that Conrad, not Ford, first suggested the idea of a collaboration, that Ford not only contributed the plots of The Inheritors and Romance but also gave to Conrad the plot for the short story "Amy Foster" and wrote large chunks of Nostromo.[62] That Ford profited from the joint undertaking is unquestionable; what is often overlooked is that Conrad too profited immensely.

In Thus To Revisit Ford claims that Conrad wrote to him "about Michaelmas, 1897," asking him to collaborate.[63] Goldring supports the claim and substantiates it with a passage from an apologetic letter written by Conrad to Ford in November, 1899 in which he says:

> The proposal (for collaboration) certainly came from me under a false impression of my power of work.[64]

In the spring of 1902 Conrad wrote: "I miss collaboration in a most ridiculous manner. I hope you don't intend dropping me altogether."[65] H. G. Wells, who, according to Ford,[66] begged him

---

[61] John Hope Morey, "Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford: A Study in Collaboration" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of English, Cornell University, 1960), Dissertation Abstracts, XXI (1960), 1568.

[62] Ibid.

[63] P. 27.

[64] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 70; the parenthesis is Goldring's.

[65] Ibid., p. 77.

[66] Joseph Conrad, p. 51.

not to ruin Conrad's "wonderful Oriental style" by meddling, admitted:

> I think Conrad owed a very great deal to their early association; Hueffer helped greatly to "English" him and his idiom, threw remarkable lights on the English literary world for him, collaborated with him on two occasions, and conversed interminably with him about the precise word and about perfection in writing.[67]

Even Jessie Conrad, who started the fashion of deprecating Ford, saw that "in those days Conrad found F.M.H. a mental stimulus," although she goes on to say that "he [Ford] was not the literary godfather he claims to have been at any time."[68]

That Ford claimed to have been Conrad's literary godfather is impossible to document. His references to Conrad are invariably deferential, and there is little doubt that Ford regarded him on the whole as the vastly superior writer.[69] Jessie Conrad, however, who detested Ford personally, violently attacked Joseph Conrad when it appeared in 1924 almost immediately after Conrad's death. Against her view of the book we may place that of Christopher Morley, who said in 1928:

> Ford's memoir of Conrad (three years ago) was one of the most thrillingly intelligent tributes ever paid to a great writer, I always listen with most attentive ears when Mr. Ford has anything to say about his friend and collaborator;[70]

---

[67] Experiment in Autobiography, p. 531.

[68] Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad As I Knew Him (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), p. 113.

[69] Ford's tone whenever he wrote about Conrad was, I think, deferential. See especially the chapter "Working with Conrad" in Return to Yesterday, pp. 190-207.

[70] Christopher Morley, "A Note on Conrad," Saturday Review of Literature (January 14, 1928), p. 519.

and that of H. L. Mencken:

> His [Ford's] book is affected and irritating, but full of valuable information. No matter how violently the Widow Conrad protests in her eccentric English it will be read with joy and profit by all parties at interest. It is packed with little shrewdnesses, and it is immensely amusing.[71]

Ford suggests that that which brought them together was "a devotion to Flaubert and Maupassant."[72] Conrad had stated his aesthetic in the famous preface to The Nigger of "The Narcissus" before he and Ford met, and it was a creed to which Ford was happy to subscribe:

> That message, that the province of written art is above all things to make you see, was given before we met: it was because that same belief was previously and so profoundly held by the writer that we could work for so long together. We had the same aims and we had all the time the same aims. Our attributes were no doubt different. The writer probably knew more about words, but Conrad had certainly an infinitely greater hold over the architectonics of the novel, over the way a story should be built up so that its interest progresses and grows up to the last word.[73]

Their procedure was to discuss the problems inherent in the rendering of a given scene, to have one of them write it, then to discuss it again and revise until they were both satisfied. This procedure was applied not only to the official collaborations but also to the independent work that each was pursuing. They wrote, read to one another, debated, and revised. It was not perhaps a very efficient method of operation, but it resulted in a great deal of very good prose. In Joseph Conrad Ford describes the

---

[71] H. L. Mencken, "The Conrad Wake," The American Mercury, IV (April, 1925), 506.

[72] Joseph Conrad, p. 36.

[73] Ibid., pp. 168-69.

process:

> We once discussed for a long time whether Conrad should write of a certain character's oaken resolution. As a picturesque adjective "oaken" has its attractions. You imagine a foursquare, lumpish fellow, inarticulate and apt to be mulish, but of good conscience. The writer must obviously have suggested the adjective. We turned it down after a good deal of discussion, the writer being against, Conrad for, its use. Conrad liked its picturesqueness and was always apt to be polite to the writer's suggestions. He could afford to be. We decided for "stolidity" which is more quiet in the phrase. Eventually the whole sentence went. . . . The story was Conrad's Gaspar Ruiz. That is a fairly exact specimen of the way we worked during many years.[74]

And in Thus To Revisit he sums up the significance of the enterprise:

> During all those years--for many years that seemed to pass very slowly--Mr. Conrad and I, ostensibly collaborating, discussed nothing else [but "how best to treat a given subject"]. Buried deep in rural greennesses we used to ask each other how, exactly, such and such an effect of light and shade should be reproduced in very simple words. We read nothing but French: you might say it was Flaubert, Flaubert, Flaubert all the way. Occasionally we should become enthusiastic over a phrase of Stephen Crane's, such as, "the waves were barbarous and abrupt." Occasionally we would go together and have tea with Henry James at Rye. I think that I was most preoccupied with the simple expression of fine shades; Mr. Conrad's unceasing search was for a New Form for the Novel, mine for a non-literary vocabulary. And I do not believe that there were in the England of those days any two other people whose whole minds and whose unceasing endeavours were so absolutely given to that one problem of expression between man and man which is the end of all conscious literary art. I do not mean to say that no other writers tried to tell stories well, or that none told them better; merely that, as far as I know, at a time when devotion to exact expression or to the architectonics of art was regarded either as folly or as subversive of morality, no two other writers, functioning together, were consciously and so exclusively preoccupied with those dangerous topics.[75]

Though he liked to repeat Henry James' alleged description of him as "le jeune homme modeste,"[76] and though, as we have seen,

---

[74] P. 105. [75] Pp. 39-40.

[76] He records this description of him in several places. See, for instance, Thus To Revisit, p. 115.

in retrospect he thought of his three Americans and one Pole as gods, it is not to be supposed either that he was retiring or that he sat silently at the feet of his gods. On the contrary, he seems to have been rather overbearing and extremely smug in his role of savior of the arts. H. G. Wells, in his Experiment in Autobiography, drew him as follows:

> He [Conrad] came into my ken in association with Ford Madox Hueffer and they remain together, contrasted and inseparable, in my memory. Ford is a long blond with a drawling manner, the very spit of his [younger] brother Oliver, and oddly resembling George Moore the novelist in pose and person. What he is really or if he is really, nobody knows now and he least of all; he has become [1934] a great system of assumed personas and dramatized selves. His brain is an exceptionally good one and when he first came along, he had cast himself for the role of a very gifted scion of the Pre-Raphaelite stem, given over to artistic purposes and a little undecided between music, poetry, criticism, The Novel, Thoreau-istic horticulture and the simple appreciation of life.[77]

Stephen Crane, in a letter that Ford delighted in quoting, wrote to one of his friends:

> You must not be offended by Mr. Hueffer's manner. He patronizes Mr. James. He patronizes Mr. Conrad. Of course he patronizes me and he will patronize Almighty God when they meet, but God will get used to it, for Hueffer is all right.[78]

He complained that Henry James, who apparently liked his company until the Violet Hunt scandal put Ford in bad odor with "good people," never took him seriously. Nonetheless, he took pride in having sat for the figure of Merton Densher in The Wings of the Dove and several times quoted James' description of that character:

---

[77] Pp. 526-27.

[78] Quoted in Ford Madox Ford, Portraits from Life ("A Gateway Edition"; Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), p. 45. Also appears in Joseph Conrad, p. 232 and several other places.

> He was a longish, leanish, fairish young Englishman, not unamenable on certain sides to classification--as for instance being a gentleman, by being specifically one of the educated, one of the generally sound and generally civil; yet, though to that degree neither extraordinary nor abnormal, he would have failed to play straight into an observer's hands. He was young for the House of Commons; he was loose for the Army. He was refined, as might have been said, for the City and, quite apart from the cut of his cloth, sceptical, it might have been felt for the Church. On the other hand he was credulous for diplomacy, or perhaps for science, while he was perhaps at the same time too much in his real senses for poetry and yet too little in them for art. . . . The difficulty with Densher was that he looked vague without looking weak--idle without looking empty. It was the accident possibly of his long legs which were apt to stretch themselves; of his straight hair and well-shaped head, never, the latter neatly smooth and apt into the bargain . . . to throw itself suddenly back and, supported behind by his uplifted arms and interlocked hands, place him for unconscionable periods in communinn with the ceiling, the treetops, the sky. . . .[79]

In 1903 Ford's more or less happy existence was interrupted by a prolonged period of depression and poor health. In Return to Yesterday he gives an amusing account of it, which account, Goldring assures us, is corroborated in its general outlines by the letters of William Rossetti written at the time.[80] It is also corroborated by a number of letters written by John Galsworthy and by Conrad. As Ford puts it himself:

> From 1903 to 1906 illness removed me from most activities. The illness was purely imaginary; that made it none the better. It was enhanced by wickedly unskilful doctoring. In those days I wandered from nerve cure to nerve cure, all over England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium--but mostly in Germany. I suffered from what was diagnosed as agoraphobia and intense depression. I had nothing specific to be depressed about. But the memory of those years is one of uninterrupted mental agony. Nothing marks them off one from the other. They were lost years.[81]

---

[79] Quoted by Ford in Portraits, pp. 26-27.

[80] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 114.

[81] Return to Yesterday, p. 266.

He goes on to say that during those three years he went to nineteen specialists, "all of them famous in their nations and some world famous."[82] He was subjected to a great variety of more or less lunatic treatments none of which did him any good. Those were the days of the extreme infancy of Freudian psychology, and Ford very entertainingly recounts a number of interviews, imaginary interviews perhaps, with enthusiastic but woefully inept disciples of the Viennese master. He concludes:

> The result of the efforts of these specialists was to reduce me in weight to nine stone two--128 lbs. I am exactly six foot in height. When I went to New York next year the Herald had a caricature of me subscribed as: The Animated Match.[83]

He was finally cured, again according to his own account, by a certain Dr. Tebbs, a London physician to whom Conrad referred him.[84] Tebbs simply told him that he probably would be dead in a month in any event and so gave him permission to finish his book on Holbein, ordering him to return to Winchelsea to work on it. The immersion in work almost immediately produced the desired effect: his brooding ceased; his appetite returned; the depression and fatigue vanished.

Before his condition became serious enough to send him to the watering places of the continent in search of a cure, Ford had moved his family from the country to a house on London's Campden Hill. It is possible that the move was entirely unconnected with his illness, but since it came in the spring of 1904, after he had

---

[82] Ibid., p. 269.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., pp. 271-73.

been having periods of depression for almost a year, it seems likely that his intention was to gain easy access to London nerve specialists. This seems especially probable since the whole period of his illness was marked by constant movement between London and the country, between England and the continent. He never remained long in one place, presumably because no one place provided significant relief for his suffering. Even when in England, he was equally apt to be either in London or in the country. Thus, there is a letter from Conrad dated May 9, 1904 addressed to him at Pent Farm,[85] although he had only recently taken the house on Campden Hill.

Apparently by 1905 Ford had been having at least occasional productive periods. In 1905 he published not only the book on Holbein[86] but also The Soul of London[87] and The Benefactor,[88] his first independently written novel since his maiden effort in The Shifting of the Fire. In a letter to Edward Garnett dated May 8, 1905 John Galsworthy expresses great satisfaction that The Soul of London has been "boomed" and hopes that "this success may go a long way to putting him definitely on his feet."[89] Five days later on May 13th Galsworthy, again in a letter to Garnett, repeats his delight at the

---

[85] Quoted in The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 124.

[86] Ford Madox Hueffer, Hans Holbein the Younger: A Critical Monograph (London: Duckworth & Co., n.d. [1905]).

[87] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Soul of London (London: Alston Rivers, 1905).

[88] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Benefactor (London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1905).

[89] Letters from John Galsworthy, 1900-1932, ed. and intro. by Edward Garnett (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 59.

success of the book and his concern for Ford's health: "The news you give of Hueffer is really fine--may it be more than a passing boom, and cheer him into perfect health again."[90] The success of the book, however, seems to have been unable to prevent a relapse, for when we find Galsworthy writing to Garnett again two months later, it is to report that "poor Ford is staying with his doctor in London, as he keeps losing weight."[91]

Exactly when Ford is to be considered completely cured is hard to determine. Judging by externals, we should probably place the time of total recovery in the winter of 1905-1906. In 1906 he published The Fifth Queen[92] (the first volume of his Tudor trilogy) as well as The Heart of the Country[93] (the second volume of the England and the English trilogy) and Christina's Fairy Book[94] (a series of tales he created for his first daughter). The first two at least are significant achievements and testify to a return of his literary powers. At any rate, when he set sail for his first trip to the United States in July 1906, the sole vestige of his illness was his grotesquely underweight condition.

Before abandoning the subject of Ford's nervous breakdown, we ought to remark that it was during his search for a cure that

---

[90] Ibid., p. 62.

[91] Ibid., p. 94.

[92] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Fifth Queen (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906).

[93] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Heart of the Country (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906).

[94] Ford Madox Hueffer, Christina's Fairy Book (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906).

he gained a first hand knowledge of European health resorts. This experience was turned to good purpose ten years later in his rendering of the setting for the major portion of The Good Soldier. In Return to Yesterday he singles out for particular notice "two adorably old maidish maiden ladies from Stamford, Conn."[95] named Hurlbird, whom he met at the Rhineland Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt. They were translated, without so much as a change of name, into the Misses Hurlbird of The Good Soldier--Florence's maiden aunts.

In 1904 a domestic event wholly unrelated to his illness took place which must have given Ford great satisfaction at the time but was to have disagreeable consequences for him a few years later. His daughters became members of the Roman Catholic Church. Elsie Hueffer was not and never became a Catholic, but, as we shall see, when Ford's involvement with Violet Hunt became a matter of public scandal, she cast herself as the injured wife who as the mother of Catholic children found divorce unthinkable.[96] She pictured Ford as a false brute who blithely compromised his daughters, his wife, and his own salvation. Ford's own religious convictions are difficult to define. He remained what he called a Sentimental Catholic to his death, and certainly a great number of his novels deal with "Catholic themes." His religion, however, seems never to have been very important to him in any but superficial ways. He had not, as

---

[95] P. 270.

[96] Ford never comments himself upon his difficulties with his wife. But Violet Hunt devotes large sections of I Have This to Say to Ford's troubles and her own law suits with Elsie Hueffer. Douglas Goldring also deals at length with the imbroglio in both The Last Pre-Raphaelite and South Lodge (London: Constable & Co.,Ltd., 1943).

he falsely claimed in It Was the Nightingale, had an "orthodox Roman Catholic" upbringing;[97] but he had entered the Church when he was eighteen, about two years after his father's death. Goldring suggests that it was his mother's idea that he do so in order to win the favor of wealthy paternal relatives. The conjecture gains support from Ford's having assumed at his christening the names Joseph and Leopold, "presumably to flatter rich uncles."[98]

Ford returned from the United States fired with a new idea: that he ought to have a periodical of his own. He had been writing a column for the literary supplement to Northcliffe's Daily Mail, and Northcliffe had offered to put him in charge of a new publication. During his visit to America S. S. McClure had made him a similar offer. Neither proposal was precisely to Ford's liking, primarily because neither would have given him a very free hand. But they had certainly aroused desires to sit behind an editor's desk. Here is how Ford describes his feelings in 1907:

> There entered then into me the itch of trying to meddle in English literary affairs. The old literary gang of the Athenaeum-Spectator-Heavy Artillery order was slowly decaying. Younger lions were not only roaring but making carnage of their predecessors. Mr. Wells was then growing a formidable mane, Arnold Bennett if not widely known was at least known to and admired by me. Mr. Wells had given me Bennett's first novel--A Man From The North. Experimenting in forms kept Conrad still young. Henry James was still "young James" for my uncle William Rossetti and hardly known of by the general public. George Meredith and Thomas Hardy had come into their own only very little before, Mr. George Moore was being forgotten as he was always being forgotten, Mr. Yeats was known as having written the Isle of Innisfree. It seemed to me that if that nucleus of writers could be got together with what of undiscovered talent the country might hold a Movement might be started. I had one or two things I wanted to say. They were about the technical side of novel writing. But mostly I desired to give the

---

[97] P. 115. [98] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, pp. 51-52.

> writers of whom I have spoken as it were a rostrum. It was with that idea that I had returned from America.[99]

Ford first discussed the venture with H. G. Wells, who was much interested in finding an outlet for serial publication of Tono-Bungay and was sympathetic to the notion of founding a new periodical.[100] Nothing concrete, however, came of these talks, and Ford began to look elsewhere for encouragement and financial backing. He finally turned to his friend Arthur Marwood, who was both interested in furthering the arts and able to afford a financial loss. But Marwood, who like Wells favored the idea of a new literary journal, was, again like Wells, slow to act in bringing it to life. What prompted Marwood at last to act was outrage. According to Ford his normally placid Yorkshire friend burst in upon him one day in a great rage and exclaimed:

> "The Cornhill has refused to print Thomas Hardy's last poem!" And as a corollary: "We must start that Review at once to print it."[101]

The poem was "A Sunday Morning Tragedy," and when the first issue of the English Review saw the light in December, 1908, it was this poem with which it opened.

An apartment "over a poulterer's and fishmonger's combined"[102] at 84 Holland Park Avenue was procured to serve as editorial office

---

[99] Thus To Revisit, p. 377.

[100] Frank MacShane, "The English Review," South Atlantic Quarterly, LX (Summer, 1961), 312.

[101] Portraits, p. 130.

[102] Violet Hunt, I Have This to Say, p. 11. She gives a brief but very amusing description of the quarters at 84 Holland Park Avenue.

and domicile for Ford. A secretary was hired on a full-time basis; Douglas Goldring was hired as assistant editor on a part-time basis; and the news was spread that the English Review was in existence. The commissions went out and the manuscripts poured in. Ford's work habits, as we might expect, were eccentric in the extreme. He was particularly fond of gathering up a stack of manuscripts and with Goldring in tow retiring to the Empire Theatre. There, during the duller acts, he would read the material submitted for publication, interrupting his labors to watch his favorite performers. The final editing for the first issue was done in an all night session at Conrad's house, which Ford, his secretary, and his assistant editor had invaded, to the delight of Joseph and the chagrin of his wife.[103]

The result of their efforts that night was what is probably the most distinguished first number that any magazine has ever boasted. Here are the contents as Goldring lists them:

> Hardy's poem was followed by a long short story by Henry James, called "A Jolly Corner." Then came an instalment of Joseph Conrad's Some Reminiscences, a short story called "A Fisher of Men," by John Galsworthy, an essay on Stonehenge by W. H. Hudson, the first part of a story by Tolstoi, newly-translated by Constance Garnett, called "The Raid," and a long instalment of H. G. Wells's new novel Tono-Bungay. This concluded the main section of the review which was devoted exclusively to belles-lettres. At the end there was an editorial section of the review, devoted to current events, containing comments by the editor and communications from various writers on topics of the month. In the first issue, apart from Ford's editorial exordium there were articles by R. B. Cunninghame Graham and W. H. Davies on the unemployment problem, the first part of "A Complete Actuarial Scheme for Insuring John Dow against all the Vicissitudes of Life" by "A. M." (Arthur Marwood), a study of the "Personality of the

---

[103] Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him, p. 57.

German Emperor" by an anonymous German diplomat, "Notes on the Balkans" by Henry W. Nevinson, a review of Anatole France's L'Ile des Pingouins by Joseph Conrad and one of Swinburne's The Age of Shakespeare by Dr. Levin Schücking of Göttingen University.[104]

In later issues Ford was to publish, among others, Anatole France, Gerhart Hauptmann, W. B. Yeats, Walter de la Mare, Norman Douglas, H. Granville-Barker, Violet Hunt, H. Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Arnold Bennett, E. M. Forster, Max Beerbohm, Rupert Brooke, H. M. Tomlinson, Wyndham Lewis, Stephen Reynolds, Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence. Some of these men were, of course, established writers; but a number of them--Wyndham Lewis, Norman Douglas, and Lawrence, for instance--were published for the first time in the English Review. Ford crammed all of this rather impressive talent into the thirteen issues over which he exercised control before he was forced to sell out, which ought to suggest that each number was necessarily of extremely high quality.

He claims to have accepted "Odour of Chrysanthemums" after reading only the first paragraph, although Lawrence was completely unknown to him at the time. Ford's account of how he reached his decision is worth quoting at length as it provides an insight into his incredible perception as an editor and because it serves as an example of "new criticism" rearing its head in 1909.

> Titles as a rule do not matter much. Very good authors break down when it comes to the effort of choosing a title. But one like Odour of Chrysanthemums is at once a challenge and an indication. The author seems to say: Take it or leave it. You know at once that you are not going to read a comic story about someone's butler's omniscience. The man who sent you this has, then, character, the courage of his convictions,

---

[104] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 141.

a power of observation. All these presumptions flit through your mind. At once you read:

'The small locomotive engine, Number 4, came clanking, stumbling down from Selston,' and at once you know that this fellow with the power of observation is going to write of whatever he writes about from the inside. The 'Number 4' shows that. He will be the sort of fellow who knows that for the sort of people who work about engines, engines have a sort of individuality. He had to give the engine the personality of a number. . . . 'With seven full wagons.' . . . The 'seven' is good. The ordinary careless writer would say 'some small wagons.' This man knows what he wants. He sees the scene of his story exactly. He has an authoritative mind.

'It appeared round the corner with loud threats of speed.' . . . Good writing; slightly, but not too arresting . . . 'But the colt that it startled from among the gorse . . . outdistanced it at a canter.' Good again. This fellow does not 'state.' He doesn't say: 'It was coming slowly,' or--what would have been a little better--'at seven miles an hour.' Because even 'seven miles an hour' means nothing definite for the untrained mind. It might mean something for a trainer of pedestrian racers. The imaginative writer writes for all humanity; he does not limit his desired readers to specialists. . . . But anyone knows that an engine that makes a great deal of noise and yet cannot overtake a colt at a canter must be a ludicrously ineffective machine. We know then that this fellow knows his job.

'The gorse still flickered indistinctly in the raw afternoon.' . . . Good too, distinctly good. This is the just-sufficient observation of Nature that gives you, in a single phrase, landscape, time of day, weather, season. It is a raw afternoon in autumn in a rather accented countryside. The engine would not come round a bend if there were not some obstacle to a straight course--a watercourse, a chain of hills. Hills, probably, because gorse grows on dry, broken-up waste country. They won't also be mountains or anything spectacular or the writer would have mentioned them. It is, then, just 'country.'

Your mind does all this for you without any ratiocination on your part. You are not, I mean, purposedly sleuthing. The engine and the trucks are there, with the white smoke blowing away over hummocks of gorse. Yet there has been practically none of the tiresome thing called descriptive nature, of which the English writer is as a rule so lugubriously lavish . . . And then the woman comes in, carrying her basket. That indicates her status in life. She does not belong to the comfortable classes. Nor, since the engine is small, with trucks on a dud line, will the story be one of the Kipling-engineering type, with gleaming rails, and gadgets, and the smell of oil warmed by the bearings, and all the other tiresomenesses.

You are, then, for as long as the story lasts, to be in one of those untidy, unfinished landscapes where locomotives wander innocuously amongst women with baskets. That is to say, you are going to learn how what we used to call 'the

other half'--though we might as well have said the other ninety-nine hundredths--lives. And if you are an editor and that is what you are after, you know that you have got what you want and you can pitch the story straight away into your wicker tray with the few accepted manuscripts and go on to some other occupation. . . . Because this man knows. He knows how to open a story with a sentence of the right cadence for holding the attention. He knows how to construct a paragraph. He knows the life he is writing about in a landscape just sufficiently constructed with a casual word here and there. You can trust him for the rest.[105]

Almost all of the contributors took Ford's view that the magazine was an altruistic enterprise in the interest of good letters and not a commercial venture. Ford's policy was to pay writers exactly what they asked for their work, making the financial arrangements a matter of conscience. Acting in the spirit of the thing, most asked for ridiculously low prices for their manuscripts and helped out in the editorial offices without compensation. The one noteworthy exception was Arnold Bennett.[106] After submitting a short story, "The Matador of the Five Towns," at Ford's invitation, he had left the financial arrangements in the hands of his literary agent Pinker. For once in his life Ford seems to have gotten the better of a business deal in persuading Pinker to accept a sum far below Bennett's customary price per thousand words. Bennett promptly wrote to Ford, declaring indignantly that, as Ford must be aware, he had been cheated out of nineteen pounds according to his usual formula for payment per thousand. Ford replied:

Oh hang! If you negotiate thro' Pinker what can you expect? . . . I am running a philanthropic institution for the benefit

---

[105] Portraits, pp. 96-99.

[106] Ford gives a brief account of his dispute with Bennett in Return to Yesterday, pp. 400-402. But I follow the record of it in The Last Pre-Raphaelite, largely because Goldring reproduces the actual correspondence.

of the better letters. I am perfectly resigned to bankruptcy and the sooner you bankrupt me the sooner my troubles with the Review will be over. I stand here to be shot at Shoot! But not through Pinker! . . . [If the review were a business proposition it would be different] but it isn't: it is a device by wh. I am losing £300 a month--I have so many £300s--when they are gone--finis. And all you chaps--all, do you understand, are clamouring for this dissolution. Very well--I won't fail you . . . I pay any price any author asks--no more--no less . . . But I fight anybody who has what appears to me the indecency to employ an agent, to the bitter death. . . . This is the position--I am not repentant at having bested Pinker: I am sincerely sorry if I misrepresented you: I am ready to give you (not Pinker) any additional sum you like to ask: so there: and if you can read every word of this letter [written by hand] I will double the price.[107]

Bennett responded amicably but adamantly, and Ford, too, took a friendly line, promising to send a check for the balance of Bennett's claim and inviting him for the second time during the exchange of letters to dinner. But he also repeated and defended his position:

> Thank God you consent to bury the hatchet: I don't really deserve it because my letter to Pinker was silly--but I don't agree that the Pinker argument was illogical--not from my standpoint--and in most cases it is one's standpoint that counts. . . . I cannot be [commercial] and never will and am not going to try to be. But when a commercial gent comes to me I simply feel it sporting to beat him at his own game.[108]

Despite the high quality of its contents and the good wishes of most of its contributors, the English Review was simply not a financial success. By August, 1909 the 5,000 pounds that Marwood and Ford had put into it was exhausted. Ford's brother-in-law, Dr. David Soskice, took over as business manager and found some new financial backers. The arrangement, however, was unsatisfactory: the new backers were interested less in furthering creative writing

---

[107] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, pp. 146-47.

[108] Ibid., p. 147.

than in turning the review into a Liberal Party house organ. They wished the magazine to take on a moderately leftist complexion and set up a committee of censorship over Ford's editing. In his own rather obscure words, Ford "saw that the end was not far off, and took a flying visit to Provence."[109] When he returned, he found Galsworthy installed by the committee of backers as editor. Galsworthy, who had been told that Ford had left for good, resigned immediately upon his return, but it was now obvious that either Ford or his backers would have to go. Ford managed to get rid of them and took over financial responsibility once more. Then Violet Hunt produced a new buyer, Sir Alfred Mond, who was to relieve the beleagured editor of his financial obligations. Both Ford and Violet Hunt assumed that business would go on as usual with Ford as editor. Mond, however, had other plans. He ousted Ford and made Austin Harrison his new editor.

Ford, then, had control over only thirteen issues of the English Review--from December, 1908 to December, 1909. He is often credited with editing fifteen issues, but, in fact, he had little to do with the numbers for January and February 1910. He had merely agreed to stay on and advise Harrison for a couple of months after Mond bought the magazine.

The most frequently proposed explanation for the failure of so promising an undertaking as the English Review is that Ford was commercially incompetent. There is no question that Ford was astonishingly inept at managing business affairs, but there is more

---

[109] Return to Yesterday, p. 409.

to it than that. One important factor in the magazine's demise was that while most of the people connected with it were willing to do almost anything in the interests of Literary Art, they engaged in continual petty squabbles among themselves, much to the detriment of the common effort.[110] This was the enemy within. But there was another more powerful enemy without. Frank MacShane makes the point incisively:

> However convenient it would be to blame the collapse of Ford's review on financial mismanagement, it would be an over-simplification of London literary life to do so. What happened was that many of the old guard, finding their positions under attack by the young, adopted a hostile attitude towards the Review, while the incompetents clubbed together to cry it down.[111]

As an editor with high standards and small funds, Ford made enemies among the old by not asking them to write for the review and even more enemies among the young, especially the young critics, whose work he rejected. Ultimately, perhaps, the failure of the English Review must, in Richard Aldington's words, "be laid to the stupidity and genuine hatred of culture displayed by our countrymen."[112]

Though it failed, the English Review seen in retrospect justified its existence for Ford in two very important ways. First:

> It had got together, at any rate between its covers, a great number--the majority of the distinguished writers of imaginative literature in England of that day and a great many foreign writers of eminence.[113]

---

[110] See Thus To Revisit, p. 58 and Return to Yesterday, p. 412.

[111] "The English Review," p. 318.

[112] Quoted ibid., p. 319.

[113] Return to Yesterday, p. 411.

Second:

> Toward the end of Marwood's and my career in control of the English Review, he and I and the few friends who were interested in a real revival of Literature began to feel that life was worth living. . . . There appeared on the scene--I place them in the order of their appearance, as far as I can remember--Mr. Pound, Mr. D. H. Lawrence, Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Norman Douglas, "H.D.," Mr. Aldington, Mr. Flint--and afterwards some Americans--Mr. Frost, Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mr. Edgar Lee Masters. And of course there were Gaudier Brzeska and Mr. Epstein. It was--truly--like an opening world.[114]

It was this second aspect of the Review in which Ford found his greatest satisfaction--that it had been able to print the first efforts of les jeunes of pre-war London and that "in our Editorial Salons they found chaises-longues and sofas on which to stretch themselves whilst they discussed the fate of already fermenting Europe."[115] Ford no doubt enjoyed his position as senior artist and his power as editor, but the delight he took in the young men who, taking their lead from Ezra Pound, admired him was more than egotistical. He was again part of a movement, one of a group that cared greatly for literature and never tired of discussing the "how" of their art.

While Ford was having his troubles with the English Review, he was also becoming embroiled in a series of domestic difficulties that were to result in much unpleasantness and a resounding public scandal. In 1908, after fourteen years of a presumably happy marriage, relations between Ford and his wife suddenly became so strained that, according to Douglas Goldring, Ford was sounded by a third party on the possibility of his giving Elsie a divorce.[116] Goldring also

---

[114] Thus To Revisit, p. 136.

[115] Ibid., p. 60.

[116] South Lodge, p. 88.

recalls having had lunch with the Hueffers in October, 1908 and having received the distinct impression that theirs was not a very congenial household.[117] Soon afterward Elsie retired to the country for her health, and Ford moved into his combination living quarters-editorial offices at 84 Holland Park Avenue. In August, 1909 the third party (whom Goldring never identifies) again asked if Ford would consent to a divorce. The first request Ford had simply refused; this time he is alleged to have replied that a divorce was unnecessary since he would probably soon commit suicide.[118]

Then Violet Hunt entered the scene. The daughter of Alfred William Hunt, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, and Mrs. Alfred Hunt, the very popular novelist, she too had been trained for a genius and had known Ford since the days when they had both attended parties for Pre-Raphaelite children. Their acquaintance, however, had been so slight that when she decided late in 1908 to submit some short stories to the English Review, she asked H. G. Wells to give her an introduction to Ford.[119] Since she was eleven years his senior and had met him only a few times when he was a very young child, Ford could hardly have remembered her well; but he told Wells that they were old friends and told him to direct her to the Review office.

Ford immediately accepted one of her short stories, "The Coach," which duly appeared in the issue for March, 1909, and made her a reader for the magazine. By the summer of 1909 they had

---

[117] Ibid., p. 21. [118] Ibid., p. 88.

[119] Violet Hunt, I Have This to Say, p. 11.

become good friends, though not yet lovers. This summer seems to have been a period of profound depression for Ford. His funds had been exhausted, and his brother-in-law was in the process of finding backers; his wife, through her intermediary, was pressing for a divorce and exclusive rights to their children. Ford was making a desperate attempt to satisfy his creditors and to continue his periodical.[120] Violet Hunt not only corroborates the allegation that Ford was contemplating suicide but claims, in a rather bizarre anecdote, to have thwarted his attempt.[121] She goes on to claim that the very next day Ford proposed marriage in the event he ever became a divorced man. The suggestion was far too sudden for one brought up in Victoria's reign, and besides she was then thinking "of a freshly made grave at Clarens,"[122] that of another married man with whom she had been in love. At any rate, in the summer of 1909 their relationship took on a new, a romantic, aspect.

There should have followed in the normal course the divorce that Elsie had been asking for and which Ford was now anxious to grant. Ford, expecting Elsie to divorce him, followed the time-honored procedure of providing a co-respondent for the necessary adultery charge. "The course which Ford took was to pick up a little German girl of the 'unfortunate' class [one Elizabeth Schultz]

---

[120] Ford describes his activities that summer as follows:

> "I raised money in various disagreeable ways--by impignorating my furniture and paintings, by borrowing from my father's richer relatives and others, by writing extremely bad novels at a very great speed."

Return to Yesterday, pp. 409-410.

[121] I Have This To Say, pp. 65-66.

[122] Ibid., p. 68.

and let her live in his flat and eat at his expense."[123] In January 1910 the courts issued an order for Restitution of Conjugal Rights, directing Ford to return home and to provide family support. The decree implied that Ford had not been supporting his wife and daughters, and on principle he refused to comply with it. There was, moreover, a practical reason for refusing to carry out the court's instructions: such a refusal would provide preliminary grounds for a divorce action by Elsie. The upshot was that Ford, needlessly as it turned out, spent ten days in jail for contempt of court. With Elizabeth Schultz in the background snugly installed in Holland Park Avenue, when the courts awarded Elsie alimony payments for support of herself and her daughters in April 1910, the way seemed clear for a rather routine divorce proceeding.

And then Elsie suddenly and inexplicably reversed her stand and refused to go through with the divorce. She had succeeded in placing Ford in a thoroughly false position, and, what was worse, he was by now extremely eager to gain his freedom and wholly powerless to do so. By the time of his prison sentence he had already moved into South Lodge with Violet Hunt and her mother as a "paying guest,"[124] and Violet was demanding that he make an honest woman of her. In what must have been sheer desperation Ford conceived a solution to his dilemma: he would become a German citizen and obtain a divorce abroad. Although it was incredibly complicated, the plan was theoretically feasible. There were grounds for divorce

---

[123] Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 156.

[124] Violet Hunt, I Have This To Say, p. 104.

in Germany, and since under German law a father could not deprive his children of their right to German citizenship by his own naturalization in another country, Ford had merely to assert his father's Westphalian birth and to establish residence on German territory in order to become a German citizen.[125]

Despite the efforts of several of his friends to dissuade him, Ford found the plan irresistibly attractive. It seemed simple enough; he was disgusted with London and anxious to leave; and it appealed to his romantic sense as a dramatic gesture of sorts. He spent part of 1910 and most of 1911 in Germany trying to establish residence, but the apparently simple plan turned out to be far from simple. Ford did finally establish a domicile in Giessen, but there is no record that he ever divorced his first wife and subsequently married Violet Hunt. Goldring conjectures that either a serious obstacle unexpectedly arose or the red tape involved became so formidable that Ford, exasperated, decided to abandon the original scheme and simply announce to the world that he had succeeded in obtaining his divorce and that he and Violet Hunt had become man and wife.[126]

In the autumn of 1911 they gave out the news that they had

---

[125] Ford's behavior during the whole period of the divorce proceeding is duplicated almost exactly by Macdonald, the central character in The New Humpty-Dumpty (London: John Lane, 1912). Macdonald also has to contend with a wife who refuses to go through with divorce after taking preliminary steps. He too picks up a German prostitute and boards her. He too resorts to foreign citizenship and foreign divorce. The only difference is that Macdonald succeeds in shedding his wife and marrying the heroine.

[126] South Lodge, p. 97.

been married and prepared to return to South Lodge and resume London life. In a letter to his agent posted in Trier in October 1911 there is a postscript in Ford's hand which reads:

> My wife will be rather obliged if you will address letters to her as Mrs. Hueffer--we were married on Sept. 5th--and it is rather awkward in hotels if you address her by her literary name. For purposes of novels, cheques--if, hang you, you ever intend to pay the cheques!--she will remain Violet Hunt, but for no other purposes![127]

They must have agreed upon the September 5th dating, because much later Violet Hunt was to give the dates of their "marriage" as September 5, 1911 to April 29, 1919.[128] On October 11th an interview referring to Violet Hunt as Mrs. Hueffer appeared in London's Daily Mirror, and almost simultaneously a similar reference appeared in an advertisement in The Throne, a London society weekly. Elsie Hueffer immediately brought libel charges against both publications. The Daily Mirror prudently withdrew the reference and made formal apology, but The Throne ill-advisedly decided to contest the action.

When the case came to court in February 1913, the attorneys for The Throne insisted that the newspaper, merely having printed what had been told them in the interview, had acted in good faith and could not possibly be held liable for damages that had resulted to the plaintiff. Elsie's attorneys argued that the publication was responsible for the accuracy of its facts and moreover that it had been given an opportunity to investigate and withdraw its erroneous reference. As reported in the London Times of February 7, 1913, the

---

[127] Quoted, Richard M. Ludwig, "The Reputation of Ford Madox Ford," PMLA, LXXVI (December, 1961), 547.

[128] Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 207.

argument for the plaintiff went on to claim that The Throne's refusal to retract was clearly libelous:

> People reading it would think either the plaintiff was not his wife at all or that she was divorced. She, poor lady, who had suffered enough in this world at the hands of her husband, stood to be persecuted by people announcing to the world in their periodicals that she had no right to the title of Mrs. Hueffer at all. This exposed her to ridicule, hatred and contempt, in the language of the Law, and was a libel.[129]

It also seriously prejudiced the position of her daughters, who were Roman Catholic and could not bear the implications of a parental divorce without a special dispensation from the Pope.[130] The defense did not even attempt to demonstrate that Ford had legally divorced Elsie; they merely repeated that The Throne had acted in good faith. The jury found for Elsie, assessing damages at three hundred pounds.

To a generation that had been born in the nineteenth century court actions and newspaper reports were, to say the least, shocking. Marital irregularities, even desertions, were regrettable but, if they did not occasion "scenes," tolerable; public scandal was quite another matter. Ford and Violet, who continued to live together at South Lodge, found themselves, predictably enough, ostracized by most "good people." The snubs were probably more painful to Violet than to Ford. Before the fiasco in court she had enjoyed

---

[129] Goldring, South Lodge, p. 102.

[130] In 1925, when Elsie took Violet Hunt to court and obtained an injunction restraining her from using the title Mrs. Hueffer, Elsie's attorneys used the same arguments with the false addition that she too was a Catholic. Douglas Goldring reports, South Lodge, p. 114, that despite the injunction Violet remained Mrs. Hueffer in the London telephone directory until her death in 1942. The most convenient place to find the Times' accounts of the two lawsuits is in I Have This To Say, where Violet rather perversely prints them entire as appendices.

a good social position; she now found herself abandoned by most of her society friends. The most painful defection of all to both of them was Henry James'. On October 12, 1909 he was still writing very cordial letters to Ford. In the spring of 1913 he informed Violet, who was an even older friend than Ford, that she was no longer welcome in his home.

It is not to be imagined, however, that Ford and Violet were friendless. They continued to entertain a great deal at South Lodge, but with a slightly altered guest list. Here is Goldring's summation of the situation:

> The place of the Victorian celebrities and socially distinguished figures was taken by "les jeunes" of the English Review circle, among whom Ezra Pound, P. Wyndham Lewis, Rebecca West, the Compton Mackenzies and W. L. George were prominent. Of Violet's older literary friends, May Sinclair, Ethel Coburn Mayne, and H. G. Wells remained loyal, while Ford never lacked for friends and admirers even if he did not always keep them.[131]

There were also a number of non-literary friends who remained faithful, among them C.F. G. Masterman.

One of the great ironies in the whole situation was that long before the libel suit Ford's ardor for Violet had already left him. Indeed, she admits that as early as January 1911 his feelings were perceptibly cooling.[132] They continued to live together until Ford entered the army in August 1915 and even collaborated on a novel, Zeppelin Nights,[133] which they published in 1916; but they

---

[131] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 163.

[132] Cited by Goldring, South Lodge, p. 98.

[133] Violet Hunt and Ford Madox Hueffer, Zeppelin Nights (London: John Lane, 1916).

were merely keeping up appearances. According to Goldring, "it had become apparent, long before the war, that relations between them were getting strained and that a split was inevitable."[134]

When war broke out Ford offered his services to C.F.G. Masterman, who was in charge of a special propaganda project. With Richard Aldington as his secretary, he wrote When Blood Is Their Argument and Between St. Dennis and St. George during the first six months of 1915, and, Violet Hunt reports, nearly killed himself in the effort.[135] He had just finished The Good Soldier, and having determined to take a commission in the army and fully expecting to get killed in France, he had in 1914 taken a formal farewell to literature in a magazine called The Thrush.[136] The question of his German citizenship complicated his getting a commission, but Mastermas was able to grease the necessary wheels, and Ford, at 41, swore allegiance to King George and was appointed second lieutenant in the Welch Regiment of the British Army on August 14, 1915.

Ford's war record was undistinguished but certainly honorable. He seems to have been a very efficient officer and to have been extremely well liked by the men under him. Had he tried very hard he probably could have secured a relatively comfortable job in the War Office or as an intelligence officer. As things turned out, though, it was a tough war for him with a great deal of time in the front lines. He was never actually wounded, but he was severely gassed and on one occasion badly shell-shocked. His

---

[134] South Lodge, p. 115. [135] I Have This To Say, p. 256.

[136] See Thus To Revisit, p. 25

official War Office record is as follows:

> Appointed to a commission as 2nd Lieutenant, the Welch Regiment (Special Reserve)..... 14.8.15
> Promoted Lieutenant..... 1.7.17
> Relinquished commission on account of ill-health..... 7.1.19
> London Gazette (Supplement) dated..... 6.1.19
> Served with the British Expeditionary Force (France and Flanders).
> Awarded British War and Victory Medals.[137]

The gassing left him with a permanent wheeze that is noted by everyone who knew him after the war and wrote about him. The effect of "having been blown into the air by something and falling on my face" had been a temporary loss of memory.[138] Ford specifies:

> It had been from some date in August [1916] till about the 17th September that I had completely lost my memory so that . . . three weeks of my life are completely dead to me though I seem to have gone about my duties as usual.[139]

Actually his recovery was not complete for some time if we judge by another reference he makes to his memory lapse:

> I suffered from complete failure of memory for a period after the first battle of the Somme and my memory of events for some twelve months after the war is still extremely uncertain.[140]

These details are worth laboring because they are identical with the details of the military life Ford provided for Christopher Tietjens in Parade's End. Tietjens was older than most soldiers, was an officer in the Welsh Regiment, was gassed, was shell-shocked and lost his memory. In fact, almost all of the details of Tietjens' military career parallel those of Ford's. The critical significance

---

[137] Quoted by Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 185.

[138] It Was the Nightingale, p. 194.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., p. 80.

of this correspondence will, of course, be developed at length when we come to consider Parade's End.

The experience of the war and the immediately post-war period profoundly affected both Ford's thinking and his personality. Goldring saw him as a new, more confident man:

> The sense of guilt which as he told his daughters in the dedicatory letter to Ancient Lights, had dogged him from his childhood, was replaced by something like moral self-confidence. He had been through hell, stuck it out, made good, done his bit and in consequence was armoured against all reproaches, whether from Violet or from any other source. There is no doubt that he derived an enormous satisfaction from having held the King's Commission in an historic regiment.[141]

But Stella Bowen, who knew Ford better than anyone else during the post-war years, provides an interesting insight into his character while implicitly denying Goldring's assessment of him:

> He needed more reassurance than anyone I have ever met. That was one reason why it was so necessary for him to surround himself with disciples.[142]

Confident or not, Ford did strike out in a new direction after the war.

Like most sensitive and intelligent men he saw the war as a symbol for the end of an era. It was for him a selling out of all that was fine in England by a governing class that spouted Victorian moral hypocrisy and acted in behalf of vested interests. What hurt, perhaps, more than anything was the sense of all the pain and killing having been endured to no meaningful end. And, to make matters worse, after the victory celebrations, those who had remained at home regarded

---

[141] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 201.

[142] Stella Bowen, Drawn from Life (London: Collins Publishers, n.d. [1940]), p. 80.

the war veteran as little more than an unsavoury social problem. He caused disagreeable fluctuations in the labor market, and he increased the crime rate.

The first professional proposal Ford had after the war was for an article for the Saturday Review. When he went to the editorial office to find out what was wanted of him, he got his first taste of callous civilian ingratitude:

> "All this bunk and balderdash," he [the editor] repeated. This heroism in the trenches legend! Explode it! We know it was all nothing but drunken and libidinous beanfeasting. Show the scoundrels up! Blow the gaff on them. You've been in it. You know!"
>
> It was the first sound--like the first grumble of a distant storm--the first indication I had that the unchangeable was changing, the incorruptible putting on corruption. Over there we had been so many Rip van Winkles. The Saturday Review, the Bank of England, the pound sterling, the London County Council, the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen along with the Marylebone Cricket Club--these things had used to be indubitable and as sure as the stars in their course. And as unquestioned had been the thin red line!
>
> Alas! I continued to regard that fellow as a lunatic, until slowly, I realised that his frame of mind was common to the civilian population of London and of the world from Odessa to Seattle.[143]

The betrayal of Tommy Atkins was merely a symptom to Ford of the absence of moral values in post-war English life--especially in public life and most markedly in London public life. England, as it appeared to Ford, had abandoned the "large words" that had given her something like a meaningful tradition:

> Pre-war England had not been a very satisfactory affair. She had been distinguished in her intellectual as in her material harvests by the dead hand of vested interests. Questioning and innovation had been very difficult. But there had been at least some youth, some intellectual clarity, some carelessness, some iconoclasts. And her laws had been made for men relatively free.

---

[143] It Was the Nightingale, pp. 26-27.

> Most of that was to go. For a generation England was to sink back . . . into a slough in which despondency and vested interests however changed in incidence must strangle all initiative. You cannot kill off a million of your most characteristic young men, cram your workhouses and gaols with all that they will hold of the rest and for ever disillusionise those that remained outside those institutions--you could not do all that without at least modifying your national aspect. A nation--any body of men--cannot flourish either as empire builders or poets, or in any department of life that lies between those extremes without cherishing its illusions. And in England of those days all the great words upon which are founded the illusions of life lay under the shadow of reprobation. . . . In London Town of those days it was more than unfashionable to speak with commendation of Faith, Loyalty, Courage, Perseverance, God, Consols, the London Police Force or the Union Jack.[144]

It must be borne in mind that Ford had suffered a good deal during the war precisely for the large words which were no longer fashionable. The disillusionment he knew in post-war London had, in fact, begun long before in the trenches. The carnage he had witnessed, the war itself, had appeared to him all along the horrible price paid by common men for the folly, selfishness, and ineptitude of their political and economic rulers. What he found at home merely confirmed what he had suspected at the front.

He had known in France that he must abandon London. The war had been for him, among other things, harrowing and exhausting. The first two lines of one of his best poems written on active duty are "I should like to imagine/ A night in which there would be no machine guns!"[145] What he wanted more than anything else, to use his then favorite word, was sanctuary.[146] In France, in the wash house of a

---

[144] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[145] Ford Madox Ford, Collected Poems, ed. William Rose Benet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 87.

[146] No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction (New York: The Macauley Company, 1929), in which Ford recalls his attitudes during

bombed out villa, he had examined his world and decided what he wanted of it:

> I do not desire money, glory, the praise of my kind whom I distrust, nor yet to dominate humanity, which is a beast that I dislike. I do not desire friends; I do not desire broad lands. So, thinking about things in the wash-house of Mme. Rosalie, I said: "I must dig myself in." I said, indeed, twice: "I must dig myself in. . . ."
>
> I must have a dugout, as proof as possible against the shells launched against me by blind and august destiny; round about it there must be the strong barbed wire of solitude and, within the entanglements, space for a kitchen garden.[147]

And, so, in the spring of 1919, penniless and disillusioned, he left London, for good as it turned out, and determined to dig himself in and wrest a living from the land.

When in May, 1919 Ford retreated to a rather primitive cottage near the village of Red Ford in the wilds of west Sussex, he was accompanied by Miss Stella Bowen. They were to have a child and to live together for almost ten years in nearly perfect harmony; their separation, when it did come, was to be a friendly parting. Unlike Violet Hunt, who heaped vituperation on Ford and made his life as miserable as she could when she was no longer able to hold him, Stella Bowen knew no regrets for having taken up with him. Here is the way she sums up their association:

> . . . in spite of discrepancies, or perhaps because of them, I think our union was an excellent bargain on both sides. Ford got his cottage, and he got the domestic peace he needed, and eventually he got his baby daughter. He was very happy, and so was I. What I got out of it, was a remarkable and liberal

---

and immediately after the war, concludes on a similar note. The last line of the book is, "'Rest,' he said with his heavy tired voice, 'after toil, port after stormy seas . . .' He paused and added after a moment: 'Do greatly please!'"; p. 292.

[147] Ibid., p. 265.

education, administered in ideal circumstances. I got an emotional education too, of course, but that was easier. One might get that from almost anyone! But to have the run of a mind of that calibre, with all its inconsistencies, its generosity, its blind spots, its spaciousness, and vision, and its great sense of form and style, was a privilege for which I am still trying to say "thank you."[148]

Stella Bowen was an Australian who had gone to London in April, 1914 to study art. She had had a very provincial middle class upbringing in Adelaide, where, because it was uplifting, her mother had allowed her to study painting. When her mother died and she came into a modest income, she persuaded her guardian to permit her to visit London and to take art lessons there. The outbreak of war a few months after her arrival in England altered her original plans to return home after a brief stay. For a while she lived very dully among eminently respectable people and remained as provincial as ever. Eventually she met Peggy Sutton, Mary Butts, and Phyllis Reid. She and Phyllis Reid moved into a studio together, and when Peggy Sutton, who was well known in artists' circles, asked if she could use their studio to give a party, they were happy to oblige. One of the guests was Ezra Pound.

Pound took a liking to the two innocents, Stella and Phyllis Reid, and immediately introduced them to his own circle of friends. As Stella recalls, "from that point we met a whole heap of people; T. S. Eliot and Arthur Waley and Wadsworth and May Sinclair and Violet Hunt and G. B. Stern, and P. Wyndham Lewis and the poet Yeats."[149] And, long before she met him in person, she knew Ford

---

[148] Drawn from Life, pp. 63-64.

[149] Ibid., p. 49.

by reputation, "because he was one of the writers whom Ezra allowed us to admire."[150]

Although he was not officially discharged until January, 1919, Ford was able to spend a great deal of time in London throughout 1918. At one of the innumerable studio parties he must have attended he met Stella Bowen, in her words, "about nine months before the Armistice,"[151] or in February, 1918. She describes her reaction to him as follows:

> To me he was quite simply the most enthralling person I had ever met. Worth all of Phyllis's young men put together, and he never even looked at her!
>
> He began to tell me about himself, filling me with pride by confiding all his troubles and weaknesses. The most monumental of authors--the fountain, apparently of all wisdom, who appeared already to have lived a dozen, [sic] lives now--amazingly--announced that he wished to place his person, his fortune, his future in my hands. Revealed himself as a lonely and a very tired person who wanted to dig potatoes and raise pigs and never write another book. Wanted to start a new home. Wanted a child.
>
> I said yes, of course. I accepted him as the wise man whom I had come across the world to find. I was ready, I felt stalwart and prepared for anything.[152]

They were happy at Red Ford, and Ford was true to his intentions. Ford got his pig, worked his garden (with great success), built furniture (with little success), and did not write. The cottage, however, was entirely without modern conveniences; and when Stella became an expectant mother, it became imperative that they find new quarters. In one of the rare instances of a stroke of fortune befalling him, Ford came into some money at precisely the right moment. Entirely unexpectedly Hollywood had bought the film rights to one of his early novels.[153]

---

[150] Ibid., p. 61. [151] Ibid. [152] Ibid., p. 63.

[153] This was Mr. Fleight (London: Howard Latimer, Ltd., 1913). See Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 209, n.

With this windfall and some capital Stella withdrew from Australia they bought a more satisfactory cottage at Bedham, about ten miles from Red Ford. They moved into their new home, landowners now, in the summer of 1920. On November 29, 1920 Esther Julia was born. Ford, at 47, now had everything he desired: a comfortable house, a devoted woman, a child, and ten acres to farm. There was a constant stream of guests down from London, and, since Bedham was just as inaccessible as Red Ford, they were people who genuinely cared for him. And, he was writing again. The first book Ford published after the war was Thus To Revisit in 1921. The epigraph, taken from a letter by Machiavelli, describes how Ford saw himself and his work at Bedham:

> "But when evening falls I go home and enter my writing room. On the threshold I put off my country habit, filthy with mud and mire and array myself in costly garments; thus worthily attired, and for four hours' space I feel no annoyance, forget all care; poverty cannot frighten me. . . . I am carried away."

The one thing to mar the idyll at Bedham was the climate. It was an inordinately rainy region, which meant that the house was always surrounded by mud, and the English winters were very severe. In the fall of 1922 Harold Monro, who ran the famous Poetry Bookshop, came down for a visit. He mentioned having bought a little villa at Cap Ferrat in Provence which was going to be empty for the winter. The prospect of spending a winter on the Mediterranean, and in Ford's beloved Provence to boot, was irresistible. Ford had just sent the manuscript of The Marsden Case to Duckworth, and in expectation of its being accepted for publication he arranged to rent the villa from Monro at a nominal figure and made hasty plans to take his family abroad.

Late in November, 1922, they arrived in Paris. A month later they headed south. Their original plans had called for a return to Bedham sometime the following spring, but soon after they arrived in France, a tenant had been found to rent their cottage for a year. There was no reason now to return to England; and, so, they stayed on in Provence until September, 1923, when they returned to Paris for a second winter in France.

Soon after their arrival in Paris that September Ford ran into his brother Oliver on the street. After exchanging greetings, Oliver immediately offered Ford the editorship of a magazine he had been running unsuccessfully. It seemed as if Oliver had expected to meet him on the street and had prepared his proposal in advance. Ezra Pound was also in Paris, and, as he had done with the English Review, he immediately took Ford's new project in hand. Ford had come to Paris with absolutely no intention of becoming an editor. He feared the responsibility would interfere with his own writing, but Pound's enthusiasm and his assurances of a great reservoir of talent in Paris overwhelmed any objections Ford ventured. It became even more difficult for Ford to refuse when the backers agreed to every contractual demand he made.

Ford was launched once more as an editor, this time under the most agreeable of circumstances. His backers agreed to absolve him from any financial responsibility, to pay a flat rate per page for all accepted manuscripts, to give Ford complete editorial freedom, to provide him with a private office, and to communicate with him only through his brother and never directly. These were the terms that had been established during Ford's first meeting with

his capitalizers. But, after Ford had engaged assistants, made printing arrangements, and started reading the manuscripts that had come in a deluge, the financiers had second thoughts. They insisted upon complete powers of censorship and saw no reason why the magazine should not further their interests at the same time that it furthered good literature.[154]

It was obvious to everyone, including Oliver Hueffer, who delivered the ultimatum, that Ford must simply withdraw. He would never become involved with an undertaking to further anything but Literature; even if the propagandistic stipulation were withdrawn, it was unthinkable to allow a censorship board to get hold of Pound and Joyce and Gertrude Stein, all of whom Ford intended to publish. Joyce, in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver dated October 9, 1923, reports the new state of affairs:

> Mr. Hueffer has been made editor of a new Paris review. The editorship was offered by a financial group on condition that nothing of mine was published in it. Mr. Hueffer then declined it. Finally the group gave in.[155]

But, in fact, the group did not give in; Ford simply declined.

By now, however, things had gone too far for him to abandon the project entirely. Pound would not hear of giving it up, and Ford, despite his initial reluctance, was anxious to have another try at running a review. Then John Quinn, the very wealthy manuscript collector, turned up and offered to supply half the capital

---

[154] See It Was the Nightingale, pp. 271-342; The Last Pre-Raphaelite, pp. 226-36 for accounts respectively by Ford and Douglas Goldring of the founding of the review.

[155] James Joyce, Letters of James Joyce, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 204.

necessary if Ford could raise the other half. Actually, the arrangement called for Ford to supply fifty-one per cent so as to have full control of policy.[156] Ford and Stella meanwhile had decided not to return to England at all and had sold the cottage at Bedham. Their original intention had been to use the money they got for it to buy a house with a little garden in a suburb of Paris. Ford, then, had some money in hand when Quinn made his tempting offer. Stella never got her house; instead the transatlantic review was born.[157]

Ford intended to publish French, English, and American writers and to distribute the magazine in Paris, London, and New York. Its name was supposed to reflect its contents; the absence of capitals was no more than a whim of Ford's which happened to coincide nicely with his later decision to lead off with a poem by e. e. cummings.[158] It turned out to be every bit as distinguished a production as the English Review had been, and equally unsuccessful financially. William Bird, who owned the Three Mountains Press, offered a little gallery over his printing press as an editorial office for Ford, and amid unimaginable confusion the first of twelve numbers of the transatlantic review appeared in January, 1924.

The following excerpt from the preliminary announcement for the transatlantic review sets forth clearly and concisely its intention and its avowed editorial policy:

The home being determined, the Proprietors pitched upon Mr.

---

[156] It Was the Nightingale, pp. 319-21.

[157] For Stella Bowen's interesting account of the founding of the review see Drawn from Life, pp. 110-132.

[158] It Was the Nightingale, p. 324.

F. M. Ford as Conductor. Mr. Ford, formerly--and perhaps better--known as Ford Madox Hueffer[159] was the founder of The English Review which in its day made good along the lines on which this Review now proposes to travel. It published the work not only of such old and eminent writers as Mr. Henry James, President Taft, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Monsieur Anatole France and Herr Gerhardt Hauptmann, but it backed with energy such then only rising waves as Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Bennet and Mr. Joseph Conrad. It printed the first words of Mr. D. H. Lawrence, Mr. Ezra Pound, Mr. Norman Douglas, and many other writers now established and it serialized the first novel of the late Mr. Stephen Reynolds and the first of the longer sociological novels of Mr. Wells who will contribute also to the Transatlantic. So too will Mr. Joseph Conrad. The ever moving film has now progressed by a reel and it is such writers as Mr. James Joyce, M. Pierre Hampt, Mr. E. E. Cummings, M. Descharmes and Mr. A. E. Coppard that with the assistance of Mr. Ezra Pound, Mr. T. S. Eliot, Miss Mina Loy, Mr. Robert McAlmon and Miss Mary Butts, to mix our liquors as singularly as possible--the Review will energetically back, whilst it will hope to print the first words of many, many young giants as yet unprinted. The politics will be those of its editor who has no party leanings save towards those of a Tory kind so fantastically old-fashioned as to see no salvation save in the feudal system as practised in the fourteenth century--or in such Communism as may prevail a thousand years hence.[160]

Among the young giants the review did print was one Ernest Hemingway;[161]

---

[159] Ford's name changes are slightly confusing but simple enough to follow. His birth certificate reads Ford Hermann Hueffer. When he joined the Catholic Church he took the names Joseph and Leopold and also officially added the maternal family name Madox, which he had been using for some time. Until 1919, then, he was Joseph Leopold Ford Hermann Madox Hueffer. On June 28, 1919 he officially changed his surname from Hueffer to Ford. Those who knew him before the war habitually referred to him as Hueffer; those who met him in Paris called him Ford. Except for Violet Hunt, who called him Joseph Leopold, everyone who was on a first name basis used Ford, or sometimes Fordie. His first novel bears on the title page H. Ford Hueffer and, inconsistently, on the cover Ford H. Hueffer; his later books were all published under the name Ford Madox Hueffer or, after the war, Ford Madox Ford.

[160] Quoted, South Lodge, p. 145.

[161] Hemingway also served as assistant editor and took charge of the August and September issues while Ford was away. See, in addition to Ford, Goldring, and Stella Bowen, Carlos Baker, Hemingway, The Writer as Artist (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 23-24, for Hemingway's connection with the transatlantic review.

among the slightly older writers printed in the review but not mentioned in the preliminary announcement was Gertrude Stein.[162] "In the case of Mr. Hemingway," Ford remarks, "I did not read more than six words of his before I decided to publish everything that he sent me." E. E. Cummings' work was rather less impressive; Ford claims to have read ten lines of his before deciding to open the review with his poems.[163]

Once more the combination of mismanaged business affairs and an indifferent public put a swift end to Ford's editorial career. The expected profits from New York sales were eaten up by shipping expenses, and the Paris receipts unaccountably vanished. Moreover, the working capital had been seriously diminished in advance by the fees for setting it up as a limited company in accordance with Quinn's wishes. When it folded exactly one year after it had begun, Ford, who insisted on meeting its debts personally despite the company's limited liability, walked away from it penniless once more.

During the winter of 1924-1925, after the affairs of the review had been wound up, he and Stella headed south again, to Toulon, where he hoped to write himself back into solvency. For the remainder of his life Ford was to divide his time between Paris and Provence, with occasional trips to London and, after 1925, regular visits to the United States. During the short life span of the

---

[162] Gertrude Stein records Hemingway's enthusiasm at Ford's desire to print something of her's in the review. Hemingway literally copied by hand the first installment of The Making of Americans; Gertrude Stein, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933), pp. 263-65.

[163] It Was the Nightingale, pp. 323-24.

transatlantic review and for the remainder of the Twenties, he spent most of his time in Paris, discussing literature endlessly and encouraging rising talent.

He had very cordial relations with James Joyce,[164] and Gertrude Stein, and, of course, Ezra Pound; he was admired by most of the young men for whose benefit he wheezily pontificated on the techniques of fiction. He entertained a great deal--first with Thursday afternoon teas at the Three Mountains Press, a little later with Friday night dances, and after that at home in the various studio apartments he and Stella occupied. He was writing well once more and very prolifically. Among other things he produced between 1924 and 1928 the Parade's End tetralogy. He had been boomed in the United States and enjoyed something of an international reputation for the first time in his life. The Twenties must have been happy years for Ford Madox Ford.

Nina Hamnett, in her reminiscences of the Twenties in Paris records her impressions of him:

> I met, about this time [middle Twenties], Ford Madox Ford. I had read his books and admired them very much. He talked a great deal and so well that nobody else wanted to, or felt that they could, say anything interesting. He told stories very well indeed.[165]

Frederick J. Hoffman suggests that in post-war Paris, "the art of fiction was taught, not at the Sorbonne, but where-ever Pound, or

---

[164] Indeed, in "To Establish the Facts," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXI (Spring, 1962), 261 Frank MacShane asserts that Joyce was Julie's godfather.

[165] Nina Hamnett, Laughing Torso (New York: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932), p. 188.

Ford, or Miss Stein conversed and advised."[166] And, finally, E. E. Cummings describes him as:

> that undeluded notselfpitying
>
> lover of all things excellently rare;
> obsolete almost that phenomenon
> (too gay for malice and too wise for fear)
> of shadowy virtue and of sunful sin
>
> namely (ford madox ford) and eke to wit
> a human being
> --lets remember that.[167]

In the winter of 1926-1927 and again the following year Ford made extended visits to America. The first time he went to lecture and the second to straighten out difficulties with a publisher. The first two novels of Parade's End had been enormously successful in the United States, and Ford was, to use Stella Bowen's phrase, "feted and flattered as indeed he deserved to be"[168] both during his stay in New York and on his tour. He seems, however, to have been a less than brilliant lecturer. He was ageing, and his speaking voice, which had always been very soft, was seriously hampered by the wheeze that had resulted from his gassing during the war. Markham Harris, who as a child had met Ford, arranged for him to give a lecture at Williams College, where he was an eager freshman in 1927. He recalls the talk as a "blandly egocentric reminiscence" of the literary giants Ford had known,

---

[166] Frederick J. Hoffman, The Modern Novel in America, 1900-1950 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1951), p. 85.

[167] In "possibly thrice we glimpsed," Poems, 1923-1954 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1954), p. 434.

[168] Drawn from Life, p. 169.

unimpressively delivered, indeed, inaudible in the back rows of the auditorium.[169]

In 1928 upon returning from his second trip Ford announced to Stella "a sentimental attachment to an American lady whom he proposed to visit every year."[170] He thought the Paris menage ought to continue in between; Stella thought otherwise. There were no recriminations, no jealous scenes. In fact, Stella was happy to "slip from under the weightiness of Ford's personality."[171] They admired and respected one another, but their association was no longer the passionate affair it had been. Moreover, she was anxious to be independent and to explore her own potential as an artist. Not only did she and Ford remain good friends until his death but also she consistently refers to Janice Biala, who became her successor as "Mrs. Ford,"[172] in terms of approval. She appraises the end of their affair in amazingly unsentimental language:

> I don't think his personal relationships were important at all. They always loomed very large in his own view, but they were not intrinsically important. I don't think it matters much from whom the artist gets his nourishment, or his shelter, so long as he gets it.
>
> In order to keep his machinery running, he requires to exercise his sentimental talents from time to time upon a new object. It keeps him young. It refreshes his ego. It restores his belief in his powers. And who shall say that

---

[169] Markham Harris, "A Memory of Ford Madox Ford," Prairie Schooner, XXIX (Winter, 1955), 260.

[170] Drawn from Life, p. 169.

[171] Ibid.

[172] We must bear in mind that Ford never divorced his first wife and that since she outlived him he was never able legally to marry either Stella Bowen or Janice Biala, although both are referred to by others as Mrs. Ford.

> this type of lubrication is too expensive for so fine a machine? Goodness knows, female devotion is always a drug on the market!
>
> I happened to be the "new object" at a moment when Ford needed to be given a new lease of after-the-war life. The new life was a success. For the whole nine years of its duration, we were never bored and I don't think anyone ever heard us utter an angry word. Even when we were on the brink of separating, we could still go out to dine together and have a grand argument about Lost Causes, or the Theory of the Infallibility of the Pope, or some such theme. But by that time our real relationship had become quite a different thing from what it had once been, and my education had received a big shove forward.[173]

Whether Janice Biala was the American lady for whom Ford had formed a "sentimental attachment" is not entirely clear. She was an American, a New York Jewess, and Douglas Goldring asserts that it was she whom Ford discovered on his trip to the United States during the winter of 1927-1928.[174] But Stella Bowen, who is more dependable than Goldring and who is certainly a more authoritative source, avers that "Ford had met and fallen seriously in love with Janice quite soon after" she and Julie had left him.[175] Whoever the American lady of 1927-1928 was or was not, Janice Biala became "Mrs. Ford" until his death. Stella, with characteristic generosity, speaks of the new affair as follows:

> He had sent her to call on us and since we liked her very much, we were pleased when Ford asked for our blessing on his approaching union with her. She was a young Polish-American painter who made him very happy until the day of his death, and she developed a strong affection for Julie.[176]

---

[173] Drawn from Life, p. 165.

[174] The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 250.

[175] Drawn from Life, p. 190.

[176] Ibid.

Soon after his union with Janice Biala, Wall Street collapsed, and with it went the money Ford had recently acquired in the United States. Partly for reasons of economy and partly because he wrote best there he moved south again, and he and Biala lived for the greater part of their first five years together at Cap Brun near Toulon. By 1934 he was probably solvent again as he and Biala then began travelling a great deal from their home base in Provence to Paris, and London, and the United States--until in 1937 he accepted the chair of Creative Literature and a position on the staff of the Writers Conference at Olivet College in Michigan. He was glad also to accept an honorary D. Litt.

His duties at Olivet College must have been relatively light, since during his time there he managed to write his monumental The March of Literature and also to go on a number of lecture tours, including one to the deep south, where he spoke to a class of girls studying the novel under Caroline Gordon.[177] In the spring of 1939 he went on tour again, and in May he was back in New York, where, according to William Carlos Williams, he intended to establish a residence for the purpose of becoming an American citizen.[178] Before he left for France again on a business matter, he engineered a characteristic philanthropic scheme. He founded The Friends of William Carlos Williams, much to the embarrassment of that poet.

---

[177]For an account of this talk see Caroline Gordon, "The Story of Ford Madox Ford," Highlights of Modern Literature, ed. Francis Brown ("Mentor Books"; New York: The New American Library, 1954), pp. 113-18.

[178]Autobiography of William Carlos Williams (New York: Random House, 1951), pp. 299-300.

He was now past sixty-five and very ill. On May 25, 1939 William Carlos Williams wrote to Robert McAlmon, telling him that Ford and Biala were about to sail for France and reporting his attitude toward a proposed luncheon and prize-giving ceremony to be held by The Friends of William Carlos Williams:

> I confess it means very little to me except as it relates to Ford. I've gotten to like the man. If I can be of use to him toward the finish of his life, and let me tell you it is toward the finish of his life unless I'm much mistaken, I'm willing to let him go ahead.[179]

Soon after his arrival in France Ford was stricken with a heart attack while in Honfleur. He remained alive long enough for Stella to bring Julie to see him for a final visit, and then on June 26, 1939 he died and was buried in Deauville. His death was less than a public tragedy: he had at the time of his death, as he had always had, many friends and admirers but no popular following.

In an admirable thumbnail sketch Morton Dauwen Zabel sums up the paradox that was Ford Madox Ford:

> Traditionalist, révolté; Catholic, sceptic; agrarian and internationalist; "small producer" and restless migrant; democrat, ritual-lover, and iconoclast; fond father, erring husband, harassed lover; loyal to England, to Germany, and to France--he was all these by turns and never fully succeeded in stabilizing or centering his personal or artistic loyalties. He came to reject half his work as "worthless," wrote remorselessly day after day, found joy elusive and trouble sure, died at last in poverty (though with two hundred manuscripts by young writers in his keeping, recipients of his unflagging care and encouragement), was written off as "dated" in England, soon forgotten in France, unread even in America. "But," says Graham Greene, "I don't suppose failure disturbed him much: he never really believed in human happiness, his middle life had been made miserable by passion, and he came through, with his humor intact, his

---

[179] Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams, ed. John C. Thirwall (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957), p. 179.

stock of unreliable anecdotes, the kind of enemies a man ought to have, and a half-belief in a posterity which would care for good writing." Twice this life of avid human and aesthetic charity, un-self-protective impulse, and serious artistic dedication found the subject that could express its baffled generosity, once in The Good Soldier, again in the bitter fortunes of Christopher Tietjens; and in those two books--in the first of them with subtle poignance and studied craftsmanship, in the second with a more acute moral ferocity if, eventually, with a damaging distention of its material--he found the art he had groped toward with such dutiful understudy and painful search, so at last justifying himself as the artist he had always wanted to be, in a craft he held to be "the noblest to which a man can dedicate himself."[180]

---

[180] Morton Dauwen Zabel, Craft and Character: Method and Vocation in Modern Fiction (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 261.

CHAPTER II

THE WRITER AND HIS CRAFT

Ford's critical theory of the novel, once formulated, never changed. He repeatedly modified his attitudes toward politics, toward religion, toward persons; but at the close of his life as a novelist, as at the beginning of it, he described himself as an Impressionist; and he meant by the term the same thing in 1938 in The March of Literature[1] that he had meant in 1910 in the "Epistolary Epilogue" to A Call.[2] In fact, the principles of composition to which he adhered throughout his career were formulated once and for all during his collaboration with Conrad--roughly between 1898 and 1903. It should be observed, then, that the principles which guided his fiction throughout his life were arrived at before he actually undertook the writing of serious novels. This is not to suggest, however, that his theory of fiction was no more than a set of immature notions which he stubbornly refused to abandon. On the contrary, it was a carefully evolved formulation of principles that he had scrupulously worked out during his apprenticeship as a writer.

---

[1]Ford Madox Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our Own (New York: The Dial Press, 1938).

[2]Ford Madox Hueffer, A Call (London: Chatto & Windus, 1910). For an even earlier reference to himself as an Impressionist see Ford Madox Hueffer, England and the English (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1907), p. 197.

Ford's career as a man of letters did not begin with the writing of fiction, so that when he did turn to the novel, he brought to the effort considerable skill and experience as a writer and a number of firm ideas regarding the proper aims of imaginative literature.

We must bear in mind that before he met Conrad, Ford had written only one work of fiction--the embarrassingly amateurish product of his teens, The Shifting of the Fire[3]--and that what reputation he had when they began their collaboration was based on his early poetry and non-fiction. When The Inheritors[4] appeared in 1901, it was the first piece of published fiction in ten years to which Ford could lay even partial claim and only the second in his life. It was not until the appearance of The Fifth Queen[5] in 1906, after he and Conrad had parted company, that Ford began to emerge as a novelist in his own right. When we refer, then, to Ford in 1910, we are speaking of a man, it is true, with only a handful of novels to his name; but we are speaking also of "a man getting on for forty, a little mad about good letters,"[6] with thirty published books, a long

---

[3]H. Ford Hueffer, The Shifting of the Fire (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892).

[4]Joseph Conrad and F. M. Hueffer, The Inheritors (London: William Heinemann, 1901).

[5]Ford Madox Hueffer, The Fifth Queen (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906). Actually The Benefactor (London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1905) appeared a year earlier, but it was so derivative from James as hardly to constitute an independent effort by Ford. See infra, p. 163.

[6]Ford Madox Hueffer, Memories and Impressions (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911), p. 328. (In this and subsequent chapters references will be to Memories and Impressions, the American edition of Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections [London: Chapman and Hall, 1911]).

collaboration with Conrad, and the editorship of the English Review behind him. That the critical principles he espoused thus early in his career as a novelist should have seemed sound to him upon maturer reflection thirty years later need not surprise us.

Ford was fond of asserting that he learned what he knew about the theory and practice of fiction during his collaboration with Conrad,[7] and while this is, perhaps, essentially true, it remains something of an exaggeration by way of paying tribute to Conrad. It is clearly an overstatement because he had read and admired James, de Maupassant, Turgenev, and, pre-eminently, Flaubert--the writers whose ideas formed the basis for and permanently influenced his own ideas--long before he met or even heard of Conrad, although Conrad's "message that, the province of written art is above all to make you see was given before we met: it was because that same belief was previously and so profoundly held by the writer [Ford] that we could work for so long together. We had the same aims and we had all the time the same aims."[8] That both Ford and Conrad during their collaboration learned a great deal about how to write is incontestable, but it is patently absurd to imagine that either of them had not previously held some very clear ideas regarding what a novel ought to set out to do.

In his study of Henry James, Ford laments that James in his

---

[7]See Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1932), p. 198 for one instance of this claim. (In this and subsequent chapters references are to this American edition of Return to Yesterday.)

[8]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924), p. 168.

essays and prefaces had so thoroughly discussed his purposes and techniques that there was "nothing left for the poor critic but the merest of quotations."[9] The poor critic of Ford finds himself in a strikingly similar dilemma. For, like James, Ford never tired of discussing the art of fiction, especially his own fiction. Unlike James, however, Ford rarely discussed his novels singly but confined himself largely to the general principles that governed all of his work. Since these principles remained unaltered for some forty years, the comments on his theory and practice that occur throughout his non-fiction, while predictably repetitious, are in the aggregate remarkably consistent and comprehensive.[10]

The central thesis in Ford's literary theory was the very Jamesian notion that "the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes upon mankind."[11] The novel must be for the reader a source of vicarious experience undiminished by authorial intrusions.

> The object of the novelist is to keep the reader entirely oblivious of the fact that the author exists--even of the fact that he is reading a book. This is of course not possible to the bitter end, but a reader can be rendered very engrossed, and the nearer you can come to making him entirely insensitive to his surroundings, the more you will have succeeded.[12]

---

[9] Ford Madox Hueffer, Henry James: A Critical Study (London: Martin Secker, 1913), p. 152.

[10] The best single volume from which to gain an understanding of Ford's critical theory is Joseph Conrad, in which it is discussed somewhat systematically; but critical remarks are scattered throughout his non-fiction. Unless it serves some critical end, I will generally not cite more than one appearance of a critical idea; but I will refer to as many separate works as is feasible for my quotations in order to demonstrate the remarkable consistency of Ford's ideas.

[11] Joseph Conrad, p. 180.

[12] Ibid., p. 186.

If a novel is to produce the effect that life makes upon mankind, then,

> A novel must . . . not be a narration, a report. Life does not say to you: In 1914 my next door neighbour, Mr. Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted it with Cox's green aluminum paint. . . . If you think about the matter you will remember, in various unordered pictures, how one day Mr. Slack appeared in his garden and contemplated the wall of his house. You will then try to remember the year of that occurrence and you will fix it as August 1914 because having had the foresight to bear the municipal stock of the city of Liège you were able to afford a first-class season ticket for the first time in your life. . . ."[13]

This central notion that the novel must faithfully reproduce the effect that life makes upon consciousness is the keynote of what Ford called Impressionism. He and Conrad, he says,

> . . . accepted without much protest the stigma: 'Impressionists' that was thrown at us. In those days Impressionists were still considered to be bad: Atheists, Reds, wearing red ties with which to frighten householders. But we accepted the name because Life appearing to us much as the building of Mr. Slack's greenhouse comes back to you, we saw that Life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains. We in turn, if we wished to produce on you an effect of life, must not narrate but render . . . impressions.[14]

Before we examine the implications of this basic premise for Ford's discussions of technique (and we ought to remark immediately that the ramifications of his Impressionist commitment are manifest in every detail of his pronouncements on how novels ought to be written), it would be wise first to examine his general views on the function and history of the arts. Such an examination reveals the remarkable consistency of his critical thinking, for it becomes clear that Ford's commitment to an art of fiction that strives for the re-creation of "the general effect that life makes upon mankind"

---

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

is itself an outgrowth of his view of the function of the arts.

It is impossible to exaggerate the profundity of Ford's conviction that the arts play a serious role in civilized society and must be taken seriously. He declared repeatedly that "the only occupation fitting for a proper man in these centuries is the writing of novels,"[15] and while such a dictum may be absurdly hyperbolic, it is, of course, conscious exaggeration intended to call attention to his reverence for literature. For it is not as hyperbole that Ford suggests that "in the end it is to the novelist that the public must go for its knowledge of life."[16]

> And when, each man by himself, we are seeking to make out the pattern of the bewildering carpet that modern life is, it matters very little whether the facts are those collected by the scientific historian, by the sociopolitical economist or by the collector of railroad statistics. But to be brought really into contact with our fellow men, to become intimately acquainted with the lives of those around us, this is a thing which grows daily more difficult in the complexities of modern life. This, vicariously, the artist is more and more needed to supply . . . . So that unless the imaginative help us in this matter we are in great danger of losing alike human knowledge and human sympathy.[17]

It is to the artist, then, that we go not for facts but for an understanding of what it means to be a human being and for an understanding of the times in which we live.

> For the function of the Arts in the State--apart from the consideration of aesthetics--is so to aerate the mind of the taxpayer as to make him less a dull boy. Or if you like, it is by removing him from his own immediate affairs and immersing

---

[15] Ibid., p. 175. This idea occurs in almost every book of memoirs and in almost every book of criticism.

[16] Return to Yesterday, p. 258.

[17] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Critical Attitude (London: Duckworth & Co., 1911), pp. 66-67.

him in those of his fellows to give him a better view of the complicated predicaments that surround him.[18]

In Return to Yesterday he concludes:

> The only human activity that has always been of extreme importance to the world is imaginative literature. It is of supreme importance because it is the only means by which humanity can express at once emotions and ideas. To avoid controversy I am perfectly ready to concede that the other arts are of equal importance. But nothing that is not an art is of any lasting importance at all, the meanest novel being humanly more valuable than the most pompous of factual works, the most formidable of material achievements or the most carefully thought out of legal codes. Samuel Butler wrote an immense number of wasted words in the attempt to avenge himself for some fancied slight at the hands of Darwin. But, in spite of these follies The Way of All Flesh is of vastly more use to us today than is The Origin of Species. Darwin as scientist is as superseded as the poor alchemist in the Spessart Inn: so is Butler in the same department of human futility. But The Way of All Flesh cannot be superseded because it is a record of humanity. Science changes its aspect as every new investigator gains sufficient publicity to discredit his predecessors. The stuff of humanity is unchangeable. I do not expect the lay reader to agree with me in this pronouncement but it would be better for him if he did. The world would be a clearer place to him.[19]

For Ford, then, it was clear that "the greatest service that any novelist can render to the public, the greatest service that any one man can render to the State, is to draw an unbiassed picture of the world we live in."[20] But too few writers, in his view, especially too few gifted writers, have recognized their responsibility as artists. Among his older contemporaries he saw two equally distressing tendencies. On the one hand, there were the Inspirational school, who, while often very gifted, refused to take technique seriously. On the other hand, one found writers who took their work seriously

---

[18] Ford Madox Ford, The English Novel (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1929), p. 28.

[19] P. 178.

[20] Henry James, p. 46.

enough but failed either to look at life around them or to render it faithfully.

The first group had as its champion H. G. Wells and as its slogan-coiner Rudyard Kipling. In Portraits from Life, after stating that "in the kingdom of letters Mr. Wells and I have been leaders of opposing forces for nearly the whole of this century," Ford goes on to clarify his position thus:

> What we contended was that the world could be saved only by the Arts; Mr. Wells and his followers proclaimed that that trick could only be done by Science. What, secondly, we contended was that if you intended to practice the Arts you had better know something of the mental processes of how works of art are produced; the enemy forces proclaimed, with drums a-beat and banners waving, that to be an artist of any sort you had only to put some vine leaves in your hair, take pen or brush and paper or canvas and dip pen or brush in inkstand or paint pot, and Art would flow from your fingertips. The opposing doctrines were, in short, those of Inspiration and of Conscious Art.[21]

The forces of Wells found their justification in Kipling's

> There are five and fifty ways
> Of inditing tribal lays
> And every single one of them is right.
>
> That [Ford commented] is true enough as far as it goes--but the corollary should be considered. The corollary is more important than the proposition. It is that for every subject there is one only best treatment.[22]

Unfortunately, to take one's work seriously, consciously to seek the one best way of achieving one's literary ends does not in itself assure responsible art even by talented men. Writers like the Aesthetes, and in this they were essentially alien to the spirit

---

[21] Ford Madox Ford, Portraits from Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), pp. 107-108.

[22] Return to Yesterday, p. 183. See also Portraits from Life, p. 108, and The March of Literature, p. 341, in both of which the first line of verse reads "There are five and forty ways."

of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, failed in their trust, in Ford's estimation, because they failed to look at and to render the life around them.[23] To his father's alleged tribute that "D. G. Rossetti wrote the thoughts of Dante in the language of Shakespeare," Ford replied, "Rossetti would have been better employed if he had written the thoughts of Rossetti in the language of Victoria."[24] Equally inadequate are those who, ignoring their duty to render their world as it is, falsify, for whatever noble purpose. In Ford's view:

> With the novel you can do anything: you can inquire into every department of life, you can explore every department of life, you can explore every department of the world of thought. The one thing that you cannot do is to propagandise, as author, for any cause. You must not, as author, utter any views: above all you must not fake any events. You must not, however humanitarian you may be, over-elaborate the fear felt by a coursed rabbit.[25]

If, however, you wish to propagandize, if your views are so strong that you must express them,

> You must then invent, justify, and set going in your novel a character who can express your views. If you are a gentleman you will also invent, justify and set going characters to express views opposite to those you hold.[26]

John Galsworthy was for Ford, perhaps, the outstanding example among his contemporaries of a writer who failed as an artist because he failed to perceive that whatever moral end art serves it does so indirectly.

---

[23] Memories and Impressions, p. 42. See also Ford Madox Hueffer, Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, n.d. [1902]), p. 86.

[24] The March of Literature, p. 760.

[25] Joseph Conrad, p. 208. Italics mine.

[26] Ibid., p. 209.

> The disease from which he suffered was pity . . . or not so much pity as an insupportable anger at the sufferings of the weak or the impoverished in a harsh world. It was as if some portion of his mind had been flayed and bled at every touch. It entered into his spirit . . . and remained with him all his life. And, for me at least, it robbed his later work of interest, since the novelist must be pitiless at least when he is at work.[27]

Galsworthy believed that "humanity could be benefited by propaganda for virtue of a Christian order," while Ford contended that "humanity can only be brought to ameliorate itself if life as it is is presented in terms of an art."[28] Galsworthy never learned the lesson that Flaubert, Maupassant, and Turgenev taught:

> That camp proclaimed that a work of art must be a passionless rendering of life as it appears to the artist. It must be coloured by no exaggerations, whether they tend to exalt either the Right or Left in politics. The public function of the work of art in short was, after it had given pleasure, to present such an epitome of life that the reader could get from it sufficient knowledge to let him decide how to model both his private and his public lives. Thus Flaubert wrote that if France had read his Education Sentimentale, she would have been spared the disasters of the Franco-Prussian War. He meant, not that France would have learned from him how to choose a better rifle than the chassepot, but that if France had learned from that book how to question her accepted ideas she would have had a set of citizens capable of studying public questions with realism. Then she could have taken earlier precautions against the Prussians. . . . The business, then, of the artist was to study the works of his predecessors . . . the works that had given pleasure. In that way he would learn how to give pleasure in his turn. And, rendering the life of his day as he saw it and without preconceptions, his world would at least be enlightened as to the conditions in which it lived. It might even, then, improve itself.[29]

The function of the arts, then, in Ford's view was to give man a better understanding of his fellows and some comprehension of

---

[27] Portraits from Life, p. 125.

[28] Ford Madox Ford, It Was the Nightingale (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1933), p. 51.

[29] Portraits from Life, p. 134.

the complex world he inhabited. The artist could achieve this ultimate end only by suppressing his own preconceptions and sympathies and offering a dispassionate picture of the world as it appeared to him. But for the practicing artist there was a more immediate problem: he must give pleasure. Whatever indirect civilizing influence a work of art might possess, its first obligation is to be interesting, to engage the attention of its audience.

For, although he rarely felt it necessary to discuss it, Ford, like James, assumed as a first principle what we might describe broadly as an aesthetic standard. For this reason it is absolutely essential that the writer develop a conscious technical mastery of his craft. In Thus To Revisit Ford states his position in this way:

> There is no mystery at all about either the object or the practice of technique; yet the mere use of the word is sufficient to goad many writers into frenzies in which they will strangely betray their real natures! In itself, the acquiring, the study of, one's particular technique, is nothing more mysterious in its aim or pursuit than the desire of the artist to please--to be interesting; to be pellucid! It is nothing more than that. There is probably no one set of rules that will unite all writers. There is probably no single rule at all--except that the writer should never bore his reader![30]

And in Joseph Conrad he asserts:

> We [Ford and Conrad] thought just simply of the reader: Would this passage grip him? If not it must go. Will this word make him pause and so slow down the story? If there is any danger of that, away with it. That's all that is meant by the dangerous word technique.[31]

Before Flaubert all novels were marred by passages not only irrelevant but intolerably dull. "Post-Flaubertian technique amounts

---

[30] Ford Madox Hueffer, Thus To Revisit (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921), p. 82.

[31] P. 173.

to no more than a determination on the part of the artist not to nod."[32] What disturbed Ford, however, more than the inadequacies of Flaubert's predecessors was the obtuseness of the vast majority of his successors--the persistent willingness to sacrifice the whole for the sake of a brilliant part. To Ford and Conrad it seemed incontestable that the novel must be treated as a total construct:

> That every word set on paper--*every* word set on paper--must carry the story forward and, that as the story progresses, the story must be carried forward faster and faster and with more intensity. That is called *progression d'effet*, words for which there is no English equivalent.[33]

And yet clear as the need for an awareness of form and for technical mastery appeared to the Impressionists they found few sympathetic ears among English novelists. In *Thus To Revisit* Ford illustrates his disenchantment with most of his contemporaries with the following, probably apocryphal, anecdote.

> Looking around us, then, at our predecessors and contemporaries, and the models they presented to our view, we [Ford and Conrad] saw only one thing: the sacrificing--the ignoring indeed--of every other attribute of Art in order to produce the Strong Situation. All characters had to be outlined *a coups de hache*, to be seven feet high and to walk from two to four feet above the ground in order that, towards the end of a book one of them might exclaim: "And my poor fool is dead!" or another, "Curse you, Copperfield!" And, indeed, conversing yesterday with one of our most distinguished critics as to the relative values of James and Meredith, I was astonished to hear him say: "Yes: the *Real Thing* is all very well; but consider the matchless situation in chapter xvi (or it may have been xvii) of *Emilia*. That scene alone is worth all that Henry James ever wrote." He went on to say that all the rest of *Emilia* bored him--but he repeated that that one Strong Situation washed out all claims of the author of the *Princess Casamassima* to be considered alongside the author of *Evan Harrington*.[34]

Ford was willing to admit that the general disregard for

---

[32] *Thus To Revisit*, p. 15. [33] *Joseph Conrad*, p. 210.

[34] Pp. 41-42.

formal excellence that obtained in the Victorian novel was due in part to the demands of publishers--that serial publication required that each installment build to a Strong Situation, that remuneration based on bulk forbade the too rigid application of a principle of selection. He was aware also that the dictation of terms by publishers was more than an interesting Victorian curiosity. As late as 1911 in The Critical Attitude he loudly deplored the recently announced policy of Heinemann to give the public novels of large bulk at a small price since, in that publisher's estimation, books of high but condensed quality were so rare and so demanding on their readers that for commercial purposes they could be altogether ignored.[35]

But it was not financial exigency alone, as Ford saw the matter, that made the traditional English novel the poor thing that it was. It was a failure to take seriously the novel as an art form. Novelists in the past had erred in two distinguishable but not very different ways. One tradition stemming from Tom Jones had employed the novel not as an end in itself but as a medium through which the author by means of editorial intrusions could demonstrate his cleverness and the propriety of his reactions to the situations he invented. "Both Thackeray all his life and Fielding in Tom Jones were intent first of all on impressing on their readers that they were not real novelists . . . but gentlemen."[36] The second disastrous use to which the novel was put is really an outgrowth of the Fielding tradition in which the novelist sees himself in part at least as a "gentlemanly

---

[35] P. 135.

[36] The March of Literature, p. 587.

reformer." It was the great crime of Dickens to make of "the novel . . . the vehicle for the reform of abuses."[37]

These three--Fielding, Thackeray, Dickens--Ford held in especial contempt not only because they had perverted the proper ends of the novel but because they were poor craftsmen. Of Dickens he said, "as a constructive artist even of the picaresque school, Dickens was contemptible."[38] Of the other two,

> Were it not that they were avowed moralizers of a middle- to lower middle class type, the Fielding-to Thackeray lineage of writers might also be regarded as purveyors of the Literature of Escape but their continually brought in passages of moralizations are such a nuisance that they cannot be ignored. Though they were both amateurs in the sense that neigher knew how to write or cared anything about it, Thackeray at times projected his scenes so wonderfully that now and then he trembles dreadfully excitingly on the point of passing from the stage of the purveyor of the nuvvle to that of the real novelist.[39]

What was worse, however, in Ford's eyes, than the moral posturing of Fielding and Thackeray was their lack of concern for maintaining "the illusion of life."

> For no author with a real passion for his coming projection will begin his novel with an exordium calling attention to the artificiality of his convention any more than any author with any passion for what he has projected will end up his novel with snuffingly calling attention to the fact that the tale is only a tale. Consider, in this respect, Thackeray; how, directly imitating Fielding, he ruins whole books of his by their introductions or their last paragraphs--those last paragraphs in which the real novelist strains every nerve to add reality to his closing so that the reader, rising from the book in the actual atmosphere of a West Chester library, goes about for an hour or so still beneath the palms of Malaysia or the lower reaches of the Thames. But what must Mr. Thackeray do but begin or end up his books with paragraphs running: "Reader, the puppet play is ended; let down the curtain; put

---

[37] The English Novel, p. 104. [38] Ibid., p. 33.

[39] Ibid., p. 84. "Nuvvle" was the term Ford coined for cheap escape fiction.

the puppets back into their boxes, sweep up the programmes and orange peels from the sawdust." . . . and the whole effect of the long book is dispelled.[40]

While Ford saw no meaningful tradition in the English novel, he did see a tradition and a steady development of novelistic theory which crossed national boundaries. He contended that while the subject of the English novel between Fielding and James was a vast topic, "the topic of main currents of that literature is more easily got rid of simply because there are practically no main currents at all. There are some good writers but of a Tradition practically no trace."[41] Among the isolated good writers, he admired Smollett, Austen, Marryat, and, in spite of himself, Trollope.[42] But his greatest admiration was reserved for Richardson, largely because it is from Richardson that what Ford saw as a meaningful tradition in the novel stemmed.

Because Richardson did evolve a form for his novels, however unsatisfactory that form may be for present-day writers; because he did consciously attempt to convince the reader of the objective existence of his characters and their affairs; because he did try to place the reader within the action of his novels and the minds of his characters while leaving himself outside; and because he influenced a whole generation of French writers who made the modern novel--Ford could say of him, "I know of no other figure in English literature--if it be not that of Trollope--who so suggests

---

[40] The March of Literature, pp. 586-87.

[41] The English Novel, p. 108.

[42] Ibid., pp. 106 and 119. Also see Ford Madox Ford, New York Essays (New York: W. E. Rudge, 1927), p. 16, for qualifications regarding Trollope.

the two supreme artists of the world--Holbein and Bach."[43] Ford was not blind to the excruciating sentimentality of Richardson's novels, but the value of the epistolary form was for him so great that it obliterated whatever faults Richardson possessed and assured him an important place in literary history. Nor was Ford blind to the fact that the epistolary form was itself a rather obvious convention calling for a willing suspension of disbelief. Two things were nonetheless undeniable: Richardson had consciously sought a form; and,

> The advantage of writing a novel in the form of letters is that the author obtains verisimilitude; he has neither the temptation, nor indeed the possibility, to introduce his own person or comments into the narrative.[44]

Aside from Smollett, who added nothing new to the concept of the novel, Ford saw no writers in England who pursued the fruitful approach that Richardson had initiated. But in France there arose "Diderot, Stendhal, Chateaubriand, and Flaubert, all avowed followers of the Author of 'Clarissa.'"[45] It was Diderot, and still more Stendhal, who made the next great advance in the art of the novel. "That consisted in the discovery that words put into the mouth of a character need not be considered as having the personal backing of the author."[46] Before them authors would put statements with which they did not sympathize only into the mouths of characters clearly marked "villain." Now it became clear that the novel could be employed "as a means of profoundly serious and

---

[43] The English Novel, p. 89.

[44] The March of Literature, p. 593.

[45] The English Novel, p. 83. [46] Ibid., p. 122.

many-sided discussion and therefore a medium of profoundly serious investigation into the human case. It came into its own."[47] With Stendhal it became clear that if the novel were to render the human situation, the novelist could not take sides with either the virtuous or the wicked. Indeed, if Stendhal erred at all, it was in the direction of "making his detrimentals argumentatively masterly and his conventionally virtuous characters banal and impotent."[48] At any rate, Stendhal remained for Ford the "greatest literary influence of modern times."[49] By the Nineties "Stendhal was the Great Influence of every existing literary school--of the realists, the naturalists, the impressionists, the psychologists of the Yellow Book in London."[50]

After Stendhal there came Flaubert and with him Maupassant and Turgenev. Finally, James and Conrad, having learned from Flaubert and his circle, introduced impressionism to England and America and brought what was for Ford the great tradition of the novel back to the English-speaking world. Flaubert, in addition to imposing a demand for disciplined conscious craftsmanship, had done two things to shape the novel. First, he had taken the theory of aloofness--the "doctrine of the novelist as Creator who should have a Creator's aloofness, rendering the world as he sees it, uttering no comments, falsifying no issues"--to its absolutely logical conclusion.[51] Second, he added the theory that the novel should be the history of an Affair and "not the invention of a tale in which a central

---

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 127.

[49] The March of Literature, p. 780.

[50] Ibid.

[51] The English Novel, p. 129.

character with an attendant female should be followed through a certain space of time until the book comes to a happy end on a note of matrimony or to an unhappy end--represented by death."[52]

While Ford saw Impressionism as the direct descendant of a great tradition whose chief tenet was the suppression of the artist, he was certainly aware of other tendencies in modern literature. There was, as he saw it, the lamentable desire among most modern writers to demonstrate their literary skill rather than to give vicarious experience. Once a style became too refined, once a *mot* became too *juste*, the reader must inevitably become aware of the existence of the writer; one might as well have Fielding or Thackeray. In an anecdote intended to illustrate the tendency of much of modern literature, Ford tells of a harangue Percy Wyndham Lewis delivered to him just before the first world war. Lewis said:

> You and Mr. Conrad and Mr. James and all those old fellows are done. . . . Exploded! . . . *Fichus*! . . . *Vieux jeu*! . . . No good! . . . Finished! . . . Look here! . . . You old fellows are merely nonsensical. You go to infinite pains to get in your conventions. . . . *Progression d'effets*. . . . *Charpentes* . . . . Time-shift. . . . God knows what. . . . And for what? What in Heaven's name for? You want to kid people into believing that, when they read your ingenious projections they're actually going through the experiences of your characters. Verisimilitude--that's what you want to get with all your wheezy efforts. . . . But that isn't what people want. They don't want vicarious experience; they don't want to be educated. They want to be amused. . . . By brilliant fellows like me. Letting off brilliant fireworks. Performing like dogs on tight ropes. Something to give them the idea that they're at a performance. You fellows try to efface yourselves; to make people think there isn't any author and that they're living in the affairs you . . . adumbrate, isn't that your word? What balls! What rot! . . . What's the good of being an author if you don't get any fun out of it? . . . Efface yourself! . . . Bilge![53]

---

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[53] *Portraits from Life*, p. 219. The same anecdote appears

Since Ford, even in his own judgment, was not an innovator but a disciple of Flaubert and James, a perpetuator of an already established tradition, we must necessarily ask whether he did in fact make any significant contribution to the development of the novel. The answer is yes, and in two ways. First of all, in collaboration with Conrad he introduced a wholly new way of treating chronology by his development of the time shift. This constituted a considerable broadening of the technical scope of the novel. Secondly, in his detailed discussions of the way in which literary effects might be achieved, that is, the practical problems of rendering an affair, he added immeasurably to the general understanding of the inner workings of the art of fiction. We must bear constantly in mind, however, that his ultimate goal was always the Flaubertian ideal of "a passionless reconstitution"[54] of one's world as it really was and the provision of a vicarious experience for the reader. Even the time shift was adopted not as part of a new direction in the aims of the novelist but as a technique to be used in creating "the general effect that life makes upon mankind."

The problem of treating the passage of time plagued Ford throughout his career. He was able to state the dilemma for the novelist quite simply:

> It became very early evident to us [Ford and Conrad] that what was the matter with the Novel, and the British novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight

---

almost word for word in The March of Literature, p. 583, in Thus To Revisit, p. 140, and in Return to Yesterday, p. 400, where the speaker is identified as D. Z.

[54] Portraits from Life, p. 208.

> forward. You meet an English gentleman at your golf club. He is beefy, full of health, the moral of the boy from an English Public School of the finest type. You discover, gradually, that he is hopelessly neurasthenic, dishonest in matters of small change, but unexpectedly self-sacrificing, a dreadful liar but a most painfully careful student of lepidoptera and, finally, from the public prints, a bigamist who was once, under another name, hammered on the Stock Exchange. . . . Still, there he is, the beefy, full-fed fellow, moral of an English Public School product. To get such a man in fiction you could not begin at his beginnings and work his life chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past. . . . That theory at least we gradually evolved.[55]

The attitude here expressed seems simple and straight forward enough, but it harbors several difficulties, and Ford was aware of all of them.

To begin with, a mixed chronology does not overcome the enormous difficulty of rendering, giving a sense of, the passage of time within a given narrative unit. When Ford says,

> Sometimes to render anything at all in a given space will take up too much room--even to render the effect and delivery of a speech. Then just boldly and remorselessly you must relate and <u>risk</u> the introduction of yourself as author, with the danger that you may destroy all the illusion of the story.[56]

he is speaking not of the obvious undesirability of editorial intrusion but of the less obvious but none the less intrusive employment of such a phrase as "after two weeks elapsed" or "ten minutes later." Such phrases constitute telling, not showing, and call attention to the existence of an omniscient author. Ford did finally solve the problem of rendering time by an ingenious compromise: the use of a narrator in a novel employing a double time scheme. In <u>The Good Soldier</u>[57] we have Dowell relating the history of his affair according

---

[55] <u>Joseph Conrad</u>, pp. 129-30. [56] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 184.

[57] Ford Madox Hueffer, <u>The Good Soldier</u> (London: John Lane,

to Ford's formula for mixed chronological associative recollections while the actual process of recollection goes on in Dowell's mind in perfectly straightforward time sequence. As a point of view character Dowell is very similar to Conrad's Marlow but with an important difference. Dowell has not assessed his reactions prior to telling his story; Marlow's shift in attitude toward Jim has already been effected when he sits down to address his circle of listeners, so that during the actual narration his views remain constant. Dowell, in fact, learns during the process of recollection. He continually calls attention to the fact that it takes him several months to accomplish the telling of his tale. As we will see in a later chapter, he learns during the process so that his judgments are far more sophisticated and reliable at the end of the book than they are at the beginning. In the Parade's End[58] tetralogy we see a similar sort of double time scheme. At the same time that we learn of the major events in the book by means of time shifts, we observe Tietjens undergoing a process of change in attitude.

In The Good Soldier Ford absolves himself of all responsibilities by employing the convention of the memoir. Failures to render become Dowell's failures not Ford's, so long as Ford manages successfully to render, not to relate, Dowell's failures to render. As Ford was aware, rendering the novel directly as author instead of putting it entirely into the mouth of a character is the more

---

1915). My references are to Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier (New York: Vintage Books Inc., 1957).

[58]Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950).

difficult way.[59] This is the method of Parade's End, in which by means of a shifting point of view Ford manages successfully to efface himself as author.

Another difficulty with Ford's treatment of chronology, especially in conjunction with characterization, resides in the means of creating the initial impression one wishes to convey.

> The practised novelist [he declares in The English Novel] knows that when he is introducing a character to his reader it is expedient that the first speech of that character should be an abstract statement striking strongly the note of that character. First impressions are the strongest of all and once you have established in that way the character of one of your figures you will find it very hard to change it. So humanity, feeling the need for great typical figures with whose example to exhort their children or to guide themselves, adopts with avidity, invents or modifies the abstract catch-words by which that figure will stand or fall.[60]

The real trick is to create a sufficiently strong impression so that the reader may recognize the distinctive qualities of the character while avoiding the creation of an unalterable caricature. In The March of Literature how to achieve this is set forth in the following terms:

> Actually, as Herodotus knew, if you wish to present, say Cyrus, as he lived, it is a good thing to get him in with some vividness and then to abandon him for a time in favor of Rhampsinitus. Because, when you return to Cyrus, you will seem to be taking up an acquaintance again with an already known figure, and you will seem to deepen your knowledge of his habits or vicissitudes quite disproportionately.[61]

The view set forth here in The March of Literature not only suggests a practical means of handling character but also mitigates to a large degree the sense of compromise that, in Joseph Conrad, Ford said he always felt when reflecting on the

---

[59] Joseph Conrad, p. 185. [60] P. 21. [61] P. 100.

beginnings of books.[62] One of his statements concerning beginnings seems optimistic enough:

> Openings for us, as for most writers, were matters of great importance, but probably we more than most writers realised of what primary importance they are. A real short story must open with a breathless sentence; a long-short story may begin with an "as" or a "since" and some leisurely phrases. At any rate the opening paragraph of book or story should be of the tempo of the whole performance. That is the règle générale. Moreover, the reader's attention must be gripped by that first paragraph. So our ideal novel must begin either with a dramatic scene or with a note that should suggest the whole book.[63]

Ford was, however, a perceptive enough critic to recognize that no ideal opening exists:

> The disadvantage of the dramatic opening is that after the dramatic passage is done you have to go back to getting your characters in, a proceeding that the reader is apt to dislike. The danger with the reflective opening is that the reader is apt to miss being gripped at once by the story. Openings are therefore of necessity always affairs of compromise.[64]

But the potential pitfalls of the dramatic opening appear less ominous if we adopt the same view of them that Ford takes with regard to the introduction of characters. Just as Herodotus may introduce Cyrus, leave him, and comfortably return to him as to an old friend, so may the novelist introduce a dramatic action, interrupt it in order to develop his characters, and return to it. If the interruption of the action is properly handled, rather than offending the reader it will serve to whet his curiosity regarding what is to happen next.

The proper handling of interruptions in the flow of narrative was, in fact, a central element in Ford's compositional technique, both in his fiction and in his non-fiction. In *It Was the*

---

[62] P. 173. [63] *Joseph Conrad*, p. 171. [64] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Nightingale he says:

> Any digression will make a longuer, a patch over which the mind will progress heavily. You may have the most wonderful scene from real life that you might introduce into your book. But if it does not make your subject progress it will divert the attention of the reader. A good novel needs all the attention the reader can give it. And then some more.
>
> Of course you must appear to digress. That is the art which conceals Art. The reader, you should premise, will always dislike you and your book. He thinks it an insult that you should dare to claim his attention, and if lunch is announced or there is a ring at the bell he will welcome the digression. So you will provide him with what he thinks are digressions--with occasions on which he thinks he may let his attention relax. . . . But really not one single thread must ever escape your purpose.
>
> I am--I may hazard the digression!--using that principle of technique in writing this book. You may think it slipshod and discursive. It will appear to drag in all sorts of subjects just to make up the requisite length. Actually it contains nothing that has not been selected to carry forward the story or the mood.[65]

Moreover, properly placed, the seeming digression, by virtue of its capacity mildly to shock the reader by its ostensible inappropriateness, actually forces him to exercise a closer attention than might be the case with a smoothly flowing sequence of events or ideas.[66] Of course, one must be careful not to make the "digression" too long, not to use it out of place, and not to allow it to become an end in itself--all matters which, in the final analysis, rely on the writer's good judgment.

In virtually all of his non-fiction Ford uses the "digression" to good advantage, and he almost invariably calls attention to the technique in a passage similar to the one we have just quoted

---

[65] P. 212.

[66] When he lectured his troops in the Army, Ford tells us that he "found that a sudden digression from the subject in hand would very much reawaken group attentions that were beginning to wander." Ford Madox Ford, Great Trade Route (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 35.

from It Was the Nightingale. In his fiction, however, what corresponds to the discursive digression is a far more subtle thing. We have already seen its importance in characterization and in the presentation of dramatic action, but there is a more fundamental basis for its existence inherent in Ford's attitude toward the proper treatment of subject. If an affair is to be properly rendered, it must be shown in all its complexity; "a subject must be seized by the throat until the last drop of dramatic possibility . . . [is] squeezed out of it."[67] And, if this is to be done, the novelist must interrupt the main action and describe its attendant circumstances. It is also necessary for a character to reflect periodically on the implications of the action.

The great master in Ford's eyes of squeezing the last drop out of a situation was, predictably, Henry James.[68] But there were far too few novelists who had learned the lesson of the master:

> In the pre-war period the English novel began at the beginning of a hero's life and went straight on to his marriage without pausing to look aside. This was all very well in its way, but the very great objection could be offered against it that such a story was too confined to its characters and, too self-centeredly, went on, in vacuo. If you are so set on the affair of your daughter Millicent with the young actor that you forget that there are flower shows and town halls with nude statuary your intellect will appear a thing much more circumscribed than it should be. Or, to take a larger matter. A great many novelists have treated of the late war in terms solely of the war: in terms of pip-squeaks, trench-coats, wire-aprons, shells, mud, dust, and sending the bayonet home with a grunt. For that reason interest in the late war is said to have died. But, had you taken part actually in those hostilities, you would know how infinitely little part the actual fighting itself took in your mentality. You would be lying on your stomach, in a beast of a funk, with an immense, horrid German barrage going on all

---

[67] Thus To Revisit, p. 44.

[68] See especially Henry James, pp. 167-68.

> over and round you and with hell and all let loose. But apart from the occasional, petulant question: "When the deuce will our fellows get going and shut them up?" your thoughts were really concentrated on something quite distant: on your daughter Millicent's hair, on the fall of the Asquith Ministry, on your financial predicament, on why your regimental ferrets kept on dying, on whether Latin is really necessary to an education, or in what way really ought the Authorities to deal with certain diseases. . . . You were there, but great shafts of thought from the outside, distant and unattainable world infinitely for the greater part occupied your mind.
>
> It was that effect then, that Conrad and the writer sought to get into their work, that being Impressionism.[69]

Another feature of Ford's technique which required a shift of emphasis away from the steady development of plot line was what he called "justification." Neither he nor Conrad ever even attempted to construct a story with an ending that flashes an illumination over the whole after parading quickly introduced characters through a fast paced action. As Ford explains the matter,

> The reason for this lies in all that is behind the mystic word "justification." Before everything a story must convey a sense of inevitability: that which happens in it must seem to be the only thing that could have happened. Of course a character may cry: "If I had then acted differently how different everything would now be." The problem of the author is to make his then action the only action that character could have taken. It must be inevitable, because of his character, because of his ancestry, because of past illness or on account of the gradual coming together of the thousand small circumstances by which Destiny, who is inscrutable and august, will push us into one certain predicament.[70]

The method, Ford was aware, had dangers. He suggests that in part at least the preoccupation with justification accounts for the inordinate length of some of his own and some of Conrad's novels.[71] The obvious danger is that in an attempt to provide characters with biographies adequate to justify their behavior the progress of the

---

[69] Joseph Conrad, pp. 191-92.

[70] Ibid., pp. 204-205. [71] Ibid., p. 206.

story may be seriously impeded. "It becomes then your job to arrange that the very arresting of the action is an incitement of interest to the reader, just as, if you serialise a novel, you take care to let the words '*to be continued in our next*' come in at as harrowing a moment as you can contrive."[72]

Ironically, while Ford admired James and Conrad above all moderns, he detected a shortcoming in each which stemmed from the greatest strength of each--James' complexity and Conrad's inevitability. Although their novels appeared to be very dissimilar, Ford saw both writers united in an extreme consciousness and conscientiousness. Moreover, their approach to subject was essentially the same in that both attempted to deal with an "affair," a parcel of life, and squeeze the most out of it. Their common defect was a too close engrossment with the affair in hand that led to *unnecessary* digressions, which impeded the movement of the story. James, in his attempts to create a sense of the complexities of relationships, would often lose control of Selection. He would introduce unnecessary subtleties, which neither helped the story forward nor enhanced the design. Conrad, in his concern for a sense of inevitability, often became involved in overly elaborate expository digressions. True, Conrad's elaborate justifications lend his work their extraordinary air of reality, but often at the cost of narrative interest. "Their defects, in short, are those of overconsciousness."[73]

James' late, "involuted," style Ford also saw as a defect

---

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[73] *The Critical Attitude*, p. 92.

born of scrupulosity.[74] Having discovered that his earlier work not only suggested less than he intended but also suggested meanings entirely unintended, James, in Ford's view, strove for absolute precision. "So he talked down to us [his readers], explaining and explaining, the ramifications of his mind. He was aiming at explicitness, never at obscurities--as if he were talking to children."[75] As we have already observed, James' "overconsciousness" led to unwarranted digressions. It also called attention to the existence of an author. Ford and Conrad, on the other hand,

> . . . wanted the Reader to forget the Writer--to forget that he was reading. We wished him to be hypnotised into thinking that he was living what he read--or, at least, into the conviction that he was listening to a simple and in no way brilliant narrator who was telling--not writing--a true story.[76]

For Ford, "the first province of a style is to be unnoticeable," and in matters of style, as in so many other things, his master was Flaubert.

> Flaubert and all his horde spent half their lives in the pursuit of the mot juste--and the other half in making sure that the word chosen was not too juste. A too startling epithet, however vivid, or a simile, however just, is a capital defect because the first province of a style is to be unnoticeable. When Stevenson--who spent an immense amount of time in finding too just words, and jewels five words long that on the outstretched forefinger of Old Time sparkle forever--when Stevenson, then, wrote the famous imagery: "With interjected finger he delayed the action of the timepiece," meaning merely that his character put back the clock, he was woefully delaying the action of his story . . . and giving at once the impression of the intrusion of

---

[74] Return to Yesterday, pp. 208-209. Also see It Was the Nightingale, pp. 240-41, Thus To Revisit, p. 117, and Henry James, passim.

[75] Return to Yesterday, p. 209.

[76] Thus To Revisit, p. 53.

the author that the impressionist so carefully avoided.[77]

Among moderns his and Conrad's "greatest admiration for a stylist in any language was given to W. H. Hudson of whom Conrad said that his writing was like the grass that the good God made to grow and when it was there you could not tell how it came."[78] Among his younger contemporaries he singled out Hemingway as a stylist deserving of special praise:

> There have been other writers of impeccable--of matchless--prose but as a rule their sustained efforts have palled because precisely of the remarkableness of the prose itself. You can hardly read MARIUS THE EPICUREAN. You may applaud its author, Walter Pater. But A FAREWELL TO ARMS is without purple patches or even verbal "felicities." Whilst you are reading it you forget to applaud its author. You do not know that you are having to do with an author. You are living.[79]

As we might expect, in Ford's view a good style must be founded on the vernacular; the closer it could come to the common usage of the day without becoming quaint, the better. "We [Ford and Conrad] used to say that a passage of good style began with a fresh, usual word, and continued with fresh usual words to the end: there was nothing more to it."[80] Furthermore, "carefully examined a good--an interesting--style will be found to consist in a constant succession of tiny, unobservable surprises."[81] In this pronouncement, of course,

---

[77] The March of Literature, p. 843.

[78] Joseph Conrad, p. 197. The same admiration for Hudson is expressed in Return to Yesterday, p. 216, Thus To Revisit, p. 69, Portraits from Life, p. 51 and many other places.

[79] Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, intro. Ford Madox Ford ("The Modern Library"; New York: Random House, 1932), p. xix.

[80] Joseph Conrad, p. 194. Italics mine.

[81] Ibid., 197.

the word unobservable is of paramount importance. In Portraits from Life Ford summed up his ultimate aim with regard to style:

> As for me I went on working beside Conrad, trying . . . to evolve for myself a vernacular of an extreme quietness that would suggest someone of some refinement talking in a low voice near the ear of someone else he liked a good deal.[82]

Ford's comments on style were always made with specific reference to fiction, and it is true that in his serious novels he does strive, usually successfully, to employ an unobtrusive style. His non-fiction, however, is quite a different matter. It is true that in the preface to almost every critical or discursive volume he wrote, Ford claimed to be writing what he called novels using all of the tricks of the novelist. It is true, also, that he insisted that his method in his non-fiction was impressionistic. But in referring to a volume of memoirs or a critical monograph as a novel Ford is obviously speaking metaphorically. What he is in fact suggesting is what he discusses at some length in The March of Literature: that non-fiction, provided it satisfies certain criteria, may justifiably be regarded as imaginative literature.[83]

> The dividing line for us between what is to be regarded as imaginative and what technical prose would seem to draw itself along the line of to what extent the writer has expressed his personality. For, not infrequently, in spite of himself, the technical writer will let his personality so shine through even the dryest passages of the dryest possible subject matter that the reader may take as much delight in him as in Browne or Clarendon himself.[84]

The implication of this assertion is that the writer of non-fiction who regards his writing as imaginative literature assumes

---

[82] P. 216.

[83] Pp. 512-21.

[84] The March of Literature, p. 516.

as his chief aim a goal precisely opposite to the goal of the writer of novels. He may employ whatever fictive techniques he finds useful, but always with the intention not of effacing but of communicating his personality. Just how successful Ford was as a writer of non-fiction is attested to, in part at least, by Hugh Kenner's judgment that "it is on his memoirs, even more than on The Good Soldier and the Tietjens series, that his fame should eventually rest."[85]

His prose style in his non-fiction was remarkably flexible, suited always to the occasion. He could be wittily urbane, as he is in the following passage taken from New York Is Not America, in which he is making the point that circumstances and tradition when properly understood often excuse what may appear to be boorishness:

> . . . much as at Yuletide you may see elderly gentlemen of blameless behaviour forcibly embrace young virgins under the mistletoe, and no doubt some similar palliation may be found for the behaviour of the German professors that I used to find so disagreeable.[86]

On the other hand, in the following passage on D. H. Lawrence in Portraits from Life:

> He [Lawrence] would see in the blackish grass of Kensington Gardens a disreputable, bedraggled specimen of a poor relation of the dandelion whose name I have forgotten. . . . Oh, yes the coltsfoot--the most undistinguished of yellow ornaments of waste places and coal dumps. . . ,[87]

we see a favorite device of his for achieving a sense of conversational intimacy.

---

[85]Hugh Kenner, "He Wrote of Giants," Review of Trained for Genius, by Douglas Goldring, Kenyon Review, XI (Autumn, 1949), 699.

[86]Ford Madox Ford, New York Is Not America (London: Duckworth, 1927), p. 30.

[87]P. 87.

If he were concerned merely with accuracy, he would simply revise the passage to read, "He would see in the blackish grass of Kensington Gardens a coltsfoot. . . ." But the trick of correcting a pretended memory lapse lends a conversational tone and also a sense that the reader is in contact with a mind in a moment of unguarded thought. Moreover, the pretense of forgetting the proper name allows him to work in the impressionistically descriptive "a disreputable, bedraggled specimen of a poor relation of the dandelion," which contributes enormously to the context, in which Ford is discussing Lawrence's capacity for discovering beauty in the most improbable of natural phenomena. Whether he is commenting urbanely on the social customs of civilized society or reminiscing conversationally about old friends, Ford invariably adapts a style calculated not only to suit the occasion but also to reveal some facet of his personality.

Indeed, his repeated insistence that he has no regard for facts but is concerned only for the impressions things have made upon his mind is tantamount to a declaration that what he is going to discuss in his prose is himself.[88] In this connection Paul Wiley has made the useful observation that a preference for impression over fact does not imply a preference for vagueness over precision.[89] On the contrary, Ford is extremely scrupulous in selecting appropriate details to convey precisely the impression he desires. In a

---

[88] He made this declaration in the preface to nearly every volume of non-fiction that he wrote.

[89] Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1962), p. 49.

book as early as The Heart of the Country he makes it abundantly clear that he is entirely conscious of what his intentions are in any given passage of prose. Having stated in the text that the English peasant has never struck for higher wages, he makes the following comment in a footnote:

> . . . of course, when I say the peasant has never struck, I do not forget the name of Mr. Joseph Arch. But from his day back to that of John Ball agitators and stack-burnings have been so comparatively rare that "never" remains a word sufficiently accurate for the uses of impressionism.[90]

The point here is that he so strongly insists on his method that he is willing to digress, if only in a footnote, to defend his word choice, which is admittedly inaccurate, instead of substituting the less emphatic "seldom" for "never." His method demands fidelity to impressions, and it is his impression that peasants never have struck in England. (It is also possible that the footnote is a calculated "digression" intended to underline his knowledge of the details of English history in an emphatically offhand manner and thus subtly to add to the authority of his views.) On occasion his disregard for factual accuracies results in historical absurdities as when he speaks of Caxton and Chaucer as contemporaries and suggests that Chaucer's technique was governed by his writing for press publication.[91] But such instances are very rare.

In fact, he had a high regard for scholarly accuracy when

---

[90] England and the English, p. 197. The Heart of the Country, originally published as a separate volume (London: Alston Rivers, 1906), appeared as Part Two of England and the English, which also contained The Soul of London (London: Alston Rivers, 1905) and The Spirit of the People (London: Alston Rivers, 1907).

[91] The English Novel, p. 51.

the occasion demanded it. He declared in Between St. Dennis and St. George that "all controversial writings that are not . . . documented are absolutely valueless,"[92] and that book, whatever else it may be, is a tour de force of accurate documentation. Similarly, in the preface to The Cinque Ports, he asserted that while the book was to be not a topographical or archaeological study but "a piece of literature pure and simple, an attempt, by means of suggestion, to interpret to the passing years the inward message of the Five Ports,"[93] he must take pains to avoid the assaults of carping critics who might attack his views on the basis of historical inaccuracy. He determined, therefore, that he "would print assertively no single statement for which I had not found chapter and verse in a chronicle of one kind or another--in the work of a chronicler as nearly as possible contemporaneous with the event asserted."[94] This he did. The critical point to be remarked is that as a general rule it is irrelevant to his intention and to his argument whether the facts he uses to illustrate them are correct and that when accuracy was required he usually supplied it.

Of course, in fiction the matter of factual accuracy in the events depicted simply has no meaning, except in so far as the accuracy of details contribute to the creation of the illusion of life that the pages are intended to convey. The author is free to

---

[92] Ford Madox Hueffer, Between St. Dennis and St. George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 28.

[93] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Cinque Ports (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900), pp. v-vi.

[94] Ibid., p. vi.

invent whatever circumstances and characters he chooses so long as he does not falsify the human situation, and the best source for an understanding of life is life itself. "The way in which to gather knowledge of life for the purpose of conveying through your writings the image of life itself [Ford stated]--the only way is to live. And if possible to live before you write."[95] He added the caution here that by observing and experiencing life he meant observing and experiencing the vicissitudes of ordinary existence and not "their more extreme manifestations."[96] For this reason the career of journalist was of no value to the future novelist:

> The newspaper of necessity presented you with a distorted image of life simply because it had to be more interesting than life. If I judged life by the Chicago newspapers I must think the world gone mad. Yet life in Chicago was perfectly normal. The journalist had to tell you that he smelt the stockyards in the foyer of the Chicago Opera-house. But you did not. Neither did he. I said that the way to see life was to live. But the journalist did not live. At any rate he did not live the life that he wrote of. He rushed feverishly about with his eyes and ears unnaturally open. But even murderers sat quietly at home, reposing with their arms round their female companions, drinking near beer. For most of the time.[97]

The business of the novelist is to treat not of the sensational but of the ordinary so that "the World should have an aperçu of itself as it is."[98] It followed, in Ford's theory, that the novel, then, must set about "rendering not the arbitrary felicities of a central character but the singular normalities of an Affair."[99] An Affair, as Ford defined it in Thus To Revisit, was simply "one embroilment, one set of embarrassments, one human coil, one psycho-

---

[95] New York Is Not America, p. 133. [96] Ibid., pp. 133-34.
[97] Ibid., pp. 132-33. [98] Portraits from Life, pp. 207-208.
[99] The English Novel, p. 132.

logical progression. From this the Novel got its Unity."[100] In the epistolary epilogue to A Call he had described the same view in only slightly different terms:

> You go to books to be taken out of yourself, I to be shown where I stand. For me, as for you, a book must have a beginning and an end. But whereas for you the end is something arbitrarily final, such as the ring of wedding-bells, a funeral service, or the taking of a public-house, for me--since to me a novel is the history of an "affair"--finality is only found at what seems to me to be the end of that "affair." There is in life nothing final. So that even "affairs" never really have an end as far as the lives of the actors are concerned.[101]

And, in its most consummate form, the novel must exhibit its unity not only in terms of its subject but also in its selection and arrangement of details:

> Technique must become always tighter and more breathless, every word--but every slightest word--carrying the affair that the novelist is rendering always further and more swiftly to the inevitable logic of the end. And, indeed, it may be reserved for the last two or three words, like a tiny coda in a musical form, to cast light back on the whole affair and, thus, to give it its final significance.[102]

That is what is meant by the term progression d'effet, or as Ford sometimes called it "cumulation of effect."[103]

In this connection, one of the most striking aspects of Ford's technique is the way in which his juggling of time sequences contributes to the progression d'effet of his major novels. In The Good Soldier and the Tietjens tetralogy, for instance, major events are repeatedly recalled and re-examined in a seemingly haphazard manner. In the intervals, however, fresh details are supplied which

---

[100] P. 44.

[101] P. 299.

[102] The March of Literature, p. 579.

[103] Ibid., p. 580 and p. 582. Also see Henry James, pp. 167-68.

bear either directly or indirectly on these events, so that each time a significant moment is reintroduced, the impact it makes is greater as a result of our increased understanding of its implications. On one level at least Ford's novels may be seen in terms of the growth of awareness of the narrator or central consciousness. As he reconsiders and reflects upon past events, his understanding of them expands and deepens, as does the reader's. Moreover, this reflective technique not only allows us to keep the major events in mind throughout but actually forces us to do so, while intensifying our experience of them.[104]

One of the aspects of technique that most troubled Ford was how best to handle conversation. One obvious difficulty is the need to make discourse sufficiently pointed so that it does not impede the progression d'effet and at the same time sufficiently lifelike so that it does not impair the illusion of reality. It is almost impossible to accomplish this in passages of extended direct discourse. Conversations in real life are almost never either economical enough or pertinent enough to serve the turn of the novelist; to make them so, is to falsify and to call attention to one's convention. For this and other reasons Ford relied almost entirely on indirect speech for the rendering of conversations. Chief among his other reasons was that direct speeches, especially long ones, destroyed the sense of verisimilitude since neither the author as author nor the first person narrator can be expected to remember

---

[104]This is an interesting technique to consider in the context of Percy Lubbock's observation that we can never keep the whole of a novel before us for critical examination, The Craft of Fiction (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), pp. 1-5.

with precision direct speeches even relatively short and relatively recent.[105] When direct speech is used, it should be mixed with indirect quotation and narrative commentary.

When Ford agreed with Conrad that the "province of written art is above all things to make you see,"[106] he unquestionably used *see* figuratively, intending it to include everything that constitutes a vicarious experience. But, as Kenneth Young points out, he also meant it quite literally. In Young's words:

> We are never in doubt as to where the characters are, where the light comes from, what they can see through the window, where at a critical moment their hands are, what lies beyond that door. Sometimes their very movements of joint or neck are noted. They are seen as though on a stage; it is interesting to note that at about this time [during the composition of *The Fifth Queen* trilogy] Henry James was telling himself in his notebooks that he should visualize the action of his novels as though it were taking place on a stage-set.[107]

The following passage is an example of visual effect in *The Good Soldier*:

> It appears that, not very far from the Casino, he [Ashburnham] and the girl sat down in the darkness upon a public bench. The lights from that place of entertainment must have reached them through the tree-trunks, since, Edward said, he could quite plainly see the girl's face--that beloved face with the high forehead, the queer mouth, the tortured eyebrows and the direct eyes. And to Florence, creeping up behind them, they must have presented the appearance of silhouettes. For I take it that Florence came creeping up behind them over the short grass to a tree that, as I quite well remember, was immediately behind that public seat.[108]

---

[105] *Joseph Conrad*, p. 186. In this regard Conrad was willing to stretch convention and assume narrators of prodigious memory for the spoken word, *ibid.*, p. 187.

[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 168-69.

[107] Kenneth Young, *Ford Madox Ford* ("Writers and Their Work, No. 74"; London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1956), p. 24.

[108] Pp. 109-110.

As we observed earlier, Ford saw an interesting style "to consist in a succession of tiny, unobservable surprises."[109] This idea expresses only one ramification of the broad aesthetic principle upon which Ford and Conrad agreed--"that the one quality that gave interest to Art was the quality of surprise."[110] The notion is certainly not a new one, but it is worth remarking with regard to Ford because it is a cornerstone upon which much of his practical criticism rests. Fiction must, in Ford's canon, convey an impression of life, but it must do so in a manner that is interesting, and in order to interest it must, subtly, surprise. Reactions and behavior must be "justified," must appear inevitable, given the circumstances and the characters of the fiction; but the art that renders them must surprise, mildly. By juxtaposing events that comment upon one another, what Ford calls an "unearned increment" is gained:

> . . . the juxtaposition of the composed renderings of two or more unexaggerated actions or situations may be used to establish, like the juxtaposition of vital word to vital word, a sort of frictional current of electric life that will extraordinarily galvanize the work of art in which the device is employed. That has the appearance of a rather hard aesthetic nut to crack. Let us put it more concretely by citing the algebraic truth that $(a=b)^2$ [sic] equals not merely a^2+b^2, but a^2 plus an apparently unearned increment called 2ab plus the expected b^2. Or let us use the still more easy image of two men shouting in a field. While each shouts separately each can only be heard at a distance of an eighth of a mile, whilst if both shout simultaneously their range of hearing will be extended by a hundred-odd yards. The point cannot be sufficiently labored, since the whole fabric of modern art depends on it.[111]

By means of juxtaposed instances a writer may expose, say, hypocrisy,

---

[109] Joseph Conrad, p. 197. [110] Ibid., p. 189.

[111] The March of Literature, p. 804.

without either exaggeration or editorial comment. Moreover, the exposure of, say, hypocrisy almost always involves larger issues. Thus two scenes properly juxtaposed can convey far more than the sum of the two taken separately, and the very juxtaposition shocks and surprises, keeping our interest alive.

The juxtaposition of rendered instances having dissimilar implications obviously exploits the interest afforded by mild surprise, but there is another, far more subtle, principle of surprise operative in the technical details of Ford's fiction. The striking thing about such devices as the time shift, the "digression," the mingling of direct and indirect discourse, is that while each is calculated to enhance the sense of verisimilitude, all necessarily surprise: they make it virtually impossible for the reader to anticipate how the complications of the affair are to unfold before him. The author must, however, not be overly ingenious, or he risks calling attention to his existence. He may mildly shock the attention of his reader by interrupting the narrative with a "digression" of some sort, but it must be a digression that indirectly reveals new depths of meaning and so does not impede the progression d'effet, and it must appear to arise naturally in the associative processes of the central consciousness of the moment.

All of this discussion brings us once again to the point that Ford's critical thinking was remarkably consistent and to the further realization that, as the child of Flaubert and James, he demanded conscious artistry. That he discussed the art of fiction in general and his own techniques in particular so exhaustively is no surprise. For, in his view it was always treatment, never

subject, that gave art its value. As he put it in Thus To Revisit:

> I am interested only in how to write, and . . . I care nothing--but nothing in the world!--what a man writes about. In the end that is the attitude of every human soul--only they don't know it.
>
> .....
>
> You read Poe--or you read Homer. What do they matter to you--the murders in the Rue de la Morgue, or the dying hound of Ulysses? Very little! It is unlikely that you will murder or be murdered; it is improbable that, ever, your wanderings shall be so protracted that, on your return, your wife will not know you, whereas your nurse will recognize your scarred feet or your blind dog, your odours. Nevertheless you have read the Gold Bug and The Pit and the Pendulum, and you have read the Odyssey. Why? What is Hecuba to you?[112]

---

[112] Pp. 32-33.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-WAR NOVELIST

While he is known almost exclusively as the author of The Good Soldier and the Tietjens tetralogy, Ford did, in fact, publish twenty-seven novels,[1] not counting his collaborations with Conrad and with Violet Hunt. Ford had no delusions--nor should we--concerning the fact that most of them are not worth serious critical attention and are deservedly unknown. In Return to Yesterday, while commenting on his prodigious output, he admits, "If I had written less I should no doubt have written better."[2] And, somewhat more emphatically, in Joseph Conrad he declares that "this writer would give a good deal if the shelf in the British Museum that contains his early writings could be burned."[3] When the English Review failed and he found himself in desperate financial straits, one of the ways he sought to raise money, he said, was "by writing extremely bad novels at a very great speed."[4]

---

[1]It is possible to consider No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction (New York: The Macauley Company, 1929) as a twenty-eighth, but wiser to think of it as a semi-autobiographical dialogue.

[2]Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1932), p. 348.

[3]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924), p. 97.

[4]Return to Yesterday, p. 392. We might add that the collapse

His largely worthless production, however, did not seem to Ford particularly at variance with his avowed commitment to the cause of serious literature. Whatever inconsistency may seem to reside in writing bad while championing good fiction he neatly sidestepped by taking refuge in the affirmation that maturity was necessary to the production of worthwhile art and that until maturity were achieved one had best master his craft.

> For it was quite definitely the writer's [Ford's] conviction that the only occupation fitting for a proper man in these centuries is the writing of novels--and that no novel worth much could be written by himself or any other man--at any rate, by himself--before he has reached the age of forty. So till he had attained that age the writer was determined never to attempt the production of anything that was not either a pastiche or a tour de force--just for practice in writing. . . . Thus, rather listlessly and a little disdainfully, from time to time the writer turned out historical novels--which were received with very great acclamations--and books of connected essays that were received with acclamations almost greater. But the writer was not disturbed: a historical novel even at the best is nothing more than a tour de force, a fake more or less genuine in inspiration and workmanship.[5]

As always with Ford, we must hesitate to take his melodramatic utterances at their face value. That he thought The Good Soldier his best work, the one book that he should stand by, there is little reason to doubt.[6] Nor is there any reason to doubt that

---

of the English Review coincided with a time of pressing financial demands in pursuing his scheme for divorce, thus doubling his monetary needs.

[5]Joseph Conrad, pp. 175-76. The conviction that a man should not write a novel until he is forty is repeated in Return to Yesterday, p. 399, and in many other places.

[6]Ford Madox Hueffer, The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion (London: John Lane, 1915); my references are always to Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion, intro. Mark Schorer (New York: Vintage Books, 1957). Ford speaks of The Good Soldier as his best book in a great number of places, but he made the following

he consciously put into it all that he knew about writing, that on his fortieth birthday he sat down to show what he "could do--and the Good Soldier resulted."[7] But how seriously we are to take his disavowal of his earlier work is certainly open to question. Committed to the position that the artist was obliged to render his own day in terms of his own day, he must perforce deprecate historical fiction; and yet, as we shall see, he granted it a very great value. In fact, in 1928, long after he had denounced the historical novel and with The Good Soldier and Parade's End comfortably behind him, he returned to it and published A Little Less Than Gods--a treatment of the Hundred Days, sub-titled A Napoleonic Tale.[8] His early novels dealing with contemporary subjects he seems, with few exceptions, to have taken seriously enough at the time of their composition, despite his later disclaimer.

Of the nineteen novels (including the three collaborations with Conrad) that Ford had written before undertaking The Good

---

qualifying remark in a letter to Mr. Percival Hinton: "I think The Good Soldier is my best book technically unless you read the Tietjens books as one novel, in which case the whole design appears" (quoted but not dated in Douglas Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite [London: Macdonald & Co., 1948], p. 245). The Tietjens books were published originally as separate novels all under the name Ford Madox Ford: Some Do Not... (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924); No More Parades (London: Duckworth & Co., 1925); A Man Could Stand Up (London: Duckworth & Co., 1926); Last Post (London: Duckworth & Co., 1928). They were republished in one volume under the omnibus title Parade's End (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950); my references are to the Knopf edition.

[7]Dedicatory Letter to The Good Soldier addressed to Stella Ford [Bowen] and dated January 9, 1927; published in the Viking edition, p. xviii.

[8]Ford Madox Ford, A Little Less Than Gods (New York: The Viking Press, 1928).

Soldier, fifteen had appeared between 1905 and 1913.[9] During those eight years he produced, in addition, eight volumes of non-fiction, four volumes of poetry, a book of children's stories, and countless periodical essays. He managed also to squeeze into those years the editorship of the English Review and such other time consuming activities as his bizarre German divorce scheme, an endless round of entertainments at South Lodge with Violet Hunt, the writing of pamphlets for the suffragette movement, and the introduction of a steady stream of discoveries into London literary life. That the quality of his fiction of that period was, to say the least, uneven was probably inevitable; but the fact remains that he did turn out a few very good novels. And all of them, even the worst of the lot, command interest in the way they illuminate the development of themes and the mastery of techniques that were to figure in his best work. Even an effort so slight as The Young Lovell,[10] which one is content to dismiss with Paul Wiley as "a romance for juveniles,"[11] involves a thematic concern that is central to almost all of his novels and employs character types that were to reappear in a slightly altered and more subtle guise in his major novels.

In addition to thematic emphases and character types, one thing that unites all of these novels is a fidelity to Impression-

---

[9]All but the collaborations with Conrad and his first novel, H. Ford Hueffer, The Shifting of the Fire (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892).

[10]Ford Madox Hueffer, The Young Lovell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1913).

[11]Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962), p. 92.

istic technique. There are lapses, to be sure, such as the authorial intrusions Ford occasionally permits himself in The Young Lovell in order to achieve transitions. He appears as author several times in that novel: in one place he says, "Now let us turn for a moment to what passed in the house of the Princess Rohtraut of Croy, Lady mother of Dacre, during this time, whilst the monk wrote";[12] a bit later, after introducing a list of characters who were instrumental in mounting support for Lovell's cause, the author appears again in the suggestion, "Let us consider them in that order";[13] and immediately before Lovell's attack on the castle, at which point we have been brought up to date on that heroic young man's activities by means of a flashback, once again Ford raises his head to effect a clumsy transition with, "Now as for such as dwelt within the castle."[14] Such slips, however, rarely occur; and his method in these early novels is remarkably consistent, in the main, with the theory of fiction he had worked out with Conrad, that is, if we agree to disregard the basic premise of that theory--that the writer should never bore his reader.

Before we consider in detail the novels that preceded The Good Soldier and followed the collaborations with Conrad, it would, for several reasons, be advantageous first to look back to Ford's first two novels--The Shifting of the Fire and The Inheritors.[15]

---

[12]P. 204. [13]P. 251. [14]P. 300.

[15]Joseph Conrad and F. M. Hueffer, The Inheritors (London: William Heinemann, 1901). My references are to Joseph Conrad and F. M. Hueffer, The Inheritors (London: The Gresham Publishing Co., Ltd., 1925). The novel was, of course, a collaboration, but there is so little of Conrad in it and so much of Ford that we may consider it as Ford's second novel. The plot was Ford's and the

The Shifting of the Fire, his first novel, was published when Ford was only eighteen. It is, even after allowances are made for its author's youth and inexperience, a remarkably bad book. Its chief shortcoming was the very thing that Ford spent most of his mature life railing against--a total lack of conscious artistry. The Inheritors, on the other hand, while hardly a literary landmark, exhibits the application of a conscious literary theory and a disciplined technique. It is, as The Shifting of the Fire decidedly is not, a precursor of Ford's later achievements. It may appear, perhaps, pointless to subject an admittedly juvenile effort to critical scorn, but there is something to be gained in doing so. An examination of The Shifting of the Fire in conjunction with The Inheritors demonstrates how profoundly important for Ford's career as a novelist were his association with Henry James and Stephen Crane and his collaboration with Conrad. That The Inheritors is rather undistinguished in itself is beside the point; what is significant is that its major theme is characteristically Fordian and its technique is Impressionistic. The Shifting of the Fire, on the other hand, is a testament to the fact that despite Ford's voluminous reading as a boy and his carefully having been trained for genius, the Pre-Raphaelite hothouse in which he grew up did not fit him out to be a very good writer of novels, at least not at

---

characters; Conrad's contribution was largely stylistic, giving final touches to weak scenes. According to Ford's estimate: "The Inheritors is a work of seventy-five thousand words, as nearly as possible. In the whole of it there cannot be more than a thousand--certainly there cannot be two--of Conrad's writing; these crepitate from the emasculated prose like fire-crackers amongst ladies' skirts"; (Joseph Conrad, p. 134).

eighteen. That he made no second effort until his collaboration with Conrad is probably mute testimony to Ford's having recognized this.[16]

In The March of Literature Ford asserted of his first novel that "as far as it faintly went it was a piece of impressionism."[17] The impressionism is very faint indeed: it abounds in authorial intrusions; it has a moral blatantly tacked on; its style is unbelievably precious; its theme is trivial; it is full of offensive digressions; it goes out of its way to call attention to the fact that it is a fiction. In short, it violates nearly every tenet of Impressionism. Richard Cassell, although he certainly does not hesitate to point out the book's weaknesses, does mitigate his censure in the suggestion that its absurdities are, in part at least, intended to satirize the Victorian novel.[18] Paul Wiley, mercilessly riding a thesis and detecting brilliancies where they do not exist, prefers to dwell on the book's merits and finds it interesting as an immature attempt to treat the subject of the consequences of passion.[19]

Unfortunately, there is nothing, either in Ford's nonfiction or in the novel itself, to support either attempt to give

---

[16]See supra, pp. 72-74.

[17]Ford Madox Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our Own (New York: The Dial Press, 1938), p. 840.

[18]Richard A. Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 126.

[19]Wiley, pp. 133-36. Wiley tries to suggest that even in his first book we can see the theme that will dominate the action of The Good Soldier and Parade's End.

it some modicum of literary respectability. The passages Cassell cites as satiric may as readily be seen as straightforward, if ludicrous. Moreover, his own assertions that "the novel is a confusion of models and tones"[20] and that its "most telling weakness is the faltering attempt of youth to write detachedly of youth"[21] hardly inspire the view that Ford had either the maturity or the technical control to write conscious satire, especially satire of the formal characteristics of the Victorian novel couched in its own terms. Wiley's approach depends for its credibility entirely on a verbal deception. It would be hard to find a novel, unless it confined itself to the vicissitudes of a community of eunuchs or confirmed and happy celibates, which could not be construed in some way to treat of the consequences of passion. A number of marriages do, in fact, take place during the course of The Shifting of the Fire, and its central characters are a young man and a young woman who are in love with one another and who are happily joined at last in its concluding pages; but to describe the book as a treatment of the consequences of passion rather than an unbelievable and sentimental love story is grossly to misrepresent it. There is not a single important action in the novel that is motivated by what may legitimately be termed passion.

The book begins inauspiciously with a sentence that Ford in his mature years would doubtless have ranked with Stevenson's obtrusive five word jewels:

The year was reluctantly tottering through its last sixth

---

[20] Cassell, p. 127.

[21] Ibid.

of life, and the boisterous winds shrieked in derision at its decline.[22]

This sort of preciosity, which is characteristic of the prose throughout, is sometimes relieved by triteness as when characters judge each other in terms of "nobleness of thought"[23] or "innate and unconquerable selfishness."[24] One phrase, "the shifting of the fire," recurs with infuriating persistence at every turning point in the action. Just as Cooper's Indians never fail to snap twigs at critical junctures, so Ford's fire never fails to shift.[25]

From time to time Ford engages the reader in direct conversation. These intrusions are made to serve a variety of ends. Sometimes they serve to explain the characters: thus, when Edith Ryland seems willing to disregard the consequences of incurring her father's displeasure, Ford comments, "She was very young, remember, and was not even mentally precocious enough to have reached that stage in her psychological career when one begins for a time to be pessimistic. . . ."[26] And later, when she accepts the proposal of the odious Mr. Kasker-Ryves, we are asked to "make allowances that the girl is very young, very wretched, headstrong, and inexperienced, deprived of counsel from all those from whom it should come. . . ."[27] Sometimes an authorial intrusion appears to urge the reader to

---

[22] The Shifting of the Fire, p. 1.

[23] P. 36.

[24] Ibid.

[25] John A. Meixner in his Ford Madox Ford's Novels (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962) sees the recurrent shifting of the fire as a praiseworthy device for achieving formal patterning in the novel; p. 9.

[26] P. 33.

[27] P. 51.

greater attentiveness:

> How badly she fared, and how despair followed on despair has been already recorded in these pages, in the course of a conversation, to the which, if it be not impressed on his memory, let the reader turn back.[28]

If, however, one may rate literary offenses, Ford's most offensive intrusions are those in which he delivers moral apothegms or passes along to us his acquired wisdom. Since his lovers are young and rather innocent, he feels constrained to make the following comment:

> The rough awakening must come sooner or later; but I do not hold that sorrows seem the harder by contrast, for if a man's youth is wilted and warped, God preserve him from an old age--for how will he do without the remembrance of secret, hot, young joys that he can croon over to warm himself on the cold journey as he nears the Shadowland.[29]

To these we may add the tag that concludes the book and spells out its moral and its theme:

> The Past, with its struggles and heart burnings, was dead--only the good that adversity had brought out in their characters remained.
>
> This was what it had taught them:
>
> "How you must have loved me!"[30]

The Shifting of the Fire, then, showed no promise of things to come; it is totally different in both theme and technique from every other novel Ford wrote. Such is not the case with The Inheritors. It deals with the theme of social decay and the supersedure in the twentieth century of traditional values, "probity . . . that sort of thing,"[31] by unscrupulous, ruthless, amoral efficiency--the major concern of all of Ford's fiction. Moreover, while not unqualifiedly so, it is a piece of impressionism. There is a

---

[28] P. 185. [29] P. 34. [30] P. 322.

[31] The Inheritors, p. 185.

rigorous control of point of view, a conscious attempt to maintain a suitable style, a clearly evident progression d'effet, a limited use of the time shift, and consistently developed characterization, at least in the case of the narrator.

I do not wish to suggest that The Inheritors is anything like a first rate novel, but, even if we disregard its historical importance, it is a much better novel than is usually granted. Inexplicably, it has become rather conventional when discussing the fruits of the Ford-Conrad collaboration to admire Romance (London: Smith, Elder, 1903) and to disdain The Inheritors.[32] Yet Romance is little more than a dull, interminable, adventure story interspersed with pseudo-philosophical reflections, for all the labor and affection its authors lavished on it. It plods along for hundreds of pages, implicating its hero in and extricating him from one uninteresting embroilment after another. And, it stands finally as a classic example of the way in which a first person point of view may destroy the element of suspense and forbid us to take seriously the present dangers of the narrator because we know in advance that he has lived through them so that he may tell us of them. On the other hand, The Inheritors, for all its weaknesses, is a carefully controlled novel informed by a significant theme. Still, it is conventional to prefer Romance.

A possible explanation for this attitude may be that commentators have simply assumed the jaundiced view of The Inheritors that Ford took when he wrote of it in Joseph Conrad in 1924. Every

---

[32]See, for instance, Meixner, p. 27.

comment he makes there is intended to convey the impression that the book need not be taken seriously now and that he did not take it seriously at the time of its composition. He describes it as "a queer, thin book which the writer has always regarded with an intense dislike. Or no, with hatred and dread having nothing to do with literature."[33] He insists that it was written very rapidly between 1900 and 1901, when he and Conrad temporarily interrupted work on Romance,[34] and wonders rhetorically what could have attracted Conrad to "this farrago of nonsense?"[35]

Ford offered some trenchant criticism of the book, but in a letter to Edward Garnett, Conrad, who did take the book lightly, clearly indicates that Ford took it seriously and that it was not written with either the rapidity or the indifference he would like to suggest. On March 26, 1900 Conrad wrote to Garnett as follows:

> I consider the accept: of the Inh:ors a distinct bit of luck. Jove! What a lark!
>
> I set myself to look upon the thing as a sort of skit upon the sort of political (?!) novel, fools of the N.S. do write. This in my heart of hearts. And poor H was dead in earnest! Oh Lord. How he worked! There is not a chapter I haven't made him write twice--most of them three times over.[36]

What attracted Conrad to the book seems clearly in the first place to have been the hope of making some money by it. But Ford suggests that Conrad did, in fact, find the political theme alluring[37] and that a further attraction lay in the fact that the book "has a faint

---

[33] Joseph Conrad, p. 118. [34] Ibid., p. 74. [35] Ibid., p. 146.

[36] Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895-1924, edited with introduction and notes by Edward Garnett (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928), p. 168.

[37] Joseph Conrad, p. 133.

suggestion of--unrequited--love between brother and sister."[38] For, Ford held, Conrad always wanted to deal with the love between the sexes, and he especially wanted to deal with incestuous love--not with illicit consummation but with that taboo and thus most hopeless of all passions.[39]

Ford objected to the novel specifically on three counts: its "tremendously sentimental last scene";[40] its having "no plot in particular";[41] and its "emasculated prose,"[42] which was:

> . . . a medley of prose conceived in the spirit of Christina Rossetti with imitations of the late Henry James; inspired by the sentimentality of a pre-Raphaelite actor in love scenes--precisely by Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson dyspeptically playing Romeo to Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Juliet; cadenced like Flaubert and full of little half-lines dragged in from the writer's own verses of that day.[43]

Ford is absolutely right about the last scene and the quality of the prose, but the plot is, contrary to his assertion, clearly defined, and the book does have considerable intrinsic merit.

As Ford described it, The Inheritors

> . . . was to be a political work, rather allegorically backing Mr. Balfour in the then Government; the villain was to be Joseph Chamberlain who had made the [Boer] war. The sub-villain was to be Leopold II, King of the Belgians, the foul--and incidentally lecherous--beast who had created the Congo Free State in order to grease the wheels of his harems with the blood of murdered negroes and to decorate them with fretted ivory cut from stolen tusks in the deep forests. . . . For the writer, . . . it had appeared to be an allegorico-realistic romance: it showed the superseding of previous generations and codes by

---

[38] Joseph Conrad, The Sisters, intro. Ford Madox Ford (New York: Crosby Gaige, 1928), p. 7.

[39] Ibid., p. 6.

[40] Joseph Conrad, p. 141.

[41] Ibid., p. 53.

[42] Ibid., p. 134.

[43] Quoted in Meixner, p. 101.

the merciless young who are always alien and without remorse.[44]

The novel may be read in terms of its topical allegory, in which Churchill stands for Balfour, Gurnard for Joseph Chamberlain, Fox for Lord Northcliffe, and the Duc de Mersch for Leopold II; but this level of meaning is of secondary, or perhaps tertiary, importance, the major theme centering in the passing of traditional values. It is not the historical events on which it is based that give coherence to the allegory but the allegory which invests with profound moral significance the political events of the day. The topical allusions are finally only to prototypes, as the novel reveals the passing of an old order and the struggle of its central character, the narrator, to come to terms with the shifting values of his day.

The action of The Inheritors is reasonably easy to summarize. The narrator, Arthur Etchingham Granger, is a young writer "with high--with the highest--ideals"[45] who has withdrawn to the country to live isolated in the hope someday "of putting greatness on paper."[46] While admiring the Cathedral at Canterbury one day he meets a young woman who identifies herself as a Fourth Dimensionist and explains that her race is presently to inherit the earth. He is fascinated by her but somewhat fearful of what she represents. He had heard the Fourth Dimensionists described as:

> a race clear-sighted, eminently practical, incredible; with no ideals, prejudices, or remorse; with no feeling for art and no reverence for life; free from any ethical tradition; callous to pain, weakness, suffering and death, as if they had been invulnerable and immortal. She did not say that they were immortal, however.[47]

---

[44] Joseph Conrad, p. 133.

[45] P. 5. [46] Ibid. [47] Pp. 9-10.

The girl reveals that her people are ready now to take over the earth; they will discredit a great man "with a name, standing for probity and honour"[48] and elevate their own party to its rightful position of power. Granger muses:

> It occurred to me that she wished me to regard her as a symbol, perhaps, of the future--as a type of those who are about to inherit the earth, in fact. She had been playing the fool with me, in her insolent modernity. She had wished me to understand that I was old-fashioned; that the frame of mind of which I and my fellows were the inheritors was over and done with. We were to be compulsarily retired; to stand aside superannuated.[49]

The girl, who remains nameless but represents herself as Granger's sister (here is the hint of incestuous love that allegedly attracted Conrad), further reveals that in the process of discrediting Churchill, the Foreign Secretary who is the symbol for probity and the old order, a number of Dimensionists will also be brought low but that this hardly is a deterrent since Dimensionists are not hampered by any false sense of loyalty to one another. One of the things that characterizes the Dimensionist, the twentieth century politician, is his willingness to consider only his own ends and to use and if necessary to destroy ally and enemy alike in the attainment of those ends.

Of course, the Dimensionists are successful: Churchill and his regime are toppled; the girl and Gurnard, who is Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Dimensionist, take their place at the top of the new power structure. What gives the novel its peculiar power and depth is that the Dimensionists' success depends not so much on their own efforts as on the failure of the old order to live up to

---

[48] P. 13. [49] P. 16.

the moral standards it preaches. Somewhere along the line everyone associated with traditional values--Granger, Churchill, an unnamed great lady of Churchill's county, Granger's aunt--has accepted compromise and refused to fight for what he professed. The Dimensionist girl tells Granger that the reason for her victory is evident:

> It is because you broke; because you were false to your standards at a supreme moment; because you have discovered that your honour will not help you to stand a strain.[50]

She had been able to predict unerringly from the beginning exactly how he would react, exactly how all of the old order would react and behave.

We see Granger throughout the novel compromising all of his standards one by one and justifying his moral evasions by protesting he wishes to come into contact with the life of his times. When he accepts a job as a journalist for the Hour, a cheap sensational publication whose owner Fox is a Dimensionist with political axes to grind, and abandons his literary ideals, he becomes himself part of the new society although he continues to give lip service to the old. When, by the accident of Fox's sudden death, he finds himself in a position to suppress the expose that will topple the Churchill government, we have been prepared to see him act as he does, out of passion for his "sister," and allow the article to appear. Predictably, when he claims the girl, "a fit reward for the sacrifice of a whole past,"[51] she tells him that he is no longer useful to her and that she will marry Gurnard, who has succeeded to power.

But Granger is not the only one who has been guilty of moral

---

[50] P. 210. [51] P. 192.

evasion and compromise. Churchill, the great man himself, has become involved in a fraudulent scheme in "a desperate effort to get in touch with the spirit of the times that he doesn't like and doesn't understand."[52] What he should have done from the first was "to have played the stand-off" to people like the Dimensionists, "to have gone on playing it at whatever cost."[53] But he chose political expedience and justified it with moral platitudes. Similarly, Granger's aunt will simply not listen to his exposure of the girl, whom she has accepted as her niece. Concerned with her glorious position in the county, she will not hear ill of the girl who is a welcome ornament amid the fading glory of her household. Like the great lady of the county that originally gave Churchill his seat in Parliament, the great lady whose support could once swing elections but who wistfully retires now with the assertion that "the old order changeth,"[54] Granger's aunt, believing in traditional values refuses to take any responsibility for their preservation. The novel concludes on the note that was to emerge as the major theme in all of Ford's serious fiction:

> There stood Virtue . . . and Probity . . . and all the things that all those people stood for. Well, today they are gone; the very belief in them is gone.[55]

At one point in the narrative Granger pauses to say: "Things began to move so quickly that, try as I will to arrange their sequence in my mind, I cannot."[56] There follows a somewhat impressionistic recounting of events, which, though it is fairly straightforward in

---

[52] P. 63. [53] P. 42. [54] P. 164.

[55] P. 208. [56] P. 141.

its chronology, is clearly an attempt to tell the story as a man telling a story would tell a story and adumbrates Ford's later technique. His objection to the "tremendously sentimental last scene" is just, for in that scene the Dimensionist girl steps completely out of character and tells Granger that for a moment at least she had cared for him and had been tempted to abandon her ruthless ways. One must accept also Meixner's criticism that, Granger aside, the characters are either too vague or too conventional.[57] But these strictures should not obscure the merit of the book seen as a whole. The central character is extremely well drawn, the theme is perfectly realized in the action, the structure is very tight, and nearly every aspect of the book is controlled by a conscious literary technique--Impressionism.[58] In turning now to Ford's historical fiction, we shall see some of the directions in which that technique developed.

Despite his contention that "a historical novel even at the best is nothing more than a tour de force, a fake more or less genuine in inspiration and workmanship,"[59] Ford was very successful as a historical novelist and saw a real value inherent in the form. In the dedication to A Little Less Than Gods he writes:

---

[57]Meixner, p. 105.

[58]An interesting feature of the progression d'effet of the novel is the way in which descriptive passages are used symbolically. Thus, at the very beginning of the novel--on page seven--Granger sees the bell tower of the Canterbury cathedral, "a vision, the last word of a great art," which symbolizes for him a monument of civilization, reel before his eyes at a glance from the Dimensionist girl.

[59]Joseph Conrad, p. 175. The same sentiment appears in Return to Yesterday, p. 284, and elsewhere.

> He [the historical novelist] may . . . convey a sense of the Truth truer than that reached by the industrious compilings of the serious--and so portentous!--Chronicler! For I bet that your sense--not your details--of mediaeval life came to you from Scott and your mental colouration of seventeenth-century France from The Three Musketeers, and that, fill in your details afterwards how you may have, your sense and your mental colouration are truer to the real right thing in history than all the mole-work lucubrations of the most learned of contemporary Puffendorfiuses. Or should I write Puffendorfii? For the worst historical novelist is better for giving you a vicarious sense of experience than the most industrious of compilers of scientific evidence. And the novelist is there to give you a sense of vicarious experience. What without him would you know?[60]

His early reputation as a novelist was based largely on his historical fiction, which was, at least from the point of view of popular success, his best received work. The Fifth Queen trilogy,[61] which was particularly successful, received this praise from Conrad:

> Ford's last Fifth Queen novel is amazing. The whole cycle is a noble conception--the swan song of Historical Romance--and frankly I am glad to have heard it.[62]

The immediate success and the enduring interest of Ford's historical fiction resides largely in the fact that he took it seriously, or, in Paul Wiley's words, "in his refusal to treat historical fiction as a means of escape."[63] Ford, as we have seen, dismissed his historical novels as merely tours des force, but in them he observed the same principles of composition that governed his serious

---

[60] P. ix.

[61] Comprised of The Fifth Queen (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906); Privy Seal (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1907); The Fifth Queen Crowned (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908) all published under Ford Madox Hueffer.

[62] In a letter to John Galsworthy dated February 20, 1908; quoted in Douglas Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite, p. 137.

[63] Wiley, p. 93.

work and he endowed them with significant themes.

Each of these novels is an exercise in impressionism; that is, it renders an affair and gives a picture of an age through a restricted point of view. There are occasional authorial intrusions, such as those we observed in The Young Lovell; there are occasional overdrawings of minor characters, such as Nicholas Udall in The Fifth Queen; there is sometimes sentimentality, such as Hudson's reflections on the death of Edward Colman in The "Half Moon";[64] there is sometimes a lack of focus, as in the handling of point of view in A Little Less Than Gods; there is sometimes descriptive detail which appears for its own sake and impedes the progression d'effet as in Ladies Whose Bright Eyes;[65] there is sometimes a sense of utter triviality, as in the total conception of The Portrait.[66] These are not great, certainly not flawless, novels; but by and large they are extremely impressive performances by a very fine craftsman.

Ford's intention in these novels was, like his intention in all of his fiction, to provide the reader with vicarious experience. His primary emphasis was always on, to borrow R. P. Blackmur's useful phrase, "not what happened but what someone felt about what happened." As Ford put it in his dedication to The "Half Moon":

---

[64] Ford Madox Hueffer, The "Half Moon" (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909).

[65] Ford Madox Hueffer, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1911); greatly revised and republished under Ford Madox Ford (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1935).

[66] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Portrait (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1910).

> What is inspiring about a voyage or a world is the passion that gave rise to the one and the other. For it is not the seas but the men who cross them; not the hills but the men who live on them and in time mould their surfaces; not the rivers but the hearts of the men who sail upon them, that are the subjects of human interest.[67]

In Return to Yesterday he compares his own historical fiction and his methods of writing it with those of Maurice Hewlett and concludes: "I think he [Hewlett] loved the Middle Ages better than I. I was more interested in humanity."[68] The historical novelist, then, "is almost forced to make you view his History through the eyes of a character supposedly present at the scenes that he renders."[69] The point of view character's prejudices and interests will necessarily color the events, for Ford was willing to admit, "no one is so inaccurate as an eyewitness";[70] but for the novelist intent upon providing vicarious experience and a sense, not the details, of an age this was hardly a serious concern. He says in the dedication to A Little Less Than Gods:

> I have read I do not know how many accounts of Napoleon's escape from Elba and his subsequent march on Paris, each written by a participant in those events; yet each account differs inextricably from every other. Above all they differ entirely from the final accounts arrived at by the Official Historians. So what is the poor historical novelist to do? I suppose if he were veracity-mad rather than an artist he would put a "?" after most speeches of his characters and a "sic" after the rest.[71]

As is most likely the case with all historical novelists, Ford's method is to devise a set of circumstances with which to sur-

---

[67] P. v.

[68] P. 284.

[69] A Little Less Than Gods, p. ix.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., pp. ix-x.

part it is. What sets the Fifth Queen trilogy above the other historical fictions is that in it Ford is confidently sure of his details. It violates most of the known facts of Catherine Howard's biography, but because it has what James called "solidity of specification," it is convincing. The details of dress, diet, domestic appurtenances, modes of behavior ring so true that we trust the author in larger issues. It is not only in physical detail that the trilogy is rich in solidity of specification; Ford's diction is convincingly charged with sixteenth century rhythms and archaisms.[74] It is worth observing at this point that Ford was better prepared to write a Tudor novel than he was to write on any of the other subjects he attempted. Before he even considered writing novels, he had done considerable research for a projected biography of Henry the Eighth, only to see the project fall to a more qualified historian, so that when he came to write of Henry's fifth queen he brought with him the knowledge of a specialist.[75] Moreover, the details of Henry's court must have been fresh in his mind since the year before the first volume of the trilogy appeared, he published his critical study of Holbein.[76]

In sharp contrast to the knowledgeable depths which gave

---

[74]At first glance this may appear to suggest that Ford is false to the impressionist tenet that style must be unobtrusive, but, as Meixner points out, the archaisms occur almost exclusively in the speech of the characters (Meixner, p. 59), and, as Cassell points out, speeches are rendered in a suitable mixture of direct and indirect discourse (Cassell, p. 132n.).

[75]See Return to Yesterday, pp. 167-69.

[76]Ford Madox Hueffer, Hans Holbein the Younger: A Critical Monograph (London: Duckworth & Co., n.d. [1905]).

rise to the Tudor trilogy are the intellectual shallows that produced The Portrait. Ford's knowledge of the eighteenth century was superficial at best, and it is this as much as anything that accounts for the inferiority of his performance in The Portrait. In addition to the lack of any significant thematic development, the book lacks interest. The characters are flat and static; the plot devices are trite and predictable. The fops are excessively foppish; the debonair young men and women, excessively debonair; the clever heroine, offensively clever. There is not a single character or situation that requires more familiarity with the eighteenth century than can be gleaned from reading a half dozen sentimental comedies of the period. In short, it seems that Ford had nothing in particular to say about the eighteenth century although he tries for over three hundred pages to obscure that fact.

All of his other historical novels, with the exception of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, which is a special case, explore a common theme, which is, moreover, the major theme of most of his serious non-historical fiction--the dilemma of the honorable man in a time of crumbling traditions and shifting values.[77] Normally it is pointless to speak of an era or a reign as a period of transition, since all eras and all reigns inevitably mark transitions, but in Ford's historical fiction the case is altered, because the characters think

---

[77]In the first version of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, the central character, a modern who returns for a time to the fourteenth century much in the manner of Twain's Connecticut Yankee, decides that one century is just about as good as another. In the second version, which will be discussed with Ford's late novels, he rejects both the medieval and the modern and strikes out for new beginnings.

of themselves as living in an age which is witnessing the decline of an old order and is uncertain about the new. The moments in history that Ford chooses to dwell upon usually are characterized by some far reaching and dramatic social and moral upheaval, and men of good will are left without accepted standards upon which to base noble behavior.

The Young Lovell is set in the year 1485, and one of the major problems that beset the central character is to determine how a northern nobleman who has loved and been loyal to Richard Crookback may act honorably with regard to the new monarch and still not violate his prior convictions. Sir Bertram of Lyonesse voices an attitude that we will see some character express in almost every one of Ford's historical novels when he declares:

> For these are strange times of newnesses coming both from the East and the West. From the East is come new learning which is, for ordinary men, a thing very evil at all times, leading to sorceries and civil strife and change. And from the West is talk of a New World possessed with demons and pagans and dusky fiends as is now on the lips of all men. And I hold it for certain that, if anything evil and inexplicable shall occur in this land from now on it shall come from that East or that West.[78]

But an even more significant change is recorded by the narrator, more significant because it is a change that has not come from without but has taken place within the hearts of Englishmen--the death of the chivalric tradition.

> For the days were past then of riding upon knight errantry, crusades, chevauchees, and other enterprises more splendid than profitable, and most fathers would not very willingly let their young men go fighting unless the gain in money much outweighed the costs.[79]

---

[78] Pp. 180-81. [79] P. 277.

Mark and Christopher Tietjens will make the same observation with regard to the twentieth century.

In The "Half Moon," which is sub-titled A Romance of the Old World and the New, and takes as its subject Hudson's first voyage to America, we see a similar insistence on an awareness of change. In this instance, however, the new, atypically for Ford, is welcomed. In his dedication Ford remarks:

> Fortunately for me the psychology of the Old World in the days of Hudson has always been very fascinating to me. It is, as you know, the subject to which I have more than anything devoted my attention: for at that date the Dark Ages were finally breaking up. There lingered many traces of that darkness; a thousand superstitions, a million old beliefs. But men were beginning to disbelieve--and in consequence men were beginning to look out for truths of all kinds: for new faiths, for new methods of government and, perhaps above all, for lands in which Utopias might be found or founded.[80]

Henry Hudson and the novel's young hero, Edward Colman, are pictured as nobly visionary, rejecting the outmoded.

The book is complicated, however, by a subsidiary theme, which, although Ford does not develop it, suggests that the work may not be as atypical as it at first appears. The England that Edward Colman leaves behind is a Protestant England; the society that has failed him is a Puritan society; but there are vestiges, to whose value he is blind, of the old Catholic England. Anne Jeal, a curious compound of devout Catholic and practicing witch, who effectively curses Colman and swears her curse by the "Virgin Mother of Christ,"[81] is probably Ford's attempt to embody what he took to be the prevailing attitude toward Catholics. But, witch or

---

[80] P. vi. [81] P. 24.

not, what she decrees comes to pass. Colman's rejection of his father's broadsheet "Directions for Pilgrims" is regarded sympathetically,[82] but the point is made emphatically that what alone could preserve him from the operation of Anne Jeal's evil is not a flight to new horizons but a return to former truth. Anne Jeal's curse was to take effect in fourteen days after its incantation:

> And, if in that time, Edward Colman took communion her spells would be powerless. At the thought that he might do so she became sorrowful; but at the thought that, to be efficacious in saving him, it must be the communion of the Old Faith she became again serene. Edward Colman was little likely to have truck with papists. He had too much of disbelief and liked to laugh.[83]

This idea, as we have already observed, receives only brief and occasional attention in Ford's rather pale adventure story, but its presence certainly suggests that even in a book conceived in praise of the inspired explorers of "the New World where it was still light"[84] Ford was reluctant to abandon entirely the values of the Catholic middle ages.[85]

---

[82] P. 103. Colman rejects his father's precepts in the following speech:

> "They were of no use; they never would again be of use: they were like the old privileges of the Ports, the old customs, the old faiths. They must get them new ones--either from the New World or from elsewhere, he said. They must cut their coats according to newer cloths."

[83] P. 180. [84] P. 313.

[85] Before leaving The "Half Moon," we ought to observe the presence of a scene which parallels almost exactly a scene in No More Parades and illustrates the way in which Ford often borrowed details from one novel for inclusion in another. The scene in which Anne Jeal makes a pact with herself not to curse Edward Colman if he glances at her in her window before she finishes her song is duplicated almost exactly by the scene in No More Parades in which Sylvia Tietjens makes a pact with the dead Father Consett to cease torturing Christopher if he will give her a sign by showing her one pre-

The contrasts between the medieval and the modern, the Catholic and the Protestant worlds, as we have seen, received only glancing attention in The "Half Moon," but Ford did explore these contrasts in some depth in The Fifth Queen trilogy. And in these novels there is no doubt of where Ford's sympathies lay. The entire trilogy is conceived in terms of the ultimate defeat of the genuine faith, the courage, simplicity, frankness, and integrity of Catherine Howard by the devious and morally compromising Machiavellianism of Thomas Cromwell and his successor as antagonist, Lascelles, to whom Cromwell symbolically bequeaths his personal copy of Il Principe. During the course of the action, which covers the period from the arrival of Anne of Cleves to the death of Catherine, we see Catherine repeatedly thwarted in her attempts to guide the vacillating Henry back to the true faith and the ideals of stable, chivalric, old England, by the forces of political expediency and vested interest. She finally succumbs to court intrigue and suffers a somewhat unhistorical but nonetheless martyrlike execution, and a new stage in the history of England and mankind, the modern world, is upon us.[86]

---

sentable man within the next ten minutes. The parallel is especially interesting since Anne Jeal and Sylvia have a great deal in common, both being Catholic figures in a Protestant England who have perverted their religious tradition. Moreover, although The "Half Moon" is a leading candidate for the title of Ford's worst novel and Parade's End, seen as a whole, for his best, both recognize the need for a new perspective of the values of life while glancing wistfully back at the old.

[86]For a brief and incisive resume of Ford's alterations of Catherine's biography see Meixner, p. 46. However, what Meixner describes as "fairly well established" does not always coincide with the account of her life given in the Dictionary of National Biography,

These books are interesting from the point of view of technique because of their fidelity to impressionistic theory and because they represent Ford's first venture into historical fiction. They are also easily the most compelling of Ford's historical novels. As we have already observed, they gain their strength from their solidity of specification and from the brilliant pictorial effects and convincing psychological examinations which this solidity makes possible. Even in objecting to the disproportionate development given to some of the minor characters, we must recognize that these figures are admirably drawn and "justified," so that viewed merely as characters they remain wholly unobjectionable, their offense being that the elaborateness of their portraiture tends to impede the progression d'effet. These novels, as early as they were and as uncongenial to impressionistic theory as the historical subject is, did employ with remarkable success every novelistic trick in the impressionist's bag. And, what is more important, they do what they set out to do: they create the sense of an age while engaging the reader in a vivid vicarious experience.

But far more important in terms of Ford's entire career, not only as a novelist but as a man of letters in the broader sense, is their theme of the defeat of the chivalric ideal. One of the amazing things about the novels is that although the point of view is most often Catherine Howard's and although Ford's sympathies clearly lay with her cause, he manages to present her and what she

---

eds. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (Oxford University Press, 1921), III, pp. 1212-17, so that what Meixner thinks of as Ford's alterations may be in some cases simply variant interpretations.

stands for without sentimentality. This is owing largely to the sense of the ridiculously quixotic which she shares in some measure with all of Ford's values characters.[87] By remaining outside of the action and suppressing all editorial comment in her favor, Ford contrives to convey the suggestion that while admirable she is absurdly anachronistic. Her efforts are necessarily in vain because her weapons--the appeal to honor and the chivalric--have been declared obsolete illusions by her antagonists. We know from the beginning that she doesn't stand a chance because her adversaries know, just as the Dimensionists in The Inheritors know, that there is a point beyond which the champion of nobility will not go in forcing his claims, a point at which he will exclaim, "No, this is playing it too low down."[88] Neither the Machiavellian, nor the Dimensionist, nor, indeed, Sylvia Tietjens is handicapped by comparable moral scruples; they invariably achieve their ends, largely because they never question their means.

The history of the world from the time of Thomas Cromwell, "who destroyed Catholicism and the rule of the noble,"[89] until the twentieth century was, in Ford's view, a record of the falling away from the spirit of the knightly code. The twentieth century had

---

[87] Even Christopher Tietjens is tinged with a hint of the ridiculous.

[88] The Inheritors, p. 13.

[89] Ford Madox Hueffer, The Critical Attitude (London: Duckworth & Co., 1911), p. 16. Similar descriptions of Cromwell as the founder of the modern world occur in Ford Madox Hueffer, England and the English (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1907), pp. 280-90; Holbein, p. 6; Ford Madox Hueffer, When Blood Is Their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p. 11; and in numerous places throughout his memoirs.

delivered the final blow, for with the advent of the twentieth century even the outward forms of gentlemanly behavior had begun to perish. Although in the past they had often been no more than mechanical conventions emptied of their essential value, they had assured at least a modicum of civilized behavior, and some men had continued to believe in them passionately and had thus kept them alive. But this century had been inherited by the Dimensionists, and tradition had been supplanted by efficiency, probity by self interest; personal dignity had been supplanted by the worship of the mass, the sense of the fraternity of all men by militant nationalism. There had been a triumph, in short, of what Ford liked to think of as the Nordic temperament over the Mediterranean.

Throughout his life Ford was a somewhat dispirited champion of the traditions of medieval chivalry, and so central was this attitude to all of his thought that it might be well before considering his novels of social criticism to examine the view he took in his non-fiction of the values of his society.[90] He declared in Between St. Dennis and St. George: "Chivalry is the most valuable thing in the world: I have given a little impression of how all the chivalry in the world came from France";[91] and, a few pages earlier, "Those knights and ladies [of Medieval Provence] established between them

---

[90]Cassell, inadvisedly I think, draws his discussion of Ford's world-view from his novels. To avoid making Ford responsible for my own critical interpretations, I have drawn exclusively on his non-fiction for the brief discussion that follows and relied wherever practicable on direct quotations.

[91]Ford Madox Hueffer, Between St. Dennis and St. George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p. 221.

what remains the most valuable tradition in the world--the tradition of chivalry."[92] Before World War One the gentlemanly code still exhibited vestiges of that tradition that alone could make of human existence a civilized thing. The old school tie and all that it stood for had retained a core of meaning, a trace at least of the chivalric. In A Mirror to France Ford writes:

> Bertran de Born sent out wagonfuls of meat and wine to the starving troops of the Kings of England and Navarre [who held his castle in siege], therefore, yesterday, you and I used to try to play the game, and a little bit more.[93]

The Great War for Ford, as for many others, marked the irrevocable end of a way of life and a system of values. Again in A Mirror to France he writes:

> Before the late war we showed, as I have said, traces of Mediterranean culture. . . . Our religion at least was vaguely a religion of the poor: of temperance, continence, of not judging, of not committing usury . . . even of manners, a little classical learning and some love for the better parts of the past. But all that--for all one can tell from the public prints and contact with individuals, from study of the curricula of Universities and the rhetoric of prominent public speakers--all that has been wiped out with a complacency reminiscent of that American who, being told that a lamp in a shrine--I think at Placenza--had been burning continuously for fifteen hundred years, blew it out and said: "Well, I guess it's out now!"[94]

The experience of the war, however, did not strike Ford with either the same force or the same surprise with which it struck many of his younger contemporaries. As we have seen in our examination of The Inheritors, he had perceived unmistakable signs of the passing of integrity, at least in public life, long before the Kaiser's troops

---

[92] P. 218.

[93] Ford Madox Ford, A Mirror to France (London: Duckworth, 1926), p. 118.

[94] Pp. 12-13.

poured across Belgium's border. In fact, all of his pre-war novels dealing with the contemporary scene examine the breakdown of traditional values in British society. As we shall see, his major concern in these books is with the absence of meaning in the conventions that the best people observed and the absence even of conventions from the lives of most of them.

The World War had toppled the structure that Victorian hypocrisy had erected, but Ford had seen it swaying dangerously from the time of Victoria's death. A dramatic moment of change in British standards had been signaled in the Boer War, which Ford saw as a war fought wholly for purposes of exploitation. In 1911 in Memories and Impressions he wrote:

> And then came the Boer War, which appears to me like a chasm separating the new world from the old. Since that period the whole tone of England appears to me to have entirely changed. Principles have died out of politics, even as the spirit of artistry had died out among the practitioners of the arts.[95]

And, we find the following in Return to Yesterday:

> I was shocked at the deterioration that appeared to have begun in English public life since the Boer War and the death of Queen Victoria. Before that time, a Minister of the Crown was expected to--and usually did--lay down office a poorer man than when he entered public life. That was true too of Germany. Both Bismarck and Gladstone died poorer than they had been on coming into their inherited wealth. A number of the ministers of the first Asquith Administration did not, however, see why a minister should not use government information when making investments. They did not indeed see why they should not let their friends in on a good thing. I mean that they really did not see it. Nor did they see

---

[95] Ford Madox Hueffer, Memories and Impressions (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911), p. 171. In The Critical Attitude, pp. 124-25, he suggests that the Boer War marked a radical change in reading habits. It was the first war for which "the telegraphic press" was really organized, so that for the first time news of war was current and available. The public became addicted to skimming quickly for bits of information and sensational paragraphs and never returned to the habit of quiet, unhurried reading in serious books.

any necessity for concealment. Their relatives and intimates called inside financial information one to the other up the very staircases of their clubs.[96]

In the pre-war novels we will see Ford dissect the conventions of gentlemanly behavior; he will illustrate the failure of traditions to assure morally satisfying existences when the preservers of traditions fall out of touch with the spirit of their founders. But in this period Ford does not reject either the conventions or the traditions that gave rise to them. He takes the view, rather, that if men could but grasp the essential nobility that informed the conventions of the English gentleman, chivalry might still be preserved. It was not until after the war that he saw the need for entirely fresh beginnings, and then he proclaimed, "We must go back to the Provençal Dark Ages."[97] "Faith, in short, died after the war--every sort of faith. It is time to get back to life."[98]

What most dismayed him in the post-war world were, on the one hand, the growth of industrialism with its worship of mass and the related belief in scientific achievement as a panacea; on the other hand, the re-emergence of savage, militant nationalism; or, stated more concisely, the dedication to Progress and Patriotism. As early as 1905 he had characterized modern industrialism in terms of "great organisations run by men as impersonal as the atoms of our own frames, noiseless, and to all appearances infallible";[99]

---

[96] P. 350.

[97] Ford Madox Ford, Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), p. 319.

[98] Ibid., p. 315.

[99] England and the English, p. 30. The quotation is from

they robbed men of personal dignity and destroyed the joy of small achievements well performed. Nationalism, of course, made it impossible for men to live in harmony and was, furthermore, impractical:

> It is a queer idea of serving his country that the patriot has. He loves his land. Therefore he proceeds to make himself as disagreeable as he can to every other land. When he has made himself sufficiently disagreeable to other lands they all fall upon his country and gore its gentle bosom with the shards of war. Patriotism doesn't pay. . . . Did any other Nordic ever think of that?[100]

He did not, however, greatly fear the recurrence of war, it being inconceivable to him that the follies of 1914 could again be perpetrated. In No Enemy he naively wrote:

> I do not believe that there will ever be another war if you put it only on the baser ground that the great financiers who alone can make or stop wars got hideously frightened by the last one. And in addition to that you can consider the educative effect of the Armageddon that finished yesterday. It will take a good many decades before any human soul will again regard war as a means of enrichment and a good many centuries before any Great Power will again imagine that to have an aspect of bestriding the world in jackboots and with the saber rattling is of advantage to itself. It is a better world on the 29th of June, 1919, than it was on August the 3rd, 1914. Bluff has got its deathblow.[101]

And in Great Trade Route, as late as 1937, he was still convinced that another war was unthinkable.[102] A year later he made the disturbing observation that "it has always seemed curious to me that

---

The Soul of London, originally published as a separate volume (London: Alston Rivers, 1905) but also published as Part One of England and the English, which included in addition The Heart of the Country (London: Alston Rivers, 1906) and The Spirit of the People (London: Alston Rivers, 1907).

[100] Ford Madox Ford, Great Trade Route (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 397.

[101] P. 93.

[102] P. 50.

the four fiercest of all animals, the bull, the stallion that is more terrible than the bull, the rhinoceros that is a charging castle, and Mr. Hitler, should all be vegetarians";[103] but he died in June of 1939, a few months too soon to see Mr. Hitler march into the Polish Corridor, probably still believing that men had learned from the late Armageddon.

But if another war was unlikely, in Ford's eyes it was also unnecessary to bring about the destruction of civilization as he should like to know it. That trick was being neatly effected by Progress, and Science, and the Nordic, as opposed to the Mediterranean, frame of mind.

> Our former civilisation of chivalries, learnings, arts, crafts, mysteries, abstract thought, frugalities and individualisms came, . . . from the shores of the Counts of Toulouse; all these things are today threatened by the Mass Production that is the one symbol of our two-branched Anglo-Saxon commonwealths. For who should say that <u>we</u> stand for arts, crafts, mysteries, frugalities, individualisms or any of the rest of it, our contribution to the world having been the white-tiled bathroom turned out by the hundred thousand daily and provided with nickelled fixings and glass shelves?[104]

Of Science, whose heralded benefits he profoundly distrusted, he wrote:

> Science has done more than anything--more than the Churches themselves--to break the faith in its imperial destinies, of humanity. . . . For a generation before 1914 we were deafened by assertions of the benign services that Science would render to humanity . . . and then when came the day of humanity of its trial, just as the Albigenses saw that the first use to which Christianity was put was their extinction, so the first use of Science in the mass was to put an end to infinite millions of human lives.[105]

---

[103] <u>Provence</u>, p. 351. [104] <u>A Mirror to France</u>, p. 10.

[105] <u>Provence</u>, p. 314.

He was not oblivious to the potential benefits of scientific achievements, but he was never certain whether in the long run they accomplished more good or ill.

> Obviously I am not the one to deprive an anxious mother at the bedside of her sick child of the services of a doctor. . . . But the whole affair is so paradoxical that I hardly dare write even as much as that. . . . Science at once evolves the principles of eugenics, preserves the lives of infinite millions of the mentally and physically defective and enables millions of men to move about the world carrying cans of explosives and bacteria and other cans containing inferior, scientifically preserved food, and so to destroy other millions of their fellows.[106]

Toward the end of his life Ford perceived an almost total nihilism, a lack of faith even in Progress. Using as a symbol the famous Haydn Farewell Symphony in which the players, one by one, douse their candles and silently slip away so that the stage is left finally in total darkness, he observes:

> That is our age. . . . There have stolen away from us, unperceived, Faith and Courage; the belief in a sustaining Redeemer, in a sustaining anything; the Stage is gone, the Cinema is going, the belief in the Arts, in Altruism, in the law of Supply and Demand, in Science, in the Destiny of our Races. . . . In the machine itself. . . . In Provence there is every Sunday a _Mise à mort_ that is responsible for the death of six bulls. In the world outside it one immense bull that bears our destiny is at every hour of every day slowly and blindly staggering to its end.[107]

And, so he turned prophet and preached that the world must "take Provence of the thirteenth century for its model" if it wished to save itself.[108] History had contrived to obscure the value of chivalry; the knightly code no longer obtained; conventions had lost their core of meaning; and the result was a lamentably fallen world. What

---

[106] _Ibid._, pp. 314-15.

[107] _Ibid._, pp. 261-62.

[108] _Ibid._, p. 319.

was necessary was to return to the conditions, or at least the frame of mind, in which chivalry had seen its birth.

A return to the frame of mind of the Provençal Dark Ages meant several things to Ford: a reining of the machine; "the Mediterranean conception of the Small, as against the Nordic-Mass-Producer," as an ideal;[109] its corollary pride in l'honneur du métier; and an end to nationalisms.

> . . . if you could get rid of wars, national barriers, patriotisms, politicians, and written constitutions, you might, at the hands of the Small Producer, experience a return to a real Golden Age.[110]

Or, as he put it in Provence:

> One way or another the number of machines and of machine hours worked must be reduced to a minimum. The wars of the nations must be little wars of little nations brought about by local jeers; the religions must be little religions; the churches without temporal powers; the leisure enjoyments be individual enjoyments. The glorification of Mass must disappear. You will talk of the largest pumpkin in the village as a glory, not of the largest armament factory in the world.[111]

All of this was to be achieved through a return to the land, every man to work as a small producer with his own hands upon his own acres. If he must preserve a sense of group feeling it must be as a member of the very largest group, mankind, or of the smallest possible local community.

The Small Producer Ford defined thus:

> He is the man who with a certain knowledge of various crafts can set his hand to most of the kinds of work that go to the maintenance of humble existences. He can mend or make a rough chest of drawers; he will make shift to sole a shoe or make a passable pair of sandals; he will contrive or repair hurdles,

---

[109] Great Trade Route, p. 31.

[110] Ibid., p. 274. [111] P. 320.

> platters, scythe handles, styes, shingle roofs, harrows. But above all he can produce and teach his family to produce good food according to the seasons. . . . In sufficiency to keep his household supplied independent of the flux of currencies and the tides of world supplies--and to have a surplus for his neighbors. He is the insurance premium of his race. In short a Man.[112]

What is essential is that property cease to be an abstraction, that food and possessions be valued for the labor that has brought them into being, that one take pride in his handiwork.

> It is that spirit--the tradition that a man should not eat high cooking till he can cook; shall not inhabit a house of his own till he can sweep the floor; shall not drink the juice of fabulous fruits brought him from the Indies till he can grow the fruits of his own land; shall not go to the play till he has proved himself an actor who can improvise his part; shall not travel till he has made a home . . . and shall not wear a fine coat till he can grow the wool, card, spin and weave the cloth, cut out, baste, fit and sew an everyday one. . . . It is that spirit that could yet save the Western World. . . . But to do that it must be enjoined on the world that Mass and Machine are the servants not the master of Man, and a man must blush as if he were caught in a petty theft if a stranger coming into his house should find anything that was not made by the human hand or if a guest should find himself being offered food out of a can or unseasoned meat that should have been kept beyond its due season by preservatives. It is in that way and in that way only that an economic balance could be re-established, a law of Supply and Demand be re-enacted and the Great Trade Routes be restored to their beneficent function of distributing civilization to the darkest ends of the earth. . . . It is that or extinction: the one or the other must come. . . . It does not take any great prophet to foresee that.[113]

What a man does, he must do with pride; that is what gives dignity to human existence:

> All this wrangling for power in newspapers, meetings, market-places, and drawing rooms is a weariness--and when you have it, what is it? A handful of dried leaves that crumble under the touch. If you have a platoon, you can make it smart; if you have a garden, you may make it fine, luxuriant, producing mar-

---

[112] Great Trade Route, p. 170.

[113] Provence, pp. 263-64.

rows as large as barrels. Or if you write a poem, you must make it beautiful. Everything else is vanity.[114]

The machine, too, would have its place, and its ability to create heretofore unimagined leisure time for man must be exploited. What the machine could do better than man, it should do. But man must never lose his pride in work as work, and he must cease to regard the machine and its capacity for mass production with awe. The proportion of his hours must be changed so that he no longer spends five days out of every week in unrewarding work and two in his garden. Here is how, in Great Trade Route, Ford described his vision of the future:

For myself, I look forward to a day when, the automobile

---

[114] No Enemy, p. 273. It is an ongoing idea in Ford's discussions of French life that it is characterized by a pride in l'honneur du métier which gives dignity to humble existences. This attitude is expressed first in Between St. Dennis and St. George, p. 194; and is best defined in A Mirror To France, pp. 33-34:

> ". . . in the great bulk of the French people there is very little restlessness. The farmer remains upon his acres; the sabotier goes on turning out sabots; the cantonnier is content to remain tending his little patch on the main road, and these men put their hopes of glory in that curious, vague and very definite thing they call l'honneur. That form of honour has about it little of the Englishman's commonplace picturesqueness. It has nothing to do with always telling the truth, with taking a cold bath every morning, or with asserting one's rights. . . . It can endure the oppressions of very bad forms of government; nevertheless, without it the individual would die. For it is the honour of the métier, allied in some respects to the honour of the German superman, and yet differing essentially, inasmuch as it is always a matter of personal discipline and traditions. The sabotier may have the meannesses of the sabotier and his want of personal cleanliness, but he must not have more than is in the tradition."

In an interesting critical commentary on Lord Jim Ford makes the suggestion that most English readers miss the point of the French lieutenant's comments on Jim's loss of honor because they do not realize that he is speaking of l'honneur du métier, which is more meaningful to him as a Frenchman than ordinary moral codes (Ford Madox Hueffer, Thus To Revisit [New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921], p. 88).

being as nearly-extinct as is today the railway, men shall live in great or small but intensively cultivated areas. Once or twice a week man shall fly to the power centres, do their three hour shifts, superintending the actions or executing the repairs of the power-supplying machines . . . or their field work in the great grain centres and ranches. The rest of the time they will occupy with the agreeable and unhurried labour of their own soil or with their own benches, chisels, easels, fiddle bows, lasts . . . and with whatever form of night life they shall find agreeable when the day is over. Occasionally even they will take a read in a book.[115]

The beauty of the scheme was that the way of life itself should provide its own entertainments. Mechanization had destroyed not only pride in work but also man's capacity for individual pleasures. The lamentable irony was that machines were creating free time for men who had no way of filling it except with the tawdry pleasures of the cinema. Ford stated the dilemma and its resolution thus:

> You cannot imagine a population each member of which works only an hour a day spending the whole rest of its time in the cinemas. Yet the only logical and moral end of the result of improvement in the Machine can only be either millionwise exterminations or a six hour world working week. There is no third way. None.
>
> But you can imagine a six hour working week population spending considerable time and regaining its mental and intellectual health growing string beans, attending on milch goats, moving hurdles for sheep among roots, weaving woolen stuffs, thinning out woodlands, carving bedposts, painting frescoes in cinema halls, felling timber . . . and having all its afternoons and evenings and most of the winter months for the movies, the theatres, the concert halls, the churches, the night clubs, the dancing floors . . . for fox-hunting, for fishing, for field sports, hitch-hiking, for distant travel. . . . Or even for the Arts.
>
> To reach that Estate the change of heart is needed--a profound modification in our sense of the values of life.[116]

Ford had, as a very young man, flirted with a sort of William Morris socialism, but this was hardly more than the experimen-

---

[115] P. 177

[116] Great Trade Route, p. 175.

tation of a rather self-conscious young intellectual. He had rejected the organized rural community very quickly and even delivered rather a bitter attack of it in The Simple Life Limited.[117] Whether, during the early years of his married life with Elsie Martindale, he actually "dressed more or less mediaevally in the manner of true disciples of socialism of the William Morris school" and sat around drinking "mead out of cups made of bullock's horns,"[118] is, of course, doubtful, and it is also unimportant. The point is that he had lived happily in the country a great deal in his youth, but he had never seriously proposed a rural existence as a panacea for the world's ills until after the war.[119] It is a point of supreme importance for an understanding not only of Ford's life but of his novels. Upon his discharge from military service he retired from London and took up the life of the Small Producer, first with Stella Bowen at Red Ford and later with Janice Biala in Provence. Except for his brief sojourn in Paris during the transatlantic review days, he lived

---

[117] Daniel Chaucer [pseud.], The Simple Life Limited (London: John Lane, 1911).

[118] Memories and Impressions, p. 250.

[119] His finally proclaiming a form of pastoralism is not, however, entirely unpredictable. He had always had a deep respect for the Kentish peasants he had met when he first left London to live in the country. He said in Return to Yesterday, p. 141:

> ". . . those brown, battered men and women of an obscure Kentish countryside come back to me as the best English people I ever knew. . . . If, as I undoubtedly do, I love England with a deep love, though I grow daily more alien to the Englishman, it is because of them";

He was especially fond of one Meary Walker, whose biography he recorded not only in Return to Yesterday, pp. 142-47, but also in England and the English, pp. 183-89, Ford Madox Ford, Women and Men (Paris: Three Mountains Press, 1923), pp. 52-58, and elsewhere.

almost exclusively in the country, growing his own radishes and making his own furniture. In his post-war novels, and this is especially important for the Parade's End tetralogy, we see a similar withdrawal to an independent rural existence by values characters. The experience of the war had so completely demolished faith in traditional values and conventional modes of behavior that a new dispensation was urgently required.

When Ford, then, turned a mirror to his times in his pre-war novels, it was to reflect the symptoms of a tradition and a ruling class in decay. Some of these novels explored in greater depth and with greater acerbity the dual theme of corruption in public affairs and the abdication of responsibility of the traditional leaders of society already introduced in The Inheritors. Others made a more Jamesian inquiry into the personal relationships of the best people. In making such a distinction, however, we must recognize that the two areas continually overlap: both private vice and public irresponsibility stem from the lack of a meaningful social structure and the absence of meaningful standards of behavior; in one form or another the seemingly unanswerable question is always posed regarding the conduct appropriate to the man of honor at a time when traditional values have ceased to be operative. The characters in these novels, with many exceptions of course, tend to be either honorably ineffectual, or consciously and cynically hypocritical, or naively rootless, unaware even that their self-interested assertiveness conflicts with any gentlemanly code.

Like Ford's historical novels, these novels all remain faithful to impressionistic theory but vary considerably in their merit as

novels. Again like the historical novels, even the worst of them contain passages of brilliance, and all of them gain interest from their treatment of character types, situations, and themes that are to reappear in Ford's best work.[120] Moreover, their common merit resides largely in their rendering of psychological effects. The action of these novels can almost always be summarized briefly, Ford's forte here as elsewhere being the revelation of psychological and moral nuances.

The few critics who have commented on Ford's early fiction have discovered in it the seeds of The Good Soldier and Parade's End. But, unfortunately, the generalizations they offer are often more misleading than illuminating. Thus, when Frank Macshane asserts:

> . . . we find a distinct pattern of behavior and definite ethical canons early established. Ford's heroes are altruists--living by a strict morality that is literally based upon Christian teachings. By pursuing this romantic ideal, they invariably end their careers either in disaster, their spirit broken by the materialistic temper of the modern age, or by retiring for solace into the depths of the country;[121]

we have to add such broad qualification that very little remains of the original suggestion. First, Macshane's observation is simply not applicable to Mr. Apollo,[122] Mr. Fleight,[123] A Call,[124] or An

---

[120]The lone exception to this last generalization is The Panel (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1912), which is aptly subtitled A Sheer Comedy and which Ford dismissed in his dedication as merely frivolous; it is an extremely polished performance, but it is altogether outside of the main stream of Ford's fiction.

[121]Frank Macshane, "The Pattern of Ford Madox Ford," New Republic, April 14, 1955, p. 16.

[122]Ford Madox Hueffer, Mr. Apollo (London: Methuen, 1908).

[123]Idem, Mr. Fleight (London: Howard Latimer, Ltd., 1913).

[124]Idem, A Call (London: Chatto & Windus, 1910).

English Girl;[125] second, in novels like The Benefactor[126] and The Simple Life Limited, whose denouements approximate Macshane's alternatives, the characters and their situations are essentially different from those in the Parade's End novels and vastly different from those of The Good Soldier, whose central character, Edward Ashburnham, can certainly not be described in good conscience as an "altruist--living by a strict morality that is literally based upon Christian teachings." Similarly, when R. W. Lid points out that A Call "contains the characteristic 'affair' of his later fiction, 'one psychological progression involving two women and a man,'"[127] he leads us into the danger of misplacing our critical emphasis, of reading A Call in terms of the later novels, from which it differs essentially in its moral dilemma. Still, these generalizations are basically sound, as are Cassell's observation that "the early novels, like those that follow them, offer various portraits of the chivalric ideal,"[128] and Meixner's judgment that "In these books, Ford castigates the whole set of phenomena which characterize modern life as a result of the triumph of the bourgeois capitalistic industrial system."[129] Such comments are extremely useful in illustrating the ongoing thematic concern in Ford's serious fiction and his gropings toward the formal excellence he achieved in The Good Soldier and Parade's End. But in pursuing consistencies and

---

[125] Idem, An English Girl (London: Methuen & Co., 1907).

[126] Idem, The Benefactor (London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1905).

[127] R. W. Lid, "Ford Madox Ford and His Community of Letters," Prairie Schooner, XXXV (Summer, 1961), 136.

[128] Cassell, p. 115. [129] Meixner, p. 7.

progressions we must avoid our Procrustean predilections and insist on the distinctions that differentiate Ford's novels.[130] Too many critics of Ford's fiction are content to rest after having drawn comparisons--which are, after all, only initial steps in understanding a literary work--and thus blur the distinctions that make each unique.

The pitfalls opened up when unearthing parallels are gravest in the discovery of the forerunners of important characters. This is especially true in the case of the alleged predecessors of Christopher Tietjens and Edward Ashburnham. R. W. Lid describes Don Collar Kelleg in An English Girl as "clearly a younger version of Ford's famous hero--he is Christopher Tietjens without brain or backbone."[131] Walter Allen, among others, identifies George Moffat of The Benefactor with both Tietjens and Ashburnham.[132] Wiley and Cassell reach as far back as The Shifting of the Fire and find a somewhat naive and inexperienced Tietjens in Clem Hollebone,[133] and Cassell goes as far as to suggest that even Robert Grimshaw of A Call is representative of the noble prototype.[134] These are all valid, if rather obvious, parallels; but once again we must add that

---

[130]Paul Wiley, for instance, pushes his parallels so far that most distinctions disappear. He even neglects to mention revised editions and in one case the very existence of a novel.

[131]R. W. Lid, "Tietjens in Disguise," Kenyon Review, XXII, 2 (Spring, 1960), 268.

[132]Walter Allen, The English Novel: A Short Critical History (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958), p. 396.

[133]Wiley, pp. 133-36; Cassell, p. 114.

[134]Cassell, ibid.

they are valid only as far as they go. They seize upon similarities of situation and make them appear as similarities of character. It is true that all of these characters, with the exception of Grimshaw, are men of honor and generosity imposed upon by a selfishly hostile world, and in so far as this is true, an awareness of it helps to illuminate the setting and the thematic concern of each of the novels. But the further point must be made that each of these characters reacts differently to his environment because, in fact, each is a character essentially different from the others. It is, finally, illicit to speak of a "Christopher Tietjens without brain or backbone," or an inexperienced and naive Tietjens, or a Grimshaw-like selfish and confused Tietjens, or, when we read the tetralogy as a whole, even a passive and submissive Tietjens. Tietjens is, in contradistinction to his "predecessors," a post-war character, and it is precisely because he is not naive and inexperienced, not "without brain or backbone" that he perceives the need for new perspectives and acts on his conviction, refusing to submit passively either to his wife or to a decadent social code. When Cassell points out that Sergius Macdonald in The New Humpty-Dumpty[135] is "the only one of Ford's men of honor to divorce his wife,"[136] he has, without realizing it, hit upon the thing that makes Macdonald, in fact, the only true forerunner of Tietjens. For Macdonald, who is incidentally a revolutionary, is the only pre-war protagonist that not only perceives the hypocrisy of the genteel tradition but

---

[135]Daniel Chaucer [pseud.], The New Humpty-Dumpty (London: John Lane, 1912).

[136]Cassell, p. 122.

also is willing to flaunt it for the sake of more genuine and, thus, higher, moral values.

The one early novel which does not invite serious comparisons with either The Good Soldier or Parade's End is The Panel: A Sheer Comedy. An avowed farce, it is the single example of Ford's very considerable gift as a comic writer. Ford is often very witty in his non-fiction, and most of his novels have comic scenes, but The Panel remains his only attempt at a full-fledged comic novel. Why he did not choose to write any others, especially when he was desperately in need of money, is wholly open to conjecture; what is certain is that the reason cannot be that he failed in The Panel. It is incredibly funny throughout and extremely fast-paced; from the point of view of pure narrative power it is among Ford's most accomplished books prior to The Good Soldier. It is true that the comic devices are far from original and that the book has no discoverable thematic content, but Ford handles his stock devices so deftly that as a simple entertainment The Panel is a remarkably successful display of novelistic virtuosity.

The plot roughly parallels that of She Stoops To Conquer[137] and employs in its intrigue all of the disguises, mistaken identities, embarrassingly untimely entrances, and conversations at cross purposes one would expect, plus the added feature of a moving panel that connects two of the bedrooms. The central character is Edward Brent-Foster, who has achieved the distinction of becoming the

---

[137]Probably to make certain that we do not miss the parallel, the novel makes a direct reference to The Vicar of Wakefield on page 116.

youngest major in the British army because of his devotion to Henry James. As he explains it:

> His [James'] characters are perpetually remarking "so that there, in a manner of speaking, we are." And, of course, as you can never make out where they are, it's extraordinarily strengthening to the brain to work it out. That's why I'm the youngest major in the British army.[138]

He is in love with Lady Mary Savylle but has abandoned his suit upon her recent acquisition of money and a title and become engaged to Olympia Peabody, a rather offensive American woman who is, among other things, perpetual grand mistress of the Boston Society for the Abolition of Vice. Brent is invited down to Basildon Manor, which his aunt has rented from Mary Savylle, and he proceeds to lie his way through a series of hilarious episodes which result finally in the routing of Olympia and his being united with Mary, who has been posing all the while as Nancy Jenkins, his aunt's maid, in order to win him back. In contrast to Olympia and her society, there is another ludicrous guest, Mrs. Julianna Kerr Howe, who is the president of the Society for Abolishing Conventional Marriage. And as an even further slap at organized morality we find Brent's immoral uncle, Arthur Foster, at the head of The National Society for the Reform of Sin. What most distinguishes the novel is Ford's amazing ability to create a sense of the lunatic in nightmarishly funny scenes: the scene involving Brent and Sir Arthur Johnson in a railroad carriage is reminiscent of and equal to the best efforts of an Evelyn Waugh. For all its lack of seriousness, one would willingly give up a dozen or so of Ford's other early novels for another book like The Panel.

---

[138] The Panel, pp. 32-33.

Ford said of his early novels that some of them were pastiches in "the manner of Mr. Henry James,"[139] who was for him always The Master. Two of these are readily identifiable in An English Girl, a rather faltering attempt to handle the international theme, and A Call, a psychological study of a small group of characters including a couple of women pointedly named Etta Stackpole and Madame de Mauvesine. But an even more interesting example of a Jamesian effort by Ford is The Benefactor, his first independently written novel since The Shifting of the Fire. In it there are unmistakable signs of a Jamesian influence blended somewhat imperfectly with elements that are peculiarly Fordian.[140] Except for a certain preciosity of style and a weakness in the drawing of some of the characters, the novel displays a great deal of technical skill. Ford handles time shifts, interior monologues, and shifts in point of view with ease and assurance. There is a great deal of admirably precise detail in descriptive passages and a very scrupulous adherence to the point of view character's perspective in scenic presentations which makes them very convincing. In spite of these praiseworthy characteristics, the book as a whole is a failure. Ford here is simply not in control of his material.

The action revolves around the sacrifices of George Moffat, the benefactor of the title, in the interests of good letters and

---

[139] Actually Ford speaks of only two such pastiches, but he makes another such reference elsewhere to The Benefactor. On this point see Lid, "Ford Madox Ford and His Community of Letters," p. 133; and Meixner, p. 130.

[140] For a discussion of Jamesian elements in the style of The Benefactor see Meixner, p. 130.

human kindness. A minor talent himself he devotes his fortune and most of his energies to the assistance of more talented younger writers and further denies his own literary ambitions by sacrificing a great deal of time in an attempt to help rehabilitate the Reverend Brede, a half mad neighbor with whose daughter Clara Moffat he has reluctantly fallen in love. Predictably, his proteges turn on him, Brede winds up institutionalized, and Moffat winds up bankrupt and despised. The only bright spot in the denouement is Moffat's discovery that Clara, who has always believed in his talent as a writer and goodness as a man, returns his love and that with her father now properly cared for she is willing, or rather anxious, to join him in his journey out of the country to fresh pastures. At the eleventh hour, however, Moffat refuses to take Clara with him, not because he is already married to an undivorceable Catholic wife from whom he has been estranged for years but because one does not run off with the daughter of a friend whom one has helped to drive insane. The Jamesian note is sounded that one must face things mutely and splendidly and go on sacrificing personal happiness to higher ideals.

Thus baldly stated the theme and the action which is to embody it appear to be promising ingredients for a novel. But a number of things go wrong in the writing. The initial difficulty is with the portrayal of Moffat. Cassell describes him a bit over-enthusiastically as:

> . . . the first protagonist in Ford's gallery whose fatal weakness is goodness. He is vilified, perjured, bankrupted. Everything he does he does out of the best of motives, and everything turns out badly.[141]

---

[141] Cassell, p. 118.

But the case is not as simple as all that. We are reminded throughout the novel that for every young writer he has helped several have been ruined by his meddling.[142] There is no doubt of the goodness of his motives, but Ford never makes it clear whether he is admirably generous or stupidly officious. A similar difficulty resides in the renunciation of his chance for happiness with Clara Brede. It seems clear that Ford intended this to be a noble act in the manner of a Jamesian renunciation, and yet it seems to be an absolutely pointless denial for its own sake. There is absolutely no hint of a moral triumph for either Moffat or Clara Brede in their decision to go their separate ways; they simply accept the fact of unhappiness in the world. Moreover, Moffat's last minute change of plan strikes the reader as unexpectedly as it does Clara. Neither what we know of the characters nor what we know of their situation prepares us for his self-denial. Perhaps the most attractive way in which to read the novel is to see its action and its title as ironic commentaries on the harm that results from the efforts of generous but misguided do-gooders, for in the long run Moffat causes far more pain than he alleviates, and things run counter to his intentions not so much because of the ingratitude of others as because of his own lack of perception.

Ford's next Jamesian attempt, An English Girl, was no more successful than his first. Here we see Ford come to grips with an international theme and lose the struggle. The novel concerns itself with the ill-fated romance between Don Collar Kelleg, an idealistic

---

[142]We must also bear in mind that his benevolent intercession has played a large part in sending Reverend Brede to a lunatic asylum.

though indecisive American, and Eleanor Greville, an English girl of good family. At the outset we are told that Don has just become the richest citizen in the world upon the death of his father, the wheeling and dealing head of the Kelleg combine, which controls trusts, railroads, industries, and politicians throughout the world. Don, who has the soul of a poet and the morals of a saint, decides that he will spend his life and his billions rectifying the wrongs and cleansing the corruption for which his father was responsible in the amassing of his fortune. He convinces Eleanor and her father to travel with him to America to see just exactly what can be done. In company with her father, her cousin, her aunt, and Don's half-brother, Count Carlo Canzano, the couple set sail for America. They are repulsed by the squalor and ferocity of New York and discover to Don's chagrin that the trust has so cunningly tied up his father's money that he is powerless to do much beside providing for his own comfort. Despite his revulsion, Don finds America vital and stimulating, and Eleanor, with a bit of sophisticated advice from Canzano to view Americans as children, manages to enjoy her stay. They return to England prepared to marry and settle down to the good life of good county folks. But the poetry in Don's soul triumphs and he determines to return to America and devote his rather nebulous talents to the elevation of the standards of his homeland; Eleanor simply lets him go.

Kelleg, Eleanor, and Count Canzano, who are intended to represent the American, the English, and the Continental temperaments and values, are all very unconvincingly drawn. The dialogue is clumsy, and the action generally incredible and "unjustified."

And, as R. W. Lid points out, the theme of the novel instead of being realized in the action is stated in a letter from Canzano to Eleanor tacked on at the end.[143] There are, on the other hand, some attractive features. As Meixner points out, the descriptions of a ship's arrival at New York harbor, and the scenes of Manhattan and Coney Island are brilliant pieces of Impressionism.[144]

The chief interest of the novel, however, is its early attempt to define the type of an English girl of good traditions. What is particularly noteworthy is that while Don Collar Kelleg is hardly an attractive character Ford places the responsibility for the defeat of the young couple's love squarely with Eleanor. It is her inadequacies that make a meaningful relationship between them impossible. In the concluding letter, in which Canzano recapitulates the action of the book and comments upon it, Ford insists that in living up to the external forms of her tradition she has been false to their spirit, that in fact the malaise that besets the English gentry is that they have so codified the rules of behavior that they no longer admit of human variation. Standards and conventions have become so rigid and the observance of them so mechanical that imagination and emotion have been driven out. Canzano, speaking for Ford, tells Eleanor that it is her own weakness, her own cowardice, her own fear of testing her conventions that has estranged her

---

[143] Lid, "Tietjens in Disguise," p. 272.

[144] In this connection Wiley makes the point that <u>An English Girl</u> appeared a year after Ford's first trip to the United States in 1906, which must have given him the material for his New York settings (Wiley, p. 146).

from the erratic Kelleg. He says in his letter:

> You are cowardly--all you English are cowardly: you are afraid of your own emotions: you are afraid that if you become passionate you will lose dignity. That's why you insist on maintaining your frigid exteriors.[145]

And, a little earlier:

> You think that Don--poor Don!--is not the sort of man to fit in with your scheme of life as it should be lived! You think it was your duty--to your sex, to your class, to your country, to your tradition--that it was your duty to cast him out. I know you very well: how typically English, how typically cold, how typically good, you are. You consider, you women of your class and race and type, that the first thing in life is to form a standard, a rule of conduct, and then to live up to it. Anything else is a weakness, and you could not face the responsibility of introducing into your family--into your gens--a weak man.[146]

What she has failed to see, and this is characteristic of her class and her time, is that her tradition properly understood demands that she embrace the nobility of soul that Don possesses, allow herself to love him, and give him the strength to act.[147]

This theme, the unexamined repression of emotion for the sake of good manners, is more profoundly and more skilfully treated in Ford's third Jamesian novel, A Call. This book, originally published in the English Review,[148] if decidedly not a masterpiece is yet a very well written novel, certainly among the best of Ford's minor works. Ford has almost perfect control of his material and uses his impressionistic techniques to full advantage. Point of view, time shifts, dialogue, characterization, thematic development--all are

---

[145] An English Girl, p. 307.

[146] Ibid., p. 302.

[147] Ibid., p. 307.

[148] Before it appeared in book form, Ford made a number of revisions, mostly additions, in order to make his theme more explicit. See his Epistolary Epilogue to the novel for his own comments on these.

handled with skill and assurance. And, in this book, the descriptions of settings are masterfully employed symbolically to heighten the effect of the action and to define the characters. The major shortcoming of the book, as John Meixner has also observed, is structural.[149] Ford is guilty of withholding information to no apparent end except to heighten suspense. By not revealing until the end of the book who made the disastrous telephone call that sets the surface action in motion, Ford not only gains nothing in terms of thematic development but also gives an undeserved importance to the exposure of the caller and introduces an atmosphere of the mystery story which seriously detracts from the issues being discussed. To this we may add the lesser objections that some of the characters are far more typical than individual and that some of the conversations seemed to be dragged in in order to air specific questions and thus impede the action.[150]

The central character, Robert Grimshaw--who, we are told, is thirty-five years old, is very rich, is a good fencer, has perfect manners, speaks in low tones, keeps regular hours, and is generally regarded as a confirmed bachelor--is an impossible meddler, reminiscent of George Moffat, and at the same time incapable of recognizing his own and others' emotional needs. Although he is in love with Pauline Lucas, he has contrived to marry her off to his dull but aristocratic friend Dudley Leicester in the hope that her drive and efficiency will make of Dudley a Cabinet Minister and thus

---

[149] Meixner, pp. 143-45.

[150] Here again Meixner and I are in essential agreement.

satisfy the responsibility Dudley has as a member of the ruling class. He explains his motives to Etta Stackpole Hudson in the following terms:

> Englishmen haven't any sense of responsibility. Perhaps it's bad for them to have it aroused in them. They can work; they can fight; they can do things; but it's for themselves alone. They're individualists. But there is a class that's got the sense of duty to the whole. They've got a rudimentary sense of it--a tradition, at least, if not a sense. And Leicester comes of that class. But the tradition's dying out. I suppose it was never native to them. It was forced on them because someone had to do the public work and it was worth their while. But now that's changing, it isn't worth while. So no doubt Dudley hadn't got it in his blood. . . . And yet I don't know . . . he's shaped so well. I would have sworn he had it in him to do it with careful nursing. And Pauline had it in her--the sense of the whole, of the clan, the class, the county, and all the rest of it.[151]

Of course, all Grimshaw achieves is to wreck the lives and the chances for happiness of everyone connected with him, including Katya Lascarides, whom he does not love but to whom he finally succumbs and is married. Unlike Eleanor Greville in An English Girl, Grimshaw does not remain ignorant of the sacrifice he has made because of his sense of duty to a tradition. He has a painful moment of recognition in which he becomes aware of his folly in denying the dictates of passion:

> When he had practically forced Dudley Leicester upon Pauline, he really had believed that you can marry a woman you love to your best friend without enduring all the tortures of jealousy. This sort of marriage of convenience that it was, was, he knew, the sort of thing that in their sort of life was frequent and successful enough, and having been trained in the English code of manners never to express any emotion at all, he had forgotten that he possessed emotions. Now he was up against it.[152]

Much of the force and irony of Grimshaw's self-revelation results from the placing of the scene in his private chamber, which Ford

---

[151] A Call, pp. 178-79. [152] Ibid., p. 282.

describes as "a room that was all monastically white"[153] in perfect keeping with the sort of life Grimshaw had been leading and with his former view of himself as without emotions or emotional needs but with only a sense of duty.

Early in the novel he says of Pauline, "I want to have her in a cage, to chirrup over her, to whistle to her, to give her grapes, and to have her peep up at me and worship me."[154] This is, in fact, the sort of relationship, calling for no emotional involvement on his part, that he enjoys with his devoted and ever-present dachshund Peter, who seems to objectify the limits of Grimshaw's capacity for love. Peter is introduced, significantly, during a conversation between Grimshaw and a Greek Orthodox priest in which they are discussing the way in which English life inspires a fear of entanglements and precludes personal contact. To Grimshaw's question regarding the advisability of washing his hands "of things and people and affections," the priest replies, "Assuredly, . . . I do not advise you to give away your little dog for fear that one day it will die and rend your heart,"[155] and exposes Grimshaw to an attitude he had never before known to exist. It is soon after his colloquy with the priest that Grimshaw and Pauline enact the climactic scene of the novel in which she reveals to him that he has ruined all of their lives in the cause of an effete set of standards, and clears the way for his recognition scene. It is Pauline that makes the final evaluation of their class and their training when she tells Grimshaw:

---

[153] Ibid., p. 283.

[154] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[155] Ibid., p. 221.

> We haven't learned wisdom: we've only learned how to behave. We cannot avoid tragedies.[156]

How well they have learned to behave and how absolutely incapable they are of avoiding tragedies Ford rendered with far greater brilliance when he returned to the theme a few years later in The Good Soldier.

As we have already observed several times, Ford's concern with the values of his time went far beyond his interest in the unsatisfactory private lives of the upper classes; and in Mr. Apollo, Mr. Fleight, The Simple Life Limited, and The New Humpty-Dumpty he turned his attention to the more general problems of public morality. In spite of the fact that these novels were intended mainly as potboilers and show signs of hasty composition,[157] they represent as a group a higher level of achievement than either of the other two groups of novels we have scrutinized. Except for Mr. Apollo, which was published in 1908, these are all fairly late novels among Ford's pre-war output, and they show the hand of a practiced craftsman.

Mr. Apollo, the first of the group, is the least distinguished. Its intellectual content is reasonably engaging, but as a work of fiction it is clearly a failure.[158] The characters never become more than interesting abstractions, and their dilemmas never seem quite real. The moral conflicts are real enough, but only as abstractions; the reader's intellect may be stirred, but not his sympathies.

---

[156] Ibid., p. 274.

[157] In The Simple Life Limited, for instance, on page 86 Ford carelessly refers to Miss Stobhall when he clearly means Miss Egmont.

[158] For an opposite view see Meixner, pp. 114-28.

A further difficulty is the mixed tone of the novel, which falls somewhere between witty social satire and impassioned religious plea.

In this novel Ford examines the religious and moral values of Edwardian England by means of a fable in which the Godhead Pheobus Apollo returns briefly to the earth.[159] Judging behavior by absolute standards, he moves through the book exposing hypocrisy and petty self-interest, ultimately inspiring a sincere faith in the hearts of Frances and Alfred Milne--a couple of heretofore dissatisfied agnostics in whom Apollo has discovered real generosity and a profound desire to believe. Like Twain's Satan, Apollo is above good and evil and totally indifferent to human life and human suffering. His standards are absolute truth and absolute justice; he takes people at their literal word and cheerfully annihilates individuals and even whole neighborhoods when his uncompromising standards call for such gestures. Scathing attacks are made upon the athletic Christianity of Reverend Todd, whose dedication to the Established Church is founded on hopes of social advancement; "tolerant" Roman Catholic priests, who are by virtue of their broadmindedness false to their evangelical calling and professed convictions; the petty hypocrisy of Ford Aldington, who professes a belief in Apollo's divinity and offers money for the building of temples but will not publish his declaration of divinity for fear of hurting the circulation of his newspaper; and the atheism of Mr. Clarges, whose antiquated positivism

---

[159]The book is very similar in its theme and structure to Twain's The Mysterious Stranger. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that Mr. Apollo was published in 1908 and thus antedates the publication of Twain's story by eight years. It is extremely unlikely that Ford would have seen The Mysterious Stranger in manuscript; there is no indication anywhere to suggest that he did.

denies the existence of the ineffable. Only the unquestioning Roman Catholic faith of Margery Snide escapes relatively unscathed. This is not to suggest, however, that Mr. Apollo is in any sense a "Catholic novel." She comes off well because her faith is genuine; Catholicism is commended because it recognizes the existence of insoluble mysteries.

Apollo makes it absolutely clear that he is but one of many gods all equally valid. The gods that men create, he tells us, all have an equal claim to be worshipped so long as they embody the genuine aspirations of men. What is important is that men recognize forces greater than they and turn their cosmic loneliness into comfortable faith: that way lies peace--at least on this side of the grave. This central theme is best expressed by Apollo in a speech to Frances Milne:

> And of this be certain--that to a God it is nothing if his worshippers be few or many or none at all, since it is not from the fumes of altars that Gods grow fat nor through the beliefs of worshippers that Gods exist. But it is by the worshipping of Gods that men attain to happiness.[160]

Finding its justification in the weaknesses of man, it is a curiously pragmatic and relativistic resolution of a fictional discussion of the decline of faith in the modern world.[161]

Ford's next excursion into social criticism, The Simple Life Limited, is a brilliantly realized satire that strikes in many telling directions at once. Its primary target is the organized simple-

---

[160] Mr. Apollo, p. 309.

[161] It is curious that although Ford invariably referred to himself as a Papist, religious discussions in his fiction are almost always resolved in secular terms, that is, on the basis of what religion has to offer its devotees in this world.

life-utopia founded on William Morris socialism, but it manages also to incorporate attacks upon county gentry, incompetent literary critics, unprincipled writers, grasping entrepreneurs, political radicals, and usurers without once violating its sense of unity. Its large cast of characters are admirably and economically portrayed, and in clearly defining each of them Ford exhibits a remarkable ability to establish the "note" of a character by a revealing speech or gesture. Moreover, he is very successful at subtly foreshadowing the turnabouts that several of the characters make. Reversals of attitudes and abandoning of philosophical positions are always prepared for by seemingly insignificant details which ultimately reveal their importance in the total progression d'effet.

The novel examines the mode of existence of a community of William Morris Simple-Lifers and the motives of its inhabitants.[162] As the action progresses, members of the outside community, for one reason or another--usually because they live in the county or have friends among the Simple-Lifers--visit the Utopia and become involved in its affairs. With the exception of Gerald Luscombe, who backs the simple-life experiment because of altruistic impulses, everyone else who expresses an interest in it, including its founders, hopes to be able to exploit it either politically or financially. In the end the organized Simple-Life is denounced as far more tedious and restricting than even ordinary bourgeois existence, and greed and

---

[162] One reason the novel is successful is that it has the same sort of "solidity of specification" that we noticed in The Fifth Queen novels. Ford drew upon his personal experience of a Simple-Life community that he had known when he lived at Limpsfield; see Return to Yesterday, pp. 40-41, et passim.

lust for power are exposed as the most common underlying motives of those who back and organize philanthropic experiments.

The most unattractive character in the book is Horatio Gubb, "a close disciple and parasitic friend of the late Mr. William Morris,"[163] who is the founder of the colony. In his capacity as an attorney Gubb had come into contact with a temporarily insane adventurer with a gift for language named Simon Bransdon (nee Brandetski) and established him as the prophet of the Simple-Life in the hope of making the enterprise pay dividends. Bransdon's lunatic verse and the trappings of medieval life with which the colony is fitted inevitably draw a stock of disciples, and for a time the undertaking thrives.[164] Gubb having anticipated a ready market for tracts by Bransdon and the homespun turned out by his colonists, discovers to his gratification that the Simple-Life can indeed be made to pay. When it becomes necessary to find a new home for the colony after he swindles a buyer out of an enormous sum for the original site, Gubb persuades Gerald Luscombe to provide land for the community and regularizes the arrangement by giving Luscombe shares in what has now become The Simple Life Limited. Gubb proceeds from one wholly unprincipled success to another in the management of the colony's affairs and earns such a distinguished reputation as an organizer that even before The Simple Life Limited literally goes up in flames

---

[163] The Simple Life Limited, p. 77.

[164] Since the book was published under a pseudonym, Ford allows himself a little joke by having the Simple-Lifers refer to the writings of "Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, an author esteemed by the Lifers as an authority upon the habits of the Middle Age and the Renaissance" in determining the details of their existence, p. 55.

he contracts to become the manager of a new and very lucrative enterprise--The East Croydon Garden City Limited. The magnificently repulsive thing about Horatio Gubb is that he never realizes that he is unprincipled; it simply does not occur to him that there can be anything reprehensible in action that results in a profit without breaking the criminal laws. Although very strict in the preservation of medieval conditions in the colony (because the tourists demand it) and passionate in his championing of William Morris socialism (because the disciples demand it), he is nevertheless willing to assure Lady Croydon that the entire community is ready to vote Tory in a body and to attend Anglican services on Sundays in return for her support. The horrifying thing is that no one else in the novel (again with the exception of Gerald Luscombe) thinks of Gubb as despicable, unless we take George Everard's complaint that the project could have been made to pay even better as a moral stricture. In the judgment of most outsiders, "Mr. Gubb had achieved the great social end of being a territorial philanthropist and, at the same time, making it pay."[165] No achievement could be more admirable.

Luscombe's position in the whole affair is very simple and very honorable. As he explains to George Everard:

> I thought I would go in for this thing as an experiment, and because these people said they had discovered the secret of eternal happiness and brotherly love and because I've done pretty well out of the country and I consider that my class has certain duties to perform.[166]

But, of course, none of his friends accept this explanation. Lady Croydon and Everard ask rhetorically: "any really valuable public

---

[165] The Simple Life Limited, p. 331. [166] Ibid., p. 173.

enterprise ought in the end, oughtn't it, to be worth the while of its organisers?"[167] And Lady Croydon, who had for some time stopped calling on the Luscombe's, reveals her aristocratic greed when she explains her unexpected visit:

> The land pays us so wretchedly badly, that if you've any secrets for getting more out of it than we can, it would be only neighbourly to give Lord Croydon and me what they call, in the stables, a straight tip.[168]

Another interested onlooker that the colony draws is Parmont, a dilletantish London critic who has been responsible for most of Bransdon's acclaim as a genius. His presence in the novel gives Ford an opportunity to roast critics in general. At one point Everard, who is, among other things, a theatrical producer, makes the following observations concerning dramatic critics:

> Of all the sodden, venial devils in the world, commend me to the Dramatic Critic. You stodge him up with champagne and dinners and cigars, and you ask him down to your little place in the country, and every now and then you give a part to some girl he recommends, and you keep the best liqueurs and *pâté de foie gras* for him, and then, why you can just write his notices. . . . the Dramatic Critic doesn't like high-class authors butting into the Theatre. He doesn't like it because he's sodden, and it startles him and his wife's uncle who got him the job on his paper as a Dramatist, and all the other old regular ring of Dramatists have fed him up and promised his wife chow-dogs and given him rides in motors, which he isn't likely to get from Literary Authors who don't know the ropes, and so, naturally, he doesn't want the old gang interfered with.[169]

More interesting than their satellites, however, are the Simple-Lifers themselves. Simon Bransdon thinks the whole affair absurd but continues as prophet in residence because he is penniless and because he needs a place in which to recover from his recent

---

[167] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[168] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[169] *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

mental breakdown, which was brought on by a severe fall and the feeling of guilt he experienced after beating out the brains of his pet bulldog, who had tripped him.[170] We learn of his insincerity fairly late in the novel, but Ford has prepared us for his declaration, "This is all blame rot,"[171] by pointing out in the opening pages that Bransdon is the one member of the community who is exempt from the rules of the Simple-Life. Gradually we discover that he does not abide by the rules of the community because he will not tolerate unnecessary discomfort and that what he wants is "to get out of this imbecility" as quickly as he can.[172] Ultimately he agrees to write plays for George Everard, who assures him a life of wealth and luxury. The final irony comes when we discover that Bransdon's first play is to be called "The White Man's Burden" since it has already been established that his career in Africa was distinguished more than anything by his cruelties to the natives on his work crews.

The daily life of the community is complicated by unending internal squabbles regarding the rules of conduct to be followed. These altercations invariably develop from differences in the interpretation of socialistic platitudes or disputes regarding such trivia as the authenticity of details of dress. Never among the continual discussions is there any exchange of meaningful ideas or a sign of

---

[170] Bransdon's cruelty to his dog vaguely suggests the scene in which Sylvia Tietjens cruelly beats her own bulldog to death. Wiley thinks that in the generally vicious portrait of Bransdon Ford was drawing an ugly caricature of Conrad. He also sees George Everard as a caricature of Frank Harris and Mr. Parmont as Edward Garnett and then goes on to suggest that these unpleasant portraits, conceived in pique, explain the pseudonymous publication (Wiley, pp. 159-60).

[171] The Simple Life Limited, p. 143. [172] Ibid., p. 245.

fraternal good will.

The two most significant Simple-Lifers among the young disciples are Hamnet Gubb, Horatio's son, and Ophelia Bransdon, allegedly Simon Bransdon's daughter but in fact also Gubb's child. They are introduced early in the novel as the fiery young zealots of the movement who have "been brought up on rational hygienic principles."[173] At their first entrance they announce that they have just been married (the marriage is never consummated for Hamnet knows all along that Ophelia is his half-sister) and are currently on a walking trip to gather data for their proposed book "Health Resides in Sandals." Ophelia's defection, however (at the end of the book she marries Everard and hopes to go on the stage), is foreshadowed in the very first episode in which she appears. Having sought refuge from a rainstorm in the Luscombe house, she is reluctantly persuaded to change her soaked homespun for one of Mrs. Luscombe's dry but elegant dresses and discovers much to her consternation that she likes dressing up in finery.

Hamnet Gubb, however, is unique among the characters in that he sincerely believes in the virtues of the Simple-Life. But the Simple-Life that he desires has nothing to do with the organized lunacy of the William Morris Utopia. His creed is far less complicated: "The only rule of the Simple-Life is not to have any rules at all. You just live and see where you come out."[174] When he moves into a hut in the woods around Coombe Luscombe, he insists, "I've not retired from life. I'm simply living it."[175] And his final

---

[173] Ibid., p. 19. [174] Ibid., p. 384. [175] Ibid., p. 383.

pronouncement, which is also the positive thematic statement of the book, is a loud declaration in favor of spontaneity and self-assertion:

> That's the Simple Life, to know the life you like and to have the courage to lead it. You don't want to organise: you don't want to make it the Simple Life Limited; you just want to go ahead. If you think about Life it isn't Life. If you think about the sort of man to model yourself on, you aren't a man. You're a trained rat.[176]

The plea for spontaneous living with which the book concludes is an unfortunate blemish on what is nevertheless a fine achievement, Hamnet's exposition of his principles being no more than a moral tag hooked on to the already completed novel. Here Ford has ceased to render and has begun to preach. The regrettable thing is that the offense here serves no end; had Ford omitted Hamnet's final speeches no reader could miss what the obvious implications of the action are. But this is a minor imperfection; the novel is too rich a work to be seriously hurt by it. If the satire were directed only at the organized Utopia, a mishandling of the central theme might be disastrous; but this book lampoons so many things so well that it remains a worthwhile production. In creating his socialist community Ford hit upon a means of bringing together a great variety of social types, either as residents or interested outsiders, whom he could then wittily demolish one by one without seeming to digress from the main subject of interest.

Similarly, Mr. Fleight in attacking one aspect of modern life, corrupt politics, draws within the circle of its satire a great many additional social ills. As it traces the history of

---

[176] Ibid., p. 384.

Mr. Fleight's successful rise from obscurity to a seat in Parliament, the book comments upon the Jew in modern society and politics, the rootless cosmopolitanism of the twentieth century Englishman, the shallowness of professional Bohemians, the lamentable power of the sensational press, the hostilities between social classes, the materialism rampant in all classes, and, inevitably, the failure of the traditional ruling class to preserve the meaning of its traditions. It is this expansive quality that gives to The Simple Life Limited and Mr. Fleight their peculiar density and sets them apart from Mr. Apollo. Just as Horatio Gubb's colony serves as a magnet to attract the unscrupulous of every level of society, so does Mr. Fleight's candidacy. In both of these narratives Ford traces the ramifications of corruption throughout a broad context without violating the principle of unity because every aspect of his satire grows naturally out of the central action of the novel.

The point to be made here is that Ford's accomplishment in The Simple Life Limited and Mr. Fleight is primarily a technical feat, a masterly handling of the complexities of an "affair," and not merely a happy choice of subject. For no theme imaginable could serve as a better point of departure for social criticism on the broadest possible scale than the decay of religious and moral values, and yet Mr. Apollo fails as a novel in a way that The Simple Life Limited and Mr. Fleight do not. The structure of Mr. Apollo is linear, almost picaresque, as its central character moves from one group to another testing its beliefs in a series of set pieces. No action grows out of a preceding action; no set of circumstances gives rise to a subsequent set of circumstances;

and, to cite what is the book's greatest shortcoming, no secondary themes cluster around the bare major theme. In The Simple Life Limited and Mr. Fleight, on the other hand, the major theme is constantly enriched by the offshoots that branch out from it while its broad implications become apparent. Ford is able to achieve this success in the two later books largely because of a greater skill in the portrayal of characters and a better sense of the unity of an "affair." By the time he wrote The Simple Life Limited, he had mastered the technique of "getting in" his characters economically and distinctly. He was able, thus, to create large casts sufficiently individualized to be satisfactory characters in a fiction and sufficiently representative to typify a social or professional class. He had also learned how to "squeeze the last drop out of a subject" so that he could employ these characters both as "reflectors" on and extenders of the significance of the central action.

Defects remain, as we have already seen in the case of The Simple Life Limited, but they grow fewer and less serious as Ford masters his craft. Mr. Fleight is not marred, in the way that The Simple Life Limited is, by an unfortunate conclusion, but it does contain passages which impede the progression d'effet. At times lengthy and rather tedious harrangues or sociological observations are put into the mouths of characters, which slow down the action and add little to the development of ideas. But it is essential to recognize that these flaws are failures in the structure of particular scenes, not aberrations in the total structure. The characters and the scenes in which obtrusive passages occur

are themselves wholly organic to the novel; it is merely that occasionally Ford fails to discipline his dialogue and allows a speaker to remain on the lecturer's platform too long.

The character most given to the delivery of protracted pronouncements is Mr. Blood, one of the novel's two major figures. An incredibly intelligent and knowledgeable gentleman, Blood is "just an anachronism"[177] who sees modern life as "more foul than it ever conceivably was" and imagines that "God has gone to sleep. If He hadn't He'd wash the whole unclean lot of us with one tidal wave into the Atlantic."[178] But unlike most of Ford's anachronistic gentlemen, Blood is a very competent manipulator of public affairs, and he is indescribably cynical. When he descants upon the evils of Edwardian England, he is obviously serving as a mouthpiece for Ford's views, but his willingness to direct the campaign to elect Fleight places him among those who have irresponsibly permitted the growth of the conditions that they volubly deplore. The affairs of his day have become so offensive to Blood that he simply washes his hands of them and sits backto view his age as a highly amusing tragi-comedy.

Once having determined to accomplish Fleight's election to Parliament, he sets about it with ruthless efficiency. It is immaterial to him whether Fleight runs as a Liberal or a Tory, so long as the party that backs him can offer a nomination to a seat which would not be impossible for an unknown, and a Jew into the bargain, to win. He uses Fleight's enormous wealth in the proper

---

[177] Mr. Fleight, p. 8. [178] Ibid., p. 194.

places, and finds no political tactic too unsavory if it promises success. He discovers willing conspirators among journalists, litterateurs, and the inner circles of both parties, none of whom care whether Fleight is elected but all of whom hope to profit by the campaign and share in the anticipated fruits of victory. Blood, very wealthy himself, is indifferent to financial profits, but he derives great delight from the observation of the spectacle he has set in motion. He mades the following estimate of twentieth century life and politics for Mr. Fleight's edification:

> It is a dismal sort of business. . . . That's what I've been saying ever since I was born, and from the point of view of a man who cares for decencies--which I don't give a hang for--it gets more and more dismal every day. The old sort of corruption, that of jobbing decayed barristers into shops, was a child compared with it; was a joke. Of course, you must have corruption. As long as there's a nephew in the world there must be nepotism. You can't hit it because you can't define it. You gave a large cheque to a fellow called Garstein, but it was made out to "self." And on account of the cheque you're going to represent Byefleet, which doesn't want you. But you couldn't possibly prove that you gave that cheque to an American Jew. It was cashed, as you know, by a boy messenger. There's just simply nothing whatever to show for the immense mass of efficient corruption that hangs like a pall all over this country, and all over every other country for the matter of that. The old sort of corruption was picturesque, so that you could have a shy at it. But you couldn't ever catch Mr. Garstein. He'd be off to Saratoga for his health before you'd opened your mouth, and every paper of both sides would be shockedly exclaiming that you were too scandalous to be printed. The other man is just the same.[179]

At one point Blood tries to explain his participation in the affair to Augusta, the bitterly anti-Semitic but greedy and ambitious blond, Nordic wife he has provided for Fleight in order to distract from Fleight's Jewishness. He tells her:

> It is a dirty nasty business. . . . It's the dirty comedy

---

[179] *Ibid.*, pp. 232-33.

> of life being unrolled before your eyes. It's the thing that modern life has become, the disgusting thing that it has become. I'm trying to crush it all up into a short period so as to make the affair all the more an object lesson--or, rather, all the more of a joke, because I don't care whether anybody learns anything from it or not. I'm not a social reformer.[180]

This speech reveals the essential duality of Blood's character. Totally objective, witty, and amazingly perceptive, he is an ideal critic of his milieu. At the same time, however, his objectivity renders him an extremely unsympathetic man. Despite his name, he is bloodless--cruel and indifferent to the suffering and emotional stresses of others. Moreover, he is morally culpable for his failure to exercise his many talents in the preservation of the traditional virtues which he values. His withdrawal to a height from which he sees the decaying world as a spectacle is a tacit capitulation to the forces he detests.

Almost the exact opposite of Blood is Mr. Fleight (nee Aaron Rothweil). The offspring of a Frankfort soap manufacturer and a Scottish music-hall dancer, he is the outcast of British society who sees in the breakdown of traditional values and social structures the very conditions under which he may rise and distinguish himself. His enormous wealth, it seems to him, should, in the modern world, make it possible for him to assert himself and to claim recognition of his existence. "Society being what it is," he tells Blood, "I feel that I ought to be Prime Minister, or a Privy Councillor at least."[181] He is not, however, either a cynic or an opportunist. He is, rather, refreshingly naive and a trifle idealistic. He shrewdly observes that since Blood's class refuses

---

[180] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[181] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

any longer to soil its hands in the dirty game of politics, they cannot reasonably object to his participation in it. He is willing to bribe the proper party officials when Blood instructs him to do so, but he is not without scruples. He balks, for instance, at a smear campaign designed by Blood to dishonor his opponent. Moreover, his seeking election is prompted in part at least by a genuine desire to perform a public service and he hopes, once elected, to be able to do a great deal of good for the people of England. He finds Edwardian England far more comfortable than Blood and tells him:

> I'd, in fact, rather live among thieves like company promoters than amongst gentlemen like your ancestor who stole the Crown jewels and was afterwards, I believe, executed for trying to kidnap the Lord Chancellor--something of the sort.

To which Blood replies, "Oh, I've quite realised that. . . . You are a child of the age if you're not yet certain to be the father of the age to come."[182]

Ford's attitude toward Fleight is difficult to define.[183] For him the triumphs of the calculating, free-spending Jew in politics and society after the Boer War dramatically symbolized the end

---

[182] Ibid., p. 18.

[183] To what degree, if at all, Ford was anti-Semitic is hard to determine. In Mr. Fleight his attitude is ambiguous. In New York Is Not America he states categorically, "I don't like Jews" (p. 106). But in Great Trade Route he writes practically an encomium on Jews and the Jewish tradition (pp. 376-83) and is generally favorable to Jews throughout. By the time of Great Trade Route he was, of course, "married" to Janice Biala, a Jewess. It is possible that his views simply changed between 1927 and 1937, but it is also possible that his declaration of anti-Semitism in New York Is Not America was disingenuous since he uses it to establish his impartiality in making the judgment which follows--that Jews are responsible for what cultural advantages there are in America.

of an older and better way of life, symbolized, in fact, the triumph of vulgarity over chivalry and tradition. Aaron Rothweil Fleight is certainly free-spending and vulgar, even owning a garishly palatial home, in which he is uncomfortable, and a gouging cockney mistress, who despises him. At the same time, however, Fleight is the most likable character in the book and the only one with a smattering of common decency. But Ford never allows him to become an over-sentimentalized character. Thus, when Fleight gains great dignity in the episode in which neighborhood thugs beat him up because he is a Jew, Ford immediately introduces a scene in which we discover that he is ludicrously vain.

Ford's intention in his treatment of Fleight seems to have been to make of him a sympathetic individual and at the same time a symbol for the regrettable turn that modern society had taken. We are never quite certain whether to like Mr. Fleight because he is Mr. Fleight or to hate him for what he represents; we are never quite certain whether to hate Mr. Blood for what he is or to revere him for the past glory he represents. The same sort of duality exists in most of the other characters, so that in reading the book we are forced continually to modify our attitudes as Ford reveals the contradictions that reside in each of them. It is this complexity and dramatic tension that elevates _Mr. Fleight_ above the pot-boiler and places it in the realm of creative literature.

Although _The New Humpty-Dumpty_ preceded _Mr. Fleight_, discussion of it has been delayed because of the special place it holds in Ford's canon. Judged solely on its intrinsic value as a novel, it does not fare too well, but it assumes an importance far out of

proportion to its literary merit by the way in which it prefigures the Tietjens novels and, to a lesser degree, The Good Soldier. In the characters of The New Humpty-Dumpty are to be found the precursors of almost every major figure in Parade's End, and in its secondary theme there is a suggestion that finds more fruitful treatment in the musings of John Dowell.

The most convenient way to read The New Humpty-Dumpty is as a companion piece to The Simple Life Limited: both, of course, were published under the pseudonym Daniel Chaucer, but, far more importantly, both are satires on the hypocrisy of professional reformers which reveal the meanness of the personal motives that inspire ostensibly altruistic undertakings. Like The Simple Life Limited, The New Humpty-Dumpty is a study of persons involved in an ostensibly noble scheme--in this case a counter-revolution in the Kingdom of Galizia to oust the incompetent new regime and restore the glorious monarchy. A coup is effected bloodlessly, largely because the entire population of Galizia has been bribed in advance of the king's return with money provided by American businessmen who have been promised mineral rights for their support, and the whole affair is handled by Ford in a semi-serious tone of bad light comedy. The one tragic note comes when Sergius Macdonald, the only truly honorable man connected with the escapade, is assassinated by his jealous co-conspirators. True to form, his dying wish is that his death be kept secret to avoid embarrassment for the new government.

Structurally, the book is very weak. As Meixner has observed: "Scenes are very rare. Page after page of expository

writing, in short, must substitute for a living reality."[184] We may add to this that even when scenes do appear, Ford takes few pains to weld them into a fluid narrative. The beginning of the book is a classic example of an artlessly managed compromise between the dramatic opening and the expository. Ford introduces the major characters dramatically in the very brief first chapter and then abandons his narrative for straight biographical exposition in Chapter Two. There is no working back and forth over a character's history to reveal him gradually; by the end of Chapter Two we know all there is to know about each of the characters, and we return then to a plot whose action is inadequate in itself to sustain interest in the fortunes of its static characters.

Curiously, Ford's handling of the characters divests the book of literary merit and at the same time invests it with its historical importance. The trouble with the characters is that they are stereotypes; they always run true to form. No fine shades are sketched in, and the reader is left with no surprises. Macdonald is consistently chivalric; Pett behaves exactly as the climbing, lower class journalist with immensely selfish ambitions is expected to behave; Margaret behaves like the daughter of a shopkeeper; Dexter and Mordaunt behave like American businessmen; the Duke of Kintyre, Lord Aldington, and the Grand Duke of Russia are riddled with aristocratic vices, but they invariably show their gentleman's upbringing in crises; and Lady Aldington is always the grand lady, unintellectual but with fine instincts and a profound appreciation of Macdonald's

---

[184] Meixner, p. 107.

quixotic generosity.

Macdonald is universally recognized as a paragon of chivalric virtue incapable of either a mean action or an ungenerous thought. What distinguishes him from his predecessors in the role of noble protagonist, however, is his ability to act. And in this he is like Christopher Tietjens. As we observed some time ago, like Tietjens he leaves his wife for the better woman, and once his loyalty has shifted to Emily Aldington, it remains fixed in the face of all the unpleasantness his former wife causes. (An interesting feature of Macdonald's divorce is that because of his wife's intractability he is compelled to secure it in another country. The entire affair closely parallels Ford's own unsuccessful attempt to obtain a divorce from Elsie Martindale. In both the actual and the fictional circumstance, the gentlemen installed a streetwalker in their lodgings to facilitate divorce action by their wives, only to have their wives withdraw litigation and force them to seek their own decrees abroad on the basis of their claims to foreign citizenship.)[185]

Macdonald's wife, Margery, is the first full scale model for Sylvia Tietjens.[186] She differs from Sylvia only in that she is

---

[185]The crucial scene in which Macdonald aids the girl injured on the bus may also be autobiographical in origin. In Return to Yesterday Ford claims to have been the central figure in an identical episode (pp. 402-403), but which came first, the fact or the fiction is, finally, impossible to determine.

[186]There are, to be sure, predatory and possessive females in earlier novels, but none fits the exact circumstances of Sylvia Tietjens in the way that Margery Macdonald does. Anne Jeal of The "Half Moon" and the White Lady of The Young Lovell are literally witches; Katya Lascarides of A Call and Polly Eshetsford of The Portrait are trying to capture husbands not trying sadistically to hold on to them.

a shopkeeper's daughter and so exhibits what Ford considers to be the pettiness of her class. This is, however, an insignificant difference in view of the great number of similarities. She cannot tolerate Macdonald's perfection and so devotes her life to tormenting him. When he finally leaves her for Emily Aldington, she determines to have him back and declares, "if I don't get him, I'll ruin him, body and soul."[187] In her attempts to ruin him she is every bit a match for Sylvia. Her chief weapon is the spreading of rumors that she knows he will not deny, her ultimate intention being to sue him for divorce without ever allowing the decree to become final so that he will never be free of her. What Margaret Macdonald does not reckon on is a noble class that is truly noble. Her smear campaign is ineffective because no one in his class is willing to believe what she says about her husband. Her characterization finally trails off into the melodramatic when at the end of the novel she is prepared to kill Macdonald but is saved the trouble by a pair of political assassins Pett has set upon him. She is a far less subtle and a far less convincing character than Sylvia Tietjens as a result of the different degree of artistry Ford exercised in the creation of each, but in essentials they are almost twins.

There are several other characters in The New Humpty-Dumpty who obviously anticipate characters in Parade's End, but it is hardly feasible to indicate their similarities in detail. We may summarize with the following list of parallels: Macdonald-Christopher Tietjens; Margaret Macdonald-Sylvia Tietjens; Herbert Pett-Vincent

---

[187] The New Humpty-Dumpty, p. 215.

Macmaster; Emily Aldington-Valentine Wannop; the Duke of Kintyre-Mark Tietjens (?).

The New Humpty-Dumpty also has an interesting bearing on The Good Soldier. Perhaps the only agreeable feature of the book is Ford's forbearance in judging the characters. This is not to say that he doesn't clearly prefer some to others, but he never ascribes blame. These people simply are what they are. A continual refrain runs through the book in which either the narrator or one of the characters asserts that "the heart of another is a dark forest." The epigraph reads "There be summer queens and dukes of a day,/ But the heart of another is a dark forest," and, Ford tells us, his original title for the book was The Dark Forest but John Lane re-christened it.[188] This admission of the ultimate impossibility of fully understanding another human being and his motives suggests the repeated "I don't know" of John Dowell in The Good Soldier, in which the attempt fully to understand in the face of the nagging awareness of the narrow limits of our insight into one another becomes an essential part of the narrative technique.

The Good Soldier is at the same time the delight and the dread of literary critics: it is so consciously and artfully wrought that it rewards close reading as few novels do; but its themes are so tantalizingly subtle and complex that in discussing them one is in danger of becoming lost in a maze of qualifying demurs and apparent inconsistencies. Critics agree that The Good Soldier is one of the great achievements in the history of the modern novel, but there

---

[188] Ibid., p. vi.

is very little else upon which they agree.[189] There is some accord regarding certain technical features of the book, but in matters of interpretation a kind of critical anarchy reigns. The usual practice is to acknowledge that others have had valuable insights into the book but then to say that their critical conclusions are misleading because they suffer from misplaced emphases. It is, finally, a tribute to the richness of the novel rather than a condemnation of its critics that its major significance has been seen to reside in so many different areas of interest. It is, furthermore, a tribute to the coherence of its composition that every critical approach which has been applied to it implicates and draws upon all of the others.[190]

Ford thought that The Good Soldier was probably his best novel--certainly his best book of the pre-war period[191]--and he derived considerable pleasure from John Rodker's now-famous estimate of it as "the best French novel in the English language."[192] He had

---

[189] A notable dissenting opinion was expressed by Theodore Dreiser, who thought Ford had used "a bad method" of telling a very good story. "A story may begin in many ways," he wrote. "Of far more importance is it that, once begun, it should go forward in a more or less direct line, or at least that it should retain one's uninterrupted interest"; Theodore Dreiser, "The Saddest Story," The New Republic (June 12, 1915), p. 155.

[190] There is probably not a single essay on The Good Soldier that does not include at least one critical point made by each of the others that preceded it. My own practice will be to acknowledge only published ideas which I did not arrive at independently.

[191] Dedicatory Letter to The Good Soldier, p. xvii. He speaks of The Good Soldier as his best book in many other places, among them, in It Was the Nightingale, p. 235; in Return to Yesterday, p. 399; and in Portraits from Life, p. 217.

[192] Dedicatory Letter, p. xx. He records Rodker's judgment also in Ford Madox Ford, New York Essays (New York: W. E. Rudge, 1927), p. 16.

sat down on his fortieth birthday (December 17, 1913) determined to put all that he knew about writing into one supreme effort by which he would stand or fall in the eyes of posterity; six months later he had completed The Good Soldier and it began its serial publication in Blast.[193] Neither the book's staggering complexity nor the speed with which he wrote it, Ford says, need surprise us, for, he goes on, "I had it hatching within myself for fully another decade."[194]

There is a great deal of evidence to support this assertion whether or not we take seriously his statement that "the story is a true story" and that he "had it from Edward Ashburnham himself" but could not write it "till all the others were dead."[195] From 1903 to 1906 Ford spent the greatest part of his time wandering from one European health spa to another and had ample opportunity to observe the details of the way of life of such resorts and the people that frequented them. It is not unlikely that they would have struck him as congenial subjects for a novel of social criticism with overtones of an international theme.[196] There is no question whatever that he knew the originals of what was to become the Nancy-Edward-Leonora triangle long before he sat down to write of them in December, 1913. In 1907 in England and the English he records the following experience:

---

[193] See Return to Yesterday, pp. 399-401 for Ford's account of the composition and first publication of the book.

[194] Dedicatory Letter, p. xx. [195] Ibid.

[196] In Return to Yesterday he claims to have met two elderly maiden ladies from Stamford, Connecticut named Hurlbird (p. 265). Also see supra, pp. 29-33.

I stayed, too, at the house of a married couple one summer. Husband and wife were both extremely nice people--"good people," as the English phrase is. There was also living in the house a young girl, the ward of the husband, and between him and her--in another of those singularly expressive phrases--an attachment had grown up. P-- had not merely never "spoken to" his ward; but his ward, I fancy, had spoken to Mrs. P-- At any rate, the situation had grown impossible, and it was arranged that Miss W-- should take a trip round the world in company with some friends who were making that excursion. It was all done with the nicest tranquillity. Miss W--'s luggage had been sent on in advance; P-- was to drive her to the station himself in the dog-cart. The only betrayal of any kind of suspicion that things were not of their ordinary train was that the night before the parting P-- had said to me: "I wish you'd drive to the station with us tomorrow morning." He was, in short, afraid of a "scene."

Nevertheless, I think he need have feared nothing. We drove the seven miles in the clear weather, I sitting in the little, uncomfortable, hind seat of the dog-cart. They talked in ordinary voices--of the places she would see, of how long the posts took, of where were the foreign banks at which she had credits. He flicked his whip with the finest show of unconcern--pointed at the church steeple on the horizon, said that it would be a long time before she would see that again--and then gulped hastily and said that Fanny ought to have gone to be shod that day, only she always run [sic] a little lame in new shoes, so he had kept her back because Miss W-- liked to ride behind Fanny.

I won't say that I felt very emotional myself, for what of the spectacle I could see from my back seat was too interesting. But the parting at the station was too surprising, too really superhuman not to give one, as the saying is, the jumps. For P-- never even shook her by the hand; touching the flap of his cloth cap sufficed for leave-taking. Probably he was choking too badly to say even "Good-bye"--and she did not seem to ask it. And, indeed, as the train drew out of the station P-- turned suddenly on his heels, went through the booking-office to pick up a parcel of fish that was needed for lunch, got into his trap and drove off. He had forgotten me--but he had kept his end up.

Now, in its particular way, this was a very fine achievement; it was playing the game to the bitter end. It was, indeed, very much the better [sic] end, since Miss W-- died at Brindisi on the voyage out, and P-- spent the next three years at various places on the Continent where nerve cures are attempted. That I think proved that they "cared"--but what was most impressive in the otherwise commonplace affair, was the silence of the parting. I am not concerned to discuss the essential ethics of such positions, but it seems to me that at that moment of separation a word or two might have saved the girl's life and the man's misery without infringing eternal verities. It may have been desirable, in the face of the eternal verities--the verities that bind and gather all nations and all creeds--that the parting should have been complete and decently arranged. But a silence so utter: a so demonstrative lack of tenderness, seems to me to

be a manifestation of a national characteristic that is almost appalling.[197]

What is finally important for the critic, however, is not that Ford drew on his own experience or that he had been mulling it over a long time but that he transformed it into the stuff of creative literature. It is not the origin of the novel's subject matter that concerns us but the manner in which it is presented. And this brings us up against the major critical problem of The Good Soldier--the question of the reliability of the narrator. Obviously, before we can make judgments on the other characters we must come to some conclusions concerning John Dowell. Taking their hint from Mark Schorer, most critics have found Dowell utterly contemptible. Schorer so despised him that his criticism of the book seems more like the expression of a personal vendetta against the narrator than an objective examination of a work of art.[198] Others have been less acrimonious in their attacks but have still judged Dowell to be not only unreliable but downright devious and cowardly. There has even been a tendency to write him off as a technical device, a point of view from which to tell a story and little else. It is always conceded, of course, that he is a participant in as well as the narrator of the action of the book, but most critics who dislike him have seen his role as minor. Unfortunately, some commentators have simply dismissed Dowell as unreliable and felt that they were justified then in disregarding half of what he has to say without realizing

---

[197] Pp. 338-39.

[198] Mark Schorer, "An Interpretation," intro. to The Good Soldier (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), pp. v-xv.

that in the process they were ignoring half of the novel Ford wrote.

It appears to be patently clear, however, that whatever we think of him personally, Dowell is more than an arbitrary point of view, more than a technical device. What we must recognize at the outset is that the action of the novel is the mental activity of John Dowell. Samuel Hynes, who has seen this more clearly than most, put the matter thus:

> These are melodramatic materials; yet the novel is not a melodrama, because the action of which it is an imitation is not the sequence of passionate gestures which in another novel we would call the plot, but rather the action of the narrator's mind as it gropes for the meaning, the reality of what has occurred.[199]

Not until we grasp this surprisingly simple idea and add to it the equally simple idea that whatever Dowell writes he writes with Ford's approval, are we in a position to examine the novel.

Dowell has been described as devious, hesitant, self-contradictory, cowardly, self-justifying, dishonest. But these charges seem to be more in the way of visceral responses to the cuckold than intelligent assessments of the narrator. The fact is that Dowell is painfully honest as a narrator, especially in admitting his own shortcomings. He describes his early relationship with Florence in the following terms: "the husband an ignorant fool, the wife a cold sensualist with imbecile fears."[200] Aware that he hardly appears to be dangerous, he adds the phrase "mad as the suggestion may appear" when he tells us that Florence was afraid of

---

[199] Samuel Hynes, "The Epistemology of The Good Soldier," Sewanee Review, LXIX (Spring, 1961), 226.

[200] The Good Soldier, p. 93.

him.[201] He says at one point, "I suppose that, during all that time, I was a deceived husband. . . ."[202] And, when he does not have first-hand information, he makes the fact clear: "Still, I believe there was some remorse on my account, too. Leonora told me that Florence said there was. . . ."[203] His efforts to understand the moral implications of the affair are not always successful, and in these instances he reverts to the recurrent "I don't know."

One of the most important aspects of the book that is generally ignored is its double time scheme. The details of the affair are scrambled in time as Dowell remembers them. But the telling of the novel, the process of Dowell's memory goes forward in a straight line. It takes him, he tells us, over two years in the writing. At the beginning of Part Four he says, ". . . you must remember that I have been writing away at this story now for six months and reflecting longer and longer upon these affairs."[204] And at the beginning of Chapter Five, Part Four, he says, "I am writing this, now, I should say a full eighteen months after the words that end my last chapter."[205] The point is that Dowell's understanding of the affair is not static; his perception is constantly evolving. Many of the seeming inconsistencies stem from his attempt sometimes to capture his responses as they occurred during his state of blissful ignorance, while at other times he is speaking in the voice of a six months sadder but wiser man. Moreover, we have to realize that for over two hundred pages Dowell does not know the final outcome of

---

[201] Ibid., p. 92. [202] Ibid., p. 69. [203] Ibid., p. 85.
[204] Ibid., p.184. [205] Ibid., p. 233.

the affair. For it is during the eighteen month interval between the fourth and fifth chapters of Part Four that Nancy goes mad and he goes off to retrieve her. When he tells us in the opening paragraphs that both Edward and Florence had bad hearts, he knows, of course, that they did not; but he is attempting here to recapture his view of things as he then knew them. In speaking of Dowell we must distinguish between the man whom Florence cuckolded and the very different man who is now writing his memoir. It is a distinction that critics like Schorer fail to make: because they despise the husband, they distrust the narrator. The most intelligent evaluation of Dowell as narrator is probably Elliott Gose's: ". . . he is an essentially honest if not very passionate person whose attitude toward the characters and events with which he deals is in constant evolution as the novel progresses."[206]

His essential honesty must be understood in terms of his method of narration. It is the honesty of the Impressionist. At the beginning of Chapter Two, Part One, Dowell describes his uneasiness as a storyteller:

> I don't know how it is best to put this thing down--whether it would be better to try and tell the story from the beginning, as if it were a story; or whether to tell it from this distance of time, as it reached me from the lips of Leonora or from those of Edward himself.
>
> So I shall just imagine myself for a fortnight or so at one side of the fireplace of a country cottage, with a sympathetic soul opposite me. And I shall go on talking, in a low voice while the sea sounds in the distance and overhead the great black flood of wind polishes the bright stars.[207]

---

[206] Elliott B. Gose, Jr., "The Strange Irregular Rhythm: An Analysis of The Good Soldier," PMLA, LXXII (June, 1957), 495.

[207] The Good Soldier, p. 12.

We have been warned, then, that the narrative is going to come to us as Dowell remembers it: we should expect disparities and apparent contradictions. The opening paragraph of Part Four is another exposition of the narrative method:

> I have, I am aware, told this story in a very rambling way so that it may be difficult for anyone to find his path through what may be a sort of maze. I cannot help it. I have stuck to my idea of being in a country cottage with a silent listener, hearing between the gusts of the wind and amidst the noises of the distant sea the story as it comes. And, when one discusses an affair--a long, sad affair--one goes back, one goes forward. One remembers points that one has forgotten and one explains them all the more minutely since one recognizes that one has forgotten to mention them in their proper places and that one may have given, by omitting them, a false impression. I console myself with thinking that this is a real story and that, after all, real stories are probably told best in the way a person telling a story would tell them. They will then seem most real.[208]

We must observe, however, that Dowell does not begin with this method in mind; it evolves from an earlier confusion which allows Ford to make a forceful beginning. Dowell begins by trying to suggest the significance of his story and thus to justify his telling it. As we have already noted, he does not yet know the final turn events are to take, but he senses a far-reaching significance in the affair even as far as it has gone. He makes the mistake in the opening chapter of trying to define meanings he does not yet understand. Thus he begins with the dramatic assertion, "This is the saddest story I have ever heard." But before he can get out of the first paragraph, he admits that he is sitting down this day "to puzzle out what I know of this sad affair."[209] Two pages later he interrupts himself to say:

---

[208] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

[209] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

> You may well ask why I write. And yet my reasons are quite many. For it is not unusual in human beings who have witnessed the sack of a city or the falling to pieces of a people to desire to set down what they have witnessed for the benefit of unknown heirs or of generations infinitely remote; or, if you please, just to get the sight out of their heads.
>
> Someone has said that the death of a mouse from cancer is the whole sack of Rome by the Goths, and I swear to you that the breaking up of our little four-square coterie was such another unthinkable event. . . .[210]

He continues for several pages to alternate narrative and discursive passages until he comes to the paragraph that concludes the brief opening chapter:

> I don't know. And there is nothing to guide us. And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all other personal contacts, associations, and activities? Or are we meant to act on impulse alone? It is all a darkness.[211]

At this point he simply gives up trying to draw conclusions and agrees to allow the events to suggest their own moral. There follows immediately the passage we have already quoted in which he resolves to speak leisurely as if into the ear of a silent companion.

There are several obvious advantages in adopting such a method--both for Dowell the narrator and for Ford the novelist. First, of course, it enhances the sense of verisimilitude. Second, it allows Ford to hold back information until he deems it most advantageous for Dowell to recall it; thus the novel maintains its suspense up to the final revelation. Third, and perhaps most important, it allows us to return to important events and to re-examine them so that their implications are broadened and deepened. By permitting Dowell to reflect upon significant moments and to pass

---

[210] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [211] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

new judgments on them from time to time, Ford gains the advantage of the Jamesian "reflector" without the necessity for introducing confidantes. What is necessary is to employ a narrator who distrusts, or at least recognizes the limitations of, his initial judgments. And Dowell is just such an honest narrator. In describing the incident in which Leonora strikes Maisie Maidan, Dowell first attritubes her violence simply to "an uncontrollable access of rage."[212] A few pages later, however, he makes an interpretive judgment which begins to reveal further levels of meaning in the event: ". . . in boxing Mrs. Maidan's ears Leonora was just striking the face of an intolerable universe. . . ."[213] And, ten pages later he returns to the incident again and reveals this time an entirely new aspect of the relationship between Mrs. Maidan and the Ashburnhams when he comments: "She was hitting a naughty child who had been stealing chocolates at an inopportune moment."[214] The point that Schorer and others overlook is that in shifting the terms of his comments Dowell is neither contradicting himself nor deviously withholding pertinent information. He is simply investing the scene with new significances without denying the validity of those he has already suggested. Similarly, when he describes Edward Ashburnham to us in the opening chapter, he tacitly admits the inadequacy of a single thumbnail sketch when, after having described him in some detail, he pauses to shift ground with the phrase "Or again" and begins anew in different terms.[215]

---

[212] Ibid., p. 52.

[213] Ibid., p. 54.

[214] Ibid., p. 64.

[215] Ibid., p. 11.

in the same way between Leonora and Nancy and that Leonora in her turn felt similarly ill-used. This much Dowell recognizes, but we recognize that in his way Dowell too has been slammed among the players and that Florence as a "Hurl-bird" is also a shuttlecock.

But the word "shuttlecock" has far greater ramifications for the novel as a whole. For it is as a shuttlecock that Henry James described his little Maisie and for all the obvious affinities The Good Soldier has with Maupassant's Fort comme la mort and Flaubert's Madame Bovary the immediate model for Ford was What Maisie Knew. As soon as we recognize Dowell as innocent rather than cowardly and obtuse, he becomes a far more sympathetic character and the relationship of the other characters to him becomes much clearer. Curiously, Violet Hunt spoke of him in these terms almost forty years ago in I Have This to Say:

> Dowell, the real hero of the story, Dowell, not Edward Ashburnham the rather pathetic, rather ridiculous sentimental swashbuckler of a lover--of three women on whom Dowell also has a lien. Dowell, the man who does not know but who can write, dropping on one page after another his little mosaics of character, detail and incident so that, in the end, we know all--and more--about these five people and about other men and women who might conceivably find themselves in this awful fix, or other fixes like it--there are so many permutations of pain! We get facts just as they drifted through Dowell's mild consciousness, his quite ordinary intelligence which never takes toll, repetitive, pertinacious, plaintive. . . .
>
> Of course he garbles it--he does not know. But does the priestess of the Delphic Oracle, leaping, swooning on her tripod over the steam and the fumes that issue from the hole in Parnassus know very much what she is saying, does she cohere the scraps and chunks of agonised talk that spurt from her blue lips? Yet, like Henry James' Maisie, what Dowell does not know about this tragic episode is not knowledge.[220]

---

[220] Violet Hunt, I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), p. 210.

By general concensus John Dowell is to be regarded as repulsive. But when we examine him closely, it becomes clear that he deserves no condemnation outside the conventional ridicule that is reserved for the cuckold. The view of him as an essentially honest narrator has already been stated, and it gains further support from the fact that Dowell is the only character in the novel who invariably behaves honorably. And, as Samuel Hynes points out, "It is he who performs the two acts of wholly unselfish love in the book--he crosses the Atlantic in answer to Ashburnham's plea for help, and he travels to Ceylon to bring back the mad Nancy, when Leonora will not."[221] If he is mistaken in his assumption that everyone else acts, as he does, in good faith, we can charge him with being naive certainly but not despicable. He is guilty only of assuming that the preservers of an honorable tradition are indeed honorable; that the external forms that characterize good people imply a moral core. He takes the line that Ford had articulated in his own person much earlier in <u>England and the English</u>:

> For, if in England we seldom think it and still more seldom say it, we nevertheless feel very intimately as a set rule of conduct, whenever we meet a man, whenever we talk with a woman: "You will play the game."[222]

It is not Dowell's fault that the others fail to observe the rules. Moreover, in his rather pathetic existence as a male nurse he too is abiding by a code. However imperceptive we may judge him, we must recognize that he thoroughly believed in Florence's bad heart and that he was determined to do his duty by her:

---

[221]Hynes, p. 230. [222]P. 340.

> She became for me a rare and fragile object, something burdensome, but very frail. Why, it was as if I had been given a thin-shelled pullet's egg to carry on my palm from Equatorial Africa to Hoboken. Yes, she became for me, as it were, the subject of a bet--the trophy of an athlete's achievement, a parsley crown that is the symbol of his chastity, his soberness, his abstentions, and of his inflexible will.[223]

The suggestion that Dowell has not seen below the surface of smooth relationships because of "moral cowardice" is simply not borne out by the novel.[224] We must once again observe the double time-scheme. In the time-present of his narration he faces squarely every unsavory detail that comes to light regardless of how much of a fool it shows him to have been. At the time the events took place, as we have seen, he was guilty of no more than good faith. If we pursue the matter and suggest that he accepted appearance instead of discovering reality, we must contend with a truth that even Mark Schorer is willing to grant--"that appearances have their reality."[225] When Dowell asks: "If for nine years I have possessed a goodly apple that is rotten at the core and discover its rottenness only in nine years and six months less four days, isn't it true to say that for nine years I possessed a goodly apple?"[226] we must answer affirmatively. It is true that John Dowell never questioned the soundness of his little "four-square coterie"; he had no reason to do so.

---

[223] The Good Soldier, pp. 91-92.

[224] The phrase is Mark Schorer's, "Foreword," Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, ed. John W. Aldridge (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952), p. xiii.

[225] "An Interpretation," p. vii.

[226] The Good Soldier, p. 7.

The further charge that Dowell is passionless and thus something less than a man and not to be trusted in his judgments is a far more complicated matter. Part of the difficulty here seems to reside in Ford's conception of the character. When we learn that Florence "faintly hinted" with regard to her marriage that "she did not want much physical passion in the affair," Dowell is speaking. But when he goes on to say, "Americans, you know, can envisage such unions without blinking,"[227] we appear to be listening to the novelist and not the narrator. Dowell does, of course, never so much as kiss Florence during their courtship, and he does treat her like a "Philadelphia gentleman" instead of embracing her on the night of their elopement; but Ford seems in these instances to have been developing Dowell not so much as a freak of nature but as a foil for Edward Ashburnham's absolute lack of control over his sexual passions. For, it seems clear that Dowell is not devoid of passion but able to control it. His breakdown immediately following Florence's death he describes as "the repose that my exhausted nature claimed after *twelve years of the repression of my instincts*."[228] And at the beginning of the novel when he is attempting unsuccessfully to make some sense of the entire affair, he points with some pride to his chastity and asks: "Am I no better than a eunuch or is the proper man--the man with the right to existence--a raging stallion forever neighing after his neighbour's womenkind?"[229] The difficulty is that Ford does not offer us a reasonable *via media*. There seem to be men who

---

[227] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[228] *Ibid.*, p. 120; italics mine. [229] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

can rein their passions and men who cannot or will not do so. Ironically, if we see Edward's major fault as his incontinence, it becomes tempting to see Dowell's faint libido, symbolically at least, as a positive value.[230]

A further point remains to be considered regarding Dowell's alleged coldness. Sexual passion aside, it has been objected that he does not exhibit normal emotions in the telling of his narrative. Such a view, however, completely ignores the richness of his irony. It is through Dowell's conscious irony that the heavily charged emotional content of the book is kept in check. John Meixner makes the following observation:

> The most obvious technical resource for the control of emotion is the prevailing ironic tone. The irony which Dowell feels is partly the product of his natural resentment against Florence, Leonora, and Edward, all of whom in varying degrees have misused him. And it is partly a personal defense, the summoning of the intellectual principle of irony to ward off painful feelings. "Forgive my writing of these monstrous things in this frivolous manner," he writes in one connection. "If I did not I should break down and cry." The irony thus provides for the novel a counterweight, a check on unbridled responses. Sensing this control, the reader can accept the passion as valid.[231]

Our emphasis thus far has been on the implications of the narrative process itself rather than on the matter narrated. In discussing Dowell as narrator we have touched upon two of the book's important themes--the reality of appearances and the inscrutability of the hearts of others. Or, to use different terms, we have seen

---

[230] Perhaps Meixner's suggestion that we view Dowell as a kind of Prufrock indicates the wisest course; "The Saddest Story," Kenyon Review, XXII (Spring, 1960), 244.

[231] Ford Madox Ford's Novels, pp. 161-62.

in Dowell's mental processes a rather subtle statement of the solipsistic dilemma. But the novel concerns itself also with broad social themes, and these are realized primarily in terms of the British characters.

Inevitably, once we move beyond the workings of Dowell's mind, our interest centers on Edward Ashburnham--the good soldier. Although Ford insisted that he conceived the title The Good Soldier "in hasty irony,"[232] a number of critics have adopted the view that Ashburnham is in fact a fit representative of his class and traditions and that he is somehow victimized by modern society because of his inherent nobility. Paul Wiley, for instance, observes, "Ashburnham appears the victim of the confused and sentimental ethic of his class and time."[233] James T. Cox sees him as the embodiment of the Provençal courtly lover, an anachronism, to be sure, but an admirable anachronism.[234] Todd K. Bender seizes upon Dowell's observation that society crushes its abnormal members and in a magnificent non sequitur proceeds to equate abnormal and noble and to find Ashburnham the victim of an unimaginative generation.[235] Even more disturbing is the predilection among critics such as James Haffley[236]

---

[232]Dedicatory Letter, p. xxi. He suggested The Good Soldier as a replacement for The Saddest Story, Ford's original title, which John Lane rejected as misleading because it might suggest that the book was about the war then in progress.

[233]Wiley, p. 192.

[234]James T. Cox, "Ford's Passion for Provence," ELH, XXVIII (December, 1961), 383-99.

[235]Todd K. Bender, "The Sad Tale of Dowell: Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier," Criticism, IV (Fall, 1962), 368.

[236]James Haffley, "The Moral Structure of The Good Soldier,"

and Walter Allen[237] to think of Edward Ashburnham as the counterpart of Christopher Tietjens.

That Ashburnham serves as a symbol of his class is obvious and indisputable. But to speak of him as a victim of his own nobility or, as Kenneth Young puts it, as "defeated because of his excess of the virtues of a gentleman,"[238] is to invert Ford's social theme. What Ford is concerned with in The Good Soldier is not a picture of an unsympathetic milieu destroying a noble class and a noble tradition but the picture of a noble class and a noble tradition crumbling from within. It is a class which finds the meaning of its traditions in external forms. Ashburnham is a noble Anglican gentleman because he is a good horseman and avoids scenes in public, even though he is without a shred of moral strength. Leonora is a noble Irish Catholic because she avoids divorce and sets her finances straight, even though she pimps for her husband and sacrifices the two girls in her keeping to an unsuccessful effort to win his love. It is absolutely essential to recognize that there is not a single external social pressure brought to bear upon Ashburnham. If there were even a hint of a destructive force being exerted on Ashburnham by, say, modern industrialism or mass media, then it might be feasible to speak of The Good Soldier in terms of the crushing of nobility by modern hostility to tradition. But Edward's tragedy is entirely self-induced, a result of his own moral failures. Ashburnham's difficulties cannot be explained, as Tietjens' are, by observ-

---

MFS, V (Summer, 1959), 127.

[237]Allen, p. 396. [238]Young, p. 27.

ing, "It is, in fact, asking for trouble if you are more altruist than the society that surrounds you."[239]

It is true, of course, that at the end of the novel we see Dowell, the rootless American, replace Ashburnham, the scion of a noble tradition and a noble name, as the owner of Branshaw Teleragh. But Dowell does not come as a usurper; he has not driven Edward out. He simply fills the empty space Edward, and symbolically his class, has left because of his moral failure. It is a question of emphasis: The Good Soldier, unlike The Inheritors or Mr. Fleight, does not deplore the intrusions of the New; it laments the passing of the Old. In the failures of Edward and Leonora we see finis written to the history of two noble traditions because of the blindness of their putative preservers, who sacrifice its spirit to its surface amenities. The striking thing is that Edward is not aware that he has been false to his tradition, that he is not in the deeper sense a good soldier at all. Nor is Leonora aware that her behavior travesties the values she is supposed to embody. Their union, predictably, is sterile. Edward proceeds along his sentimentally selfish course to his withdrawal from a world he very emphatically has made; and Leonora finally settles for "a quiet, comfortable, good time"[240] with Rodney Bayham.

What most differentiates Edward Ashburnham from a true Tory Gentleman like Christopher Tietjens is his failure, or perhaps his refusal, to suppress his purely individual needs in the interests of the collective tradition he purports to uphold. It is all very well

---

[239] Parade's End, p. 207. [240] The Good Soldier, p. 233.

to speak of Edward's many virtues, but these cost him nothing. He enjoys the role of the good soldier. Like Granger in The Inheritors and like the characters in A Call, he fails in moments of crisis. His training is calculated to ensure an admirably civilized life as long as it does not put his honor to a test. But traditional training is insufficient to assure honorable behavior in the special situation. Edward's incontinence is more than excusable human frailty; it symbolizes the gulf between form and meaning. The obvious difference between Ashburnham and Tietjens is clearly stated in the title of the first novel in the Parade's End series: some men pursue their purely personal desires and fail to play the game; Some Do Not....

The central fact about Edward is his sentimentality. It is this quality that underlies both his private vices and his public virtues. Dowell uses some form of the word sentimental in describing Edward at least seventeen times, and he explains almost as often that it is because of his own sentimentality that he continues to admire Edward despite all that has happened. Early in the novel Dowell tries to explain Edward in the following terms:

> For all good soldiers are sentimentalists--all good soldiers of that type. Their profession, for one thing, is full of the big words--"courage," "loyalty," "honor," "constancy." And I have given a wrong impression of Edward Ashburnham if I have made you think that literally never in the course of our nine years of intimacy did he discuss what he would have called "the graver things." Even before his final outburst to me, at times, very late at night, say, he has blurted out something that gave an insight into the sentimental view of the cosmos that was his. He would say how much the society of a good woman could do towards redeeming you, and he would say that constancy was the finest of the virtues. He said it very stiffly, of course, but still as if the statement admitted of no doubt.[241]

---

[241] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

We are told also that "he would pass hours lost in novels of a sentimental type--novels in which typewriter girls married marquises and governesses earls. And in his books, as a rule, the course of true love ran as smooth as buttered honey."[242] "He wanted to be looked upon as a sort of Lohengrin."[243] To Nancy, if not to Leonora, "He was the Cid; he was Lohengrin; he was the Chevalier Bayard."[244] And it was this sentimental view of himself as a knight out of the pages of Scott that made him capable of making a gift to the War Office of his new stirrup design and incapable of withholding his comforting attentions to mournful damsels. One cannot deny that Edward cuts a dashing figure; but, as Dowell perceives, he is at base more sentimental than honorable; and, as Ford implies, he bears the trappings rather than the soul of virtue.[245]

There is almost universal agreement among critics that no matter how we judge Edward's earlier affairs, we must grant that in the case of Nancy he loved truly and acted nobly. Dowell certainly thinks this is true, but in this instance he disqualifies himself as an objective observer because of his admission of the sentimentality of his view of Edward. Be that as it may, Dowell insists that Nancy was Edward's one true love, that his feeling for her was genuine and different in kind from any previous attachment. But we have been told also that his passion for Mrs. Basil "had been quite a real

---

[242] Ibid. [243] Ibid., p. 157. [244] Ibid., p. 226.

[245] Especially in the detail of his deriving his view of life from sentimental novels Edward Ashburnham is very similar to Emma Bovary. One of the main themes both of Flaubert's novel and of Ford's is the tragic results inevitably attendant on a sentimental view of life and love.

passion."[246] Even more important is his affair with Maisie Maidan. For Ford has gone out of his way to make Maisie an earlier version of Nancy. She is considerably younger than Edward, actually of the next generation; her name, Maidan, certainly suggests the innocence we associate with Nancy; like Nancy she is from the same convent as Leonora; and, finally, her relationship to the Ashburnhams is, on the surface at least, like that of an adopted daughter--Edward "was almost like a father with a child" on the trip from India, "And Leonora had almost attained to the attitude of a mother towards Mrs. Maidan."[247] There are, then, numerous parallels between Maisie Maidan and Nancy Rufford; that Edward could so readily transfer his affections from Maisie to the vulgar Florence and that he felt no remorse at Maisie's death seem to suggest that he would have been inconstant to Nancy also had they become lovers.

When we inquire closely into Edward's "renunciation" of Nancy, it appears that his self-denial here is characteristically selfish and sentimental rather than noble. It has been argued that in rejecting Nancy's offer of her body Edward demonstrates an honorable change in character. But we have been warned by Dowell to think of Edward not as a libertine but as a sentimentalist.[248] He does not require a physical consummation to make him happy; what he wanted was "that the girl should go five thousand miles away and love him steadfastly as people do in sentimental novels."[249] It is Leonora, who has never been able to trust Edward since his "unfaithfulness

---

[246] The Good Soldier, p. 58.

[247] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[248] Ibid., p. 57.

[249] Ibid., p. 243.

to the memory of poor little Maisie,"[250] that understands the matter best:

> Leonora says that, in desiring that the girl should go five thousand miles away and yet continue to love him, Edward was a monster of selfishness. He was desiring the ruin of a young life. Edward on the other hand put it to me that, supposing that the girl's love was a necessity to his existence, and if he did nothing by word or action to keep Nancy's love alive, he couldn't be called selfish. Leonora replied that showed he had an abominably selfish nature even though his actions might be perfectly correct.[251]

His renunciation of Nancy is, finally, a renunciation only of her physical presence. In sending her away but demanding she continue to love him he wishes once again to have his cake and to eat it--to justify the motives of the selfish sentimentalist with the gestures of the honorable gentleman.

The motives involved in Edward's suicide are not entirely clear. If we take the view that he imagined Nancy's telegram to indicate that she no longer cared for him, then the matter is simple enough. By her rejection the girl had destroyed his view of himself as a shining knight, and so he had chosen to die. But, Dowell says:

> Edward . . . believed maunderingly that some essential attractiveness in himself must have made the girl continue to go on loving him--to go on loving him, as it were, in underneath her official aspect of hatred. He thought she only pretended to hate him in order to save her face and he thought that her quite atrocious telegram from Brindisi was only another attempt to do that--to prove that she had feelings creditable to a member of the feminine commonweal.[252]

If this is true, and we have no reason to doubt it since Dowell is reporting here not making judgments, then Edward could not have killed himself because of heartbreak. The most attractive alternative

---

[250] Ibid., p. 194.

[251] Ibid., p. 246.

[252] Ibid., p. 245.

is that Edward, believing the girl permanently enamored of him, killed himself in a noble attempt to free her and thus to right the wrongs he had selfishly inflicted. If this is the case, then his death is the final irony in the long tragi-comedy of Edward's life. For, reading of Edward's suicide and presumably feeling in some measure responsible for it, Nancy is not set free but goes wholly mad. True to form to the last, Edward has behaved like a hero in the world of sentimental fiction and caused immense suffering in the world of real people.

We have not yet touched upon the importance of Florence Dowell. Clearly she matters almost not at all in the story of Edward Ashburnham, being merely a stage in his life between Maisie and Nancy. "If it had not been Florence, it would have been some other."[253] But Florence is important in the way she sheds light on the failure of Leonora to maintain her principles. Dowell observes of Florence:

> There is no doubt that she caused Leonora's character to deteriorate. If there was a fine point about Leonora it was that she was silent. But that pride and that silence broke when she made that extraordinary outburst, in the shadowy room that contained the Protest, and in the little terrace looking over the river.[254]

What Florence had done was to make Leonora talk, even though "She had been drilled--in her tradition, in her upbringing--to keep her mouth shut."[255] And, Dowell observes further:

> Pride and reserve are not the only things in life; perhaps they are not even the best things. But if they happen to be your particular virtues you will go all to pieces if you let them go. And Leonora let them go.[256]

---

[253] Ibid., p. 185.

[254] Ibid., p. 184.

[255] Ibid., p. 177.

[256] Ibid., p. 185.

But there is another way in which Florence calls attention to Leonora's failure and that is by calling attention to Leonora's Catholicism. For Leonora is false not only to her tradition as a member of the ruling classes but also to her religious tradition, and in two different ways. Like Edward she is concerned more with appearances than moral values. She blithely transgresses every moral law in the attempt to win a victory for her church. "She would show, in fact, that in an unfaithful world one Catholic woman had succeeded in retaining the fidelity of her husband."[257] Second, her behavior with regard to Dowell cuts her off from her church: determined to keep Dowell ignorant of his wife's infidelity--either out of fear that his knowledge would cause Florence and Edward to bolt or out of consideration for his feelings--Leonora "did not want to confess what she was doing because she was afraid that her spiritual advisers would blame her for deceiving" him.[258] Moreover, her offer to divorce Edward and free him for Nancy and her sadistic attempt to sacrifice the virgin with whom she has been entrusted to Edward's supposed lust further alienate her from the church. In fact, Leonora fails to honor everything she is supposed to represent: she fails as a lady, and she fails as a Catholic. She fails also to see what is fine in the tradition of the good soldier, and so she fails as Edward's wife. Her one success comes in the management of Edward's affairs. But even this is not an unqualified success, for in cutting off Edward's funds, she is partly responsible for his death by making his public life as unbearable as his private life.

---

[257] Ibid., p. 187. [258] Ibid., pp. 192-93.

The question of Leonora's Catholicism brings us to the importance of Catholicism in the entire structure of the novel. Haffley's view that The Good Soldier is "a novel as 'Catholic' as any art-work can be"[259] is far too extreme. But, considering Ford's general attitude on the unfortunate effects of the advent of Protestantism, it is not unreasonable to take V. S. Pritchett's view that Catholicism is "the implicit point of rest"[260] in a world devoid of moral norms. When Leonora says of the Protest, "Don't you see that that's the cause of the whole miserable affair; of the whole sorrow of the world? And of the eternal damnation of you and me and them,"[261] she speaks not only as a practicing Catholic but also as an observer of the decline of traditional values. Samuel Hynes states the case most lucidly:

> Leonora is not simply reacting either to Protestantism or to adultery; she is reacting, in the name of rigid conventionalism, to the destructive power of passion, which may equally well take the form of religious protest or of sexual license.[262]

In this context the utterances of the mad Nancy seem to reveal a certain coherence. The only two things she says are "shuttlecocks" and "Credo in unum Deum Omnipotentem," her avowal of belief in an omnipotent God having been the first thing she said upon going mad and the word shuttlecocks having been added to her vocabulary after her return to Branshaw Teleragh. As we have already observed, the

---

[259] Haffley, p. 121.

[260] V. S. Pritchett, "With a Double Turn of the Screw," New York Times Book Review (September 16, 1951), p. 5.

[261] The Good Soldier, p. 45.

[262] Hynes, p. 232.

word shuttlecocks expresses her judgment of the world of human affairs. Her insanity is clearly a withdrawal from that world into a sphere of existence which requires only that one unquestioningly believe in an omnipotent diety to secure serenity. It is a withdrawal to a pre-Lutheran, perhaps for Ford the same thing as a prelapsarian, world of stable values.

We see, finally, in The Good Soldier the rendering of a world without a frame of reference: traditional standards have ceased to obtain and communication between individuals has become impossible. It is not a happy picture that Ford paints; it is not like the world of Edward's sentimental novels with their happy endings. In Dowell's summation we hear the voice of Ford:

> Not one of us got what he really wanted. Leonora wanted Edward and she has got Rodney Bayham, a pleasant enough sort of sheep. Florence wanted Branshaw, and it is I who who [sic] have bought it from Leonora. I didn't really want it; what I wanted most was to cease being a nurse-attendant. Well, I am a nurse-attendant. Edward wanted Nancy Rufford and I have got her. Only she is mad. It is a queer and fantastic world. Why can't people have what they want? The things were all there to content everybody; yet everybody has the wrong thing. Perhaps you can make head or tail of it; it is beyond me.
>
> Is there any terrestrial paradise where, amidst the whispering of the olive-leaves, people can be with whom they like and have what they like and take their ease in shadows and in coolness? Or are all men's lives like the lives of us good people--like the lives of the Ashburnhams, of the Dowells, of the Ruffords--broken, tumultuous, agonized, and unromantic lives, periods punctuated by screams, by imbecilities, by deaths, by agonies? Who the devil knows?[263]

The tragedy of it all is that we cannot call the affair a Tragedy. Tragedy requires moral or religious norms, and these are absent. Again we hear Ford through Dowell:

---

[263] The Good Soldier, pp. 237-38.

> I call this the Saddest Story rather than "The Ashburnham Tragedy," just because it is so sad, just because there was no current to draw things along to a swift and inevitable end. There is about this story none of the elevation that accompanies tragedy; there is about it no nemesis, no destiny. Here were two noble people--for I am convinced that both Edward and Leonora had noble natures--here then, were two noble natures, drifting down life, like fireships afloat on a lagoon and causing miseries, heartaches, agony of the mind, and death. And they themselves steadily deteriorated? [sic] And why? For what purpose? To point what lesson? It is all a darkness.[264]

This, then, is the twentieth century as Ford saw it in the months before the Great War: painful, meaningless, without focus.

---

[264] Ibid., p. 164.

CHAPTER IV

THE POST-WAR NOVELIST

The Parade's End tetralogy[1] warrants special attention not only because it is Ford's most ambitious fiction but also because it is, when viewed as a whole, probably his most successful. Taking as its subject "the public events of a decade,"[2] it is the one work by Ford that deals with the structure of English society both before and after the Great War. Thus, in Parade's End we find a recapitulation of all of the major themes of Ford's pre-war fiction as well as the expression of a new set of values originating in the experience of the war and all that that "affair" symbolized. The central fact of these novels is, of course, the war itself; but

---

[1]Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End, intro. Robie Macauley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950), the four Tietjens novels in one volume; originally published as individual novels under the following titles: Some Do Not... (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924); No More Parades (London: Duckworth & Co., 1925); A Man Could Stand Up (London: Duckworth & Co., 1926); Last Post (London: Duckworth & Co., 1928). My references to the dedicatory letter to No More Parades will be to the Albert and Charles Boni edition (New York, 1925); for the dedicatory letter to A Man Could Stand Up to the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1948); for the dedicatory letter to Last Post to the Literary Guild of America edition (New York, 1928) published under the title The Last Post. All references to the actual text of the novels will be to the Knopf edition in a single volume.

[2]Ford Madox Ford, It Was the Nightingale (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1933), p. 205. In a curious departure from his usual practice Ford discusses Parade's End at some length in It Was the Nightingale, pp. 205-26.

from the standpoint of thematic content the moral chaos that preceded and in some measure caused the war and the fresh perspectives gained during its course are far more important than the discomforts and fears of trenbh warfare and the loss of faith in their civilian leaders that all but paralyzed the combat troops. Impressive as these novels are as social commentary, they are more than that alone; for the broad social themes are realized by means of brilliant psychological examinations of characters who are at the same time discrete individuals and representative types.

Most critics agree that Parade's End bears a special significance because it incorporates virtually all of the serious themes of Ford's fiction, but there is no such agreement regarding its value as a work of literary art. Against William Carlos Williams' assertion that the four novels "together . . . constitute the English prose masterpiece of their time,"[3] we must set John McCormick's view that "the Tietjens series contains grave lapses and remains a minor effort"[4] and Walter Allen's rejection of Christopher Tietjens as "a sentimental creation."[5] A third view holds that the quality of the tetralogy is very uneven, that there is little creative talent evident in some of the novels while others are masterly productions. John Meixner, for instance, discovers little to praise in No More

---

[3]William Carlos Williams, Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 316.

[4]John McCormick, Catastrophe and Imagination: An Interpretation of the Recent English and American Novel (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1957), p. 217.

[5]Walter Allen, The English Novel: A Short Critical History (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958), p. 399.

Parades and A Man Could Stand Up and wholly despises Last Post but deems Some Do Not... one of the great novels of the twentieth century.[6] This view implies not only that the tetralogy as a whole fails as an artistic construct but also that it is possible to do critical justice to each novel without reference to its place in the larger context of the tetralogy. Finally, it has been suggested that while Parade's End fails as a tetralogy, if we agree to discard Last Post, we are left with an admirable trilogy.[7] It is a dissatisfaction with Last Post that has, in fact, inspired most of the critical strictures directed at Parade's End. On the one hand, the complaint has been made that it is simply not organic either in theme or subject to the whole, that it violates the unity of the "affair." On the other hand, it has been judged a failure as a novel, a failure in execution rather than conception. Some, of course, have condemned it on both counts.[8] Nevertheless, when properly approached Last Post appears to be not only a reasonable but a necessary conclusion to the tetralogy rendered in artistic terms exactly appropriate to its theme and content.

Even Ford had serious misgivings about Last Post and the wisdom of its inclusion in the tetralogy. Unfortunately, however, his comments on the book are inconsistent. In the Dedicatory Letter

---

[6]John A. Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 221.

[7]This is Meixner's final position; it is also essentially the position taken by Richard A. Cassell in his Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 250.

[8]See, for instance, Meixner, pp. 218-21, or McCormick, p. 219.

to Isabel Paterson, dated October 13, 1927, which prefaces the book, we find the following paragraph:

> For, but for you, this book would only nebularly have existed--in space, in my brain, where you will so it be not on paper and between boards. But, that is to say, for your stern, contemptuous and almost virulent insistence on knowing "what became of Tietjens" I never should have conducted this chronicle to the stage it has now reached. The soldier tired of war's alarms, it seemed to me, might be allowed to rest beneath bowery vines. But you would not have it so.[9]

And, in 1930 he wrote to a Mr. Barton:

> I strongly wish to omit the "Last Post" from the edition. I do not like the book and have never liked it and always intended the series to end with "A Man Could Stand Up."[10]

In It Was the Nightingale he says in one place that in the Tietjens series "the 'subject' was the world as it culminated in the war,"[11] and in another that it was the periods before and during the war that he meant to deal with.[12] He even refers to the novels as his trilogy and quotes the last words of A Man Could Stand Up as if they were the last words of the whole.[13]

We must recognize, however, that all of these deprecatory comments, with the exception of the Dedicatory Letter, were made several years after the publication of Last Post. As we have observed, Ford seems to have had serious retrospective misgivings about the book. But there is no doubt that it was part of his

---

[9]Dedicatory Letter to The Last Post (New York: The Literary Guild of America, 1928), p. v.

[10]Quoted by Paul Alexander Bartlett, "Letters of Ford Madox Ford," Saturday Review of Literature (August 2, 1941), p. 14. Also quoted by Douglas Goldring, The Last Pre-Raphaelite (London: Macdonald & Co., 1948), p. 258. Ford's reference is to a proposed single volume edition of the tetralogy which was not realized at the time.

[11]P. 214. [12]P. 220. [13]P. 208.

original conception. In the letter to Percival Hinton that we have already quoted in an earlier chapter he makes no attempt to exclude Last Post when he says, "I think The Good Soldier is my best book technically unless you read the Tietjens books as one novel, in which case the whole design appears."[14] More significantly, in the dedications to both No More Parades and A Man Could Stand Up he makes it clear that he intended his series to consist of four novels, the last of which was to deal with Tietjens after the war. Thus, in the dedication to No More Parades he writes:

> Some Do Not... showed you the Tory at home during war-time; this shows you the Tory going up the line. If I am vouchsafed health and intelligence for long enough I propose to show you the same man in the line and in process of being re-constructed.[15]

And the opening sentence of the dedication to Gerald Duckworth which precedes A Man Could Stand Up reads as follows:

> Permit me to address to you this Epistle Dedicatory, for without you the series of books of which this is the third and penultimate, could not have existed.[16]

Even the histrionic dedication to Last Post does not deny the relevance of the novel despite its insistence that the book would not have been written had Isabel Paterson not asked for it. Indeed, Ford reminds her,

> . . . that for me Tietjens is the re-creation of a friend I had--a friend so vivid to me that though he died many years ago I cannot feel that he is yet dead. In the dedicatory letter of an earlier instalment of this series of books I said that in

---

[14] Quoted by Goldring, p. 245; see supra, p. 114n6.

[15] Dedicatory Letter to No More Parades (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), pp. vii-viii. Italics mine.

[16] Dedicatory Letter to A Man Could Stand Up (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1948), p. 11. Italics mine.

> these volumes I was trying to project how this world would have appeared to that friend to-day and how, in it, he would have acted--or you, I believe, would say re-acted. And that is the exact truth of the matter.[17]

The "this world" to which Tietjens is to re-act unquestionably includes the world of post-war England. Moreover, since the opening scenes of Some Do Not... take place in 1911-12, if we take Ford at his literal word that his subject was "the public events of a decade," we must see Last Post as part of the original conception.

It seems reasonably certain, then, that Ford planned the series as a tetralogy and that Last Post was an integral part of the original conception. Why he later rejected it, as he seems to have done, is an interesting matter for speculation but is not strictly a critical concern. The questions for us are whether Last Post is in fact organic to the history of the Tietjens "affair" and whether it is a successfully realized novel. The second is impossible to answer briefly and depends to a large extent on personal tastes; it seems best to delay it until we are ready to examine the novel in more detail. But the first question--is Last Post organic to the Tietjens "affair"?--elicits an immediate and unqualified affirmative. It clearly provides a logical conclusion to the thematic development of the whole.

Ford's theme in Parade's End is dual: his concern is not only with the breakdown of traditional values but also with the assertion of a new way of life; Christopher's "reconstruction" is as important as his loss of faith. Too many critics have seen Parade's

---

[17] The Last Post, p. vii.

End only in terms of its negative theme. Joseph Firebaugh, for example, writes, "Parade's End is an allegory of social decay. Christopher Tietjens, 'the last Tory,' is the England to which this decay is happening, and who must be saved if England is to be saved."[18] Similarly, John McCormick concludes his attack on Last Post by declaring:

> Neither [Christopher nor Mark] is able to save the ancestral manor, Groby, from the American tenant who cuts down the ancient Groby yew--Old England has gone under, and we can no longer take seriously Tietjens's Christian, Tory nobility.[19]

But, as William Carlos Williams has recognized, Tietjens' love for Valentine is an "awakening to a new form of love, the first liberation from his accepted Toryism."[20] And, as Williams further observes, Christopher "is not the 'last Tory' but the first in the new enlightenment of the Englishman--at his best, or the most typical Englishman."[21] Christopher, it is true, embodies the Tory ideal for the first two and a half books of the series, but the role of the last Tory passes to Mark Tietjens in Last Post. It is Mark who dies with the felling of Groby Great Tree; it is Mark who withdraws from the world entirely when his honorable principles are betrayed; it is Mark, finally, who represents the passage of the old values and the old way of life. Christopher, on the other hand, willingly abandons the old in favor of a new frame of reference and a new life.

Throughout the series Christopher is plagued by his awareness

---

[18] Joseph J. Firebaugh, "Tietjens and the Tradition," Pacific Spectator, VI (Winter, 1925), 23.

[19] McCormick, p. 219.

[20] Williams, p. 317.

[21] Ibid., p. 323.

of the moral failure of his class, but in the first two novels he remains faithful to its conventions and the values it represents despite the suffering his steadfastness costs him. In A Man Could Stand Up, as the title suggests, he accepts the need for a new perspective and resolves to abandon the old. There is, then, a personal triumph for Christopher in A Man Could Stand Up, but it is not until Last Post that we see the broad social ramifications of his resolve. The dilemma that had earlier torn him--a dedication to traditional standards and a simultaneous desire to be shut of them--no longer obtains in the final novel. That part of Tietjens which had clung tenaciously to the past is personified in the dying Mark, who claims the title of the last Tory in the end, while the vital Christopher attempts to establish a new life with Valentine, who, symbolically enough, is about to bear him a child. Moreover, it is not until Last Post that we see the effects of the Great War on the other characters--on Sylvia and what she represents; on Campion; on the Macmasters and what they stand for; on Mark and Marie Léonie; on Michael Mark.

In addition to its participation in the broad themes of the series, Last Post is united to the earlier novels by the secondary motifs that it develops. Sylvia's final behavior, for instance, fulfils the prophecy that Father Consett makes in Some Do Not... and that is repeatedly alluded to in the middle novels. Her decision to apply to Rome for a divorce which will free Christopher for Valentine is achieved after an imaginary dialogue with the priest which is reminiscent of the bargain she had tried to strike with him in the hotel lobby scene in No More Parades. Similarly, references to

the curse on the Tietjens family recorded by Speldon appear often in the first three novels, but this theme is not brought to its resolution until Last Post, in which the spell is lifted. An even more subtle link with the other novels appears in Last Post in Gunning's marital difficulties and Michael Mark's slow, painful recognition that his mother has been a whore. Social disintegration and political corruption are symbolized throughout the novels by the breakdown of family relationships in widespread adultery occurring on every social level. Christopher is not alone in being plagued by an unfaithful wife. It is precisely an unfaithful wife that drives McKechnie mad and that brings the hapless O Nine Morgan to his death. And, while we cannot blame Duchemin's insanity on Edith Ethel's infidelity, her adulterous affair with Macmaster prior to her first husband's death sounds the keynote of their morally vacuous subsequent marriage. Reverend Duchemin's insanity, which manifests itself in scatological outbursts in Latin, appears to be another example of unhealthy sexual attitudes as well as a perversion of the ends of both scholarship and religious tradition.

Last Post, then, seems clearly to be an integral part of the larger whole that is Parade's End. It is possible to charge that in its promise of a brighter tomorrow and its tying together of loose ends it concludes the series on a falsely sentimental note. We may, of course, raise the same objection to Paradise Lost, or to any work that ends in affirmation. The point is that while Last Post may involve themes that are inherently sentimental in some sense, the novel retains its integrity as a work of literary art: Ford does not falsify the human condition in asserting his

final position.

Curiously, although Parade's End is a history of suffering and futility in the modern world, each of its four novels has a symbolically happy ending. In Some Do Not... Christopher and Valentine resist the temptation to initiate an illicit affair and achieve both a personal triumph and a triumph in the name of traditional moral values. Christopher has recognized the end of pomp and glory before the final pages of No More Parades, but Campion's inspection of the mess is performed in the grand tradition:

> To Tietjens this was like the sudden bursting out of the regimental quick-step, as after a funeral with military honours the band and drums march away, back to barracks.[22]

A Man Could Stand Up terminates in the magnificent Armistice Day party at Christopher's apartment and his and Valentine's determination to begin life anew. And Last Post depicts Christopher and Valentine emerging triumphant from the moral chaos that surrounds them. There is a steady progression in the resolutions of these novels toward the final resolution. In Some Do Not... Tietjens remains firm in his dedication to traditional Tory standards despite the hostility of the modern world to his anachronistic altruism. In No More Parades it is borne in on him that his class has failed in its trust as the preservers of a noble tradition and that modern values have triumphed. In A Man Could Stand Up he resolves to abandon that which is no longer viable and to strike out in a new direction. In Last Post we see the possibilities of an honorable private existence and the hope of a brighter future. The destructive forces that have

---

[22] Parade's End, p. 500.

made Christopher's existence a hell in the past are no longer effectively operative in Last Post because he has moved beyond the social framework in which their hypocritical cruelties can function.

Ford's subject in Parade's End, as we have already observed, was "the public events of a decade." He wanted, he tells us in It Was the Nightingale, "the Novelist . . . to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time."[23] He would have preferred to take the "world" as his central character: "You would have Interest A, remorselessly and under the stress of blind necessities, slowly or cataclysmically overwhelming Interest Z. Without the attraction of sympathy for a picturesque or upright individual." But he did not feel that he "had the strength to do without the attraction of human nature" so that he "should have to fall back on the old device of a world seen through the eyes of a central observer." And, he judged, "the tribulations of the central observer must be sufficient to carry the reader through his observations of the crumbling world."[24]

Since his central character must retain his powers of detached observation while experiencing the double horrors of warfare and personal tragedy, he must of necessity be a character of great personal strength. He must be strong but not in the usual sense heroic. As Ford explained his intention:

> I carefully avoided the word "hero." I was in no mood for the heroic. My character would be just enough of a man of action to get into the trenches and do what he was told. But

---

[23] P. 199.

[24] It Was the Nightingale, pp. 214-15.

> he was to be too essentially critical to initiate any daring sorties. Indeed his activities were most markedly to be in the realm of criticism. He was to be aware that in all places where they managed things from Whitehall down to brigade headquarters a number of things would be badly managed--the difference being that in Whitehall the mismanagement would be so much the result of jealousies that it would have all the aspect of the most repellent treachery: in brigade headquarters, within a stone's throw of the enemy, it would be the result of stupidities, shortage of instruments or men, damage by enemy activities, or, as was more often the case, on account of nearly imbecile orders percolating from Whitehall itself.
>
> These things he must observe. When it seemed to be his duty he would criticise. That would get him, even at the Front, into many and elaborate messes. . . . So I should get my "intrigue" screwed up tighter and always tighter.[25]

Such a character could not, obviously, be merely a private soldier, since his criticisms must bear sufficient weight to reach the highest echelons. Moreover, since his personal difficulties must in some way reflect the shortcomings of the dishonored upper classes, he must himself be socially prominent so as to be worthy of their vicious attention.

Ford was not satisfied, however, to make his central character "merely a 'gentleman.'"

> . . . separated from and absolutely above the merely gentlemanly class, there is in England another body. They are the Ruling Classes. This body is recruited as a rule from the sons of landed proprietors, old titled families, the sons of higher Army officers and what, in England, one called Good People. They are distinguished by being authoritative, cynical, instructed in the ways of mankind. They are sometimes even educated and not infrequently they are capable of real, cold passions for some person or some cause. It is they who monopolise and distinguish the First Class Government offices--the War and Foreign Offices, the Treasury, the Diplomatic Corps. They are permanent unless they come personal croppers over a woman, or through overintelligence or on account of financial disasters. As such they are really the Ruling Classes. A politician may rise high and have the aspect of governing but almost always he is the slave of the permanent officials who control his activities and his

---

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

> utterances. . . . It is the "gentlemen" of the country who control elections deciding whether the country shall be temporarily conservative or liberal. But the Permanent Official is almost always either Whig or Tory and sees to it that the services of the country run along the lines of its ancient traditions.[26]

It was of the Ruling Class that Ford's central character must come. He would be above personal ambition, removed from the temptations of dishonorable expediency, and, above all, predisposed to make critical judgments in the light of his country's "ancient traditions." He would be admirably suited to observe and lament the disparity between noble tradition and present decadence--the gulf between what the Ruling Classes professed to be and what they had become.

Before Ford lighted on his model for Christopher Tietjens, he had pretty well worked out what his private tribulations would be. His initial marital infelicities were to be based on the actual history of an acquaintance who had married a woman he had picked up on a train because she had later persuaded him that he had got her pregnant. She was blatantly unfaithful to him before and after their marriage, so that he never knew whether her child was actually his; but he never divorced her because "he held that a decent man could never divorce," and she never divorced him because she was a Roman Catholic.[27] This was the "hard-luck story, the hardest human luck!"[28] that Ford allegedly took as his point of departure. What his novel required was "some character, in lasting tribulation--with a permanent shackle and ball on his leg."[29] "He was to go through the public affairs of distracted Europe with that private

---

[26] Ibid., pp. 219-20.

[27] Ibid., pp. 209-10.

[28] Ibid., p. 209.

[29] Ibid., pp. 208-09.

cannonball all the time dragging at his ankle!"[30] The second part of Christopher's dilemma was modeled on the case of a wealthy American who was Ford's neighbor while he occupied Harold Munro's villa at Cap St. Jean Ferrat, where he started work on the cycle. The American had married a woman who had run off with another man only to return to her husband after he had fallen in love with another woman.[31] Christopher Tietjens' private life, then, had been settled on before he had taken definite shape as a character.

Ford also had early discovered models for his two principal female characters, or at least physical models. The original for Valentine Wannop was Dorothy Minto, whom Ford had admired especially for a role in which she portrayed a Suffragette.[32] Sylvia was based on an image of Sylvia (Mrs. Sinclair) Lewis, whom Ford remembered as a shining figure in "a golden sheath-gown" that he had met at a dinner party.[33] He readily appropriated her name and her appearance, he says, but he hastens to add "that the lady . . . was guiltless of any of the vagaries of the character that ultimately resulted from that image."[34]

One day it occurred to Ford to wonder what his old friend Arthur Marwood would have thought of the predicament of Ford's American neighbor and what he would have thought of the war, and Ford had his model for Christopher Tietjens. "Marwood," Ford

---

[30] Ibid., p. 211. [31] Ibid., pp. 220-21.

[32] Ibid., p. 210; see also Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1932), pp. 243-44.

[33] It Was the Nightingale, p. 211.

[34] Ibid.

relates, "had died before the war but his knowledge of the world's circumstances had been so vast and so deep that, as it were, to carry on his consciousness through those years seemed hardly to present any difficulties."[35] The younger son of a Yorkshire landed family, an inflexibly old-fashioned paternalistic Tory, a man of unimpeachable honor--Arthur Marwood had all of the attributes Ford desired in his central character.

> He was a man of infinite benevolence, comprehensions and knowledges. He actually . . . went through the whole of the Ninth Edition of the Encyclopaedia Brittanica wagering that, out of his own head, he would find seven times as many errors and misstatements as there were pages in that compilation. And he did.[36]

We may add the further details that his most fervent intellectual interest was Higher Mathematics, that he had had a brief career in public service, that he was intellectually arrogant, that he was something of a sentimentalist.[37]

> There he was [Ford writes], large--an "elephant built out of meal sacks." Deliberate, slow in movement and extraordinarily omniscient. He was physically very strong and very enduring. And he was, beneath the surface, extraordinarily passionate--with an abiding passion for the sort of truth that makes for intellectual accuracy in the public service. It was a fascinating task to find him a posthumous career.[38]

The similarities between Arthur Marwood and Christopher Tietjens are unmistakable, and it is tempting simply to identify the two, making whatever allowances are necessary for the differences

---

[35] Ibid., p. 222.

[36] Ibid., p. 208.

[37] A further interesting detail is that Mark Tietjens seems to have been modeled on Arthur Marwood's older brother, Sir William Marwood, whose estate in north Yorkshire was called Busby. See Kenneth Young, Ford Madox Ford ("Writers and Their Work, No. 74"; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1956), p. 35.

[38] It Was the Nightingale, p. 222.

in their biographies. But, as many critics have observed, except for the circumstances of his birth and his early career Tietjens is much closer to being a portrait of Ford himself than a projection of Marwood, and the circumstances of his private life as well as his military career find almost exact parallels in the life of his creator. As we have already noted, Marwood did not serve in the war. Ford, of course, did, and as an officer in a Welsh regiment. Like Tietjens he spent time at the front, where on one occasion he suffered an almost total memory loss as a result of shell shock and on another suffered permanent injury to his lungs as a result of being gassed. After the war he abandoned London and Violet Hunt to live in the south of England in a cottage with the much younger Stella Bowen, who, like Valentine, soon bore a child. While the actuarial scheme Tietjens discusses with Waterhouse in Some Do Not... is lifted from Marwood's "A Complete Actuarial Scheme for Insuring John Doe against all the Vicissitudes of Life,"[39] the sonnet writing contest he has with McKechnie is based on one of Ford's own favorite pastimes.

Many of the personal characteristics that Tietjens had in common with Marwood were shared as well by Ford. Ford, too, had an almost incredibly retentive memory and was considered by many of his friends to be little short of omniscient. His sense of honor and his refusal to defend himself against the vicious attacks Violet Hunt leveled at him when it became clear to her that she had

---

[39]Originally published in the first number of the English Review; see supra, p. 36.

lost him were singularly like those of Christopher Tietjens. In a letter he wrote to Edgar Jepson in the early Twenties he flatly refused to discuss his former relationship with Violet Hunt any further and declared, "One's friends must accept one's actions and divine the justifications for those actions--or one must do without friends."[40] Christopher utters almost precisely the same sentiment in No More Parades when he explains to General Campion that he can never forgive his father for having thought ill of him despite the gossip he heard. "One's friends," Christopher insists, "ought to believe that one is a gentleman. Automatically."[41]

Even the general outlines of Tietjens' domestic troubles are reminiscent of Ford's personal history. Ford found it impossible to divorce Elsie Hueffer when he became involved with Violet Hunt; Violet Hunt, in her turn, spied on and hounded him when he retired to the country with Stella Bowen, so that even Tietjens' women bear striking resemblances to Ford's. One cannot establish exact parallels, but there is no mistaking the way in which Sylvia Tietjens incorporates some of the traits of both Elsie Hueffer and Violet Hunt and the way in which Valentine Wannop appears to be a composite of Stella Bowen and the Violet Hunt that first attracted Ford. Violet Hunt herself observed the way in which Ford drew upon her as a model. In I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years she writes:

I was asked several times last year how I liked being called

---

[40]Quoted in Goldring, p. 216.

[41]Parade's End, p. 497.

> Sylvia--and certainly I do recollect something about a pair of sheets commandeered for the use of the Regiment--my best sheets! I think I should rather sign myself Sylvia-Valentine, for my record suffrage experiences were those of Miss Valentine Wallop [sic] and though my hair is not yellow nor my eyes blue, my nose has certainly more than a soupçon of the tilt of the nose of Dante.[42]

All of this may seem little more than an unconscionably tedious demonstration of the autobiographical aspect of Ford's central character, but it involves a critical point of the highest importance. Elliott B. Gose, Jr. was the first critic to observe that the entire thematic development of Parade's End depends on the duality of Christopher's personality.

> . . . though Ford conceived Tietjens in Marwood's image [Gose comments], the experiences which Tietjens has are so much Ford's that he becomes more and more like Ford as the novel progresses. The result of this metamorphosis is to furnish the novel with a valuable tension: the conflict, as it develops in Tietjens' psyche, between Marwood the inactive saint, and Ford the active sinner.[43]

For the first two novels Tietjens is essentially a Marwood, suffering silently in the great tradition of the Yorkshire gentleman, but in A Man Could Stand Up and Last Post he alters to become the Fordian rebel against tradition, and his former symbolic role passes to Mark, who finally just goes out, with neither a bang nor a whimper.

In addition to the purely literary end of rendering "the public events of a decade" in the "proud position as historian of his own time," Ford pursued an avowed moral end in Parade's End. He says in It Was the Nightingale:

---

[42]Violet Hunt, I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926), p. 203.

[43]Elliott B. Gose, Jr., "Reality to Romance: A Study of Ford's Parade's End," College English, XVII (May, 1956), 445.

> I have always had the greatest contempt for novels written with a purpose. Fiction should render and not draw morals. But, when I sat down to write that series of volumes, I sinned against my gods to the extent of saying that I was going--to the level of the light vouchsafed me--to write a work that should have for its purpose the obviating of all future wars.[44]

Similarly, in the dedication to A Man Could Stand Up he writes:

> . . . as far as this particular book is concerned I find myself ready to admit to certain public aims. That is to say that in it, I have been trying to say to as much of humanity as I can reach, and, in particular to such members of the public as, because of age or for other reasons, did not experience the shocks and anxieties of the late struggle:
>
> 'This is what the late war was like: this is how modern fighting of the organised, scientific type affects the mind. If, for reasons of gain or, as is still more likely, out of dislike for collective types other than your own, you choose to permit your rulers to embark on another war, this--or something very accentuated along similar lines--is what you will have to put up with!'
>
> I hope, in fact, that this series of books, for what it is worth, may make war seem undesirable.[45]

We must not, however, overestimate the extent to which Ford sinned against his gods. To begin with, although he occasionally adopts an omniscient point of view, Ford does not make editorial intrusions. Furthermore, he did not fake events for the sake of his propagandistic purpose. Ford himself accurately described his practice in the dedication to A Man Could Stand Up:

> . . . I have not exaggerated either the physical horrors or the mental distresses of that period. On the contrary I have selected for treatment less horrible episodes than I might well have rendered and I have rendered them with more equanimity than might well have been displayed.[46]

And in a somewhat lengthier comment in It Was the Nightingale he has this to say:

> I was not going to go against my literary conscience to the extent of piling horrors on horrors or even of exaggerating

---

[44] P. 225. [45] P. 11. [46] Ibid.

horrors. That policy, in the end, always defeats itself. After you have seen two or three men killed or mangled your mind of necessity grows a carapace round itself and afterwards witnessing the slaying of thousands hardly moves you unless those men belong to your own unit. And the mind of the reader does the same thing.[47]

Remarkably, Ford recognized that his propagandistic intention could best be achieved by remaining faithful to his artistic principles, for it best suited his purpose to render impressionistically the commonplace experiences of men living under combat conditions. What he wished most emphatically to convey was the enormous strain of the unending worry felt by the men in the line. In the dedication to No More Parades he makes the following observation:

> In this novel the events, such as it treats of, are vouched for by myself. There was in France, at the time covered by this novel, an immense base camp, unbelievably crowded with men whom we were engaged in getting up the line, working sometimes day and night in the effort. That immense army was also extremely depressed by the idea that those who controlled it overseas would--I will not use the word betray, since that implies volition--but "let us down." We were oppressed, ordered, counterordered, commanded, countermanded, harassed, strafed, denounced--and, above all, dreadfully worried. The never-ending sense of worry, in fact, far surpassed any of the "exigencies of troops actually in contact with enemy forces," and that applied not merely to the bases,but to the whole field of military operations. Unceasing worry![48]

And, in It Was the Nightingale he explicitly states his expectation that the civilian population would never again undertake warfare if it were made aware of just how intolerable the soldier's worry could become:

> . . . it seemed to me that, if I could present, not merely fear, not merely horror, not merely death, not merely even self-sacrifice . . . but just worry; that might strike a note of which the world would not so readily tire. For you may become callous

---

[47] P. 225.

[48] Pp. v-vi.

> at the thought of all horrors of more than a million dead: fear itself in the end comes to rest. . . . But worry feeds on itself and in the end so destroys the morale that less than a grasshopper becomes a burden. It is without predictable term; it is as menacing as the eye of a serpent; it causes unspeakable fatigue even as, remorselessly, it banishes rest. And it seemed to me that if the world could be got to see War from that angle there would be no more wars.[49]

This approach to the subject of war permitted Ford to reconcile the practice of the impressionist with the intention of the propagandist. Furthermore, it provided these novels with a psychological tension that would have been impossible in a work intent upon the brutalities of warfare. By focusing upon the mental distress of his combatants Ford was able to deal with a considerable amount of material not directly concerned with the actual fighting; indeed, the stresses his characters feel originate more often in unsatisfactory conditions at home than in the attempts of the enemy to slaughter them, so that the broad social themes regarding domestic affairs in England continue to develop within the framework of narratives ostensibly concerned with the fighting in France. A further advantage of this method is that by insisting that the soldier is "homo duplex: a poor fellow whose body is tied in one place but whose mind and personality brood eternally over another distant locality,"[50] Ford achieves a rich picture of "man fighting" in contrast to the more ordinary portraits of the "fighting man."

Parade's End, then, operates simultaneously on three planes: it is a war novel with a message; a symbolic representation of the decline of the ruling class in England; and the history of the Tietjens "affair." Of course, in the rendering all three levels

---

[49] P. 226.

[50] It Was the Nightingale, p. 217.

of meaning are inextricably tied together, so that the literal events of Christopher's life reflect the symbolic structure and, in many instances, further Ford's anti-war "message." Thus, for instance, the whole bizarre sequence of events revolving around Sylvia's hotel room in No More Parades engages our interest on the purely literal level at the same time that it demonstrates the condition to which the ruling classes, symbolized in Sylvia, have descended and also illustrates the incredible mental strain to which the troops in France might be subjected. Though these novels are not nearly as tightly constructed as The Good Soldier, they do, in fact, exhibit the sort of complexity and the intricate system of cross-references that characterize Dowell's narrative.

The early morning collision of the horse cart in which Christopher and Valentine are returning home with General Campion's automobile at the conclusion of Part One of Some Do Not..., for instance, involves several levels of meaning. On the purely literal level it has compromising consequences for Valentine and Christopher since Lady Claudine takes their having been surprised together in the early morning as certain evidence that they have been out all night and are thus, incontrovertibly, lovers. The rumors that grow out of the event serve to confirm the already existing suspicions of an illicit affair between Tietjens and the daughter of his father's best friend. Inherent in the growth and acceptance as fact of these rumors is a critical comment on the moral soundness of a class which is predisposed to think the worst of its own most admirable members.[51]

---

[51]There is a direct contrast here with the ruling classes in The New Humpty-Dumpty (London: John Lane, 1911), who refuse to

More important is the accident's function as a symbolic and structural nexus in the tetralogy as a whole. The collision is symbolic of the clash between the natural and the mechanical, the traditional and the modern, which characterizes the twentieth century: in the grievous injury done the horse by Campion's fog-enshrouded machine we see the headlong destruction of a traditionally rural way of life by a blindly rampant industrial society. Christopher is throughout the tetralogy closely associated with horses and thus identified with a pre-industrial England. His amazing "way with" and sympathy for the beasts is repeatedly remarked, and serves as a unifying motif. It is precisely his sympathy for horses in No More Parades that results in his being sent back to the trenches in A Man Could Stand Up. His clash with the coldly scientific veterinarian Hotchkiss over the treatment of regimental cavalry makes it impossible for Campion to transfer him to the relatively safe job in transport that Mark had arranged. To Christopher's declaration, "I would rather die than subject any horse for which I am responsible to the damnable torture Hotchkiss and Lord Beichan want to inflict on service horses," Campion replies, "It looks as if you damn well will die on that account!"[52] In this instance Ford uses the treatment of horses not only as a referent for the triumph of a ruthless scientific method over traditional humaneness but also as an illustration of the hardships attendant on ill-informed civilian meddling in military affairs.

---

believe the vicious rumors concerning Count Macdonald that are promulgated by his wife.

[52] Parade's End, p. 485.

In Christopher's musings upon how best to compensate the Wannop's for the loss of their horse he reveals the dedication to conventional principles that characterizes him in the first two novels. Having already suggested that the Wannop's sue the general, he then considers that it would be easier to persuade his father to put up fifty quid for a new animal. The Wannops being in very straitened financial circumstances, his father would be happy to supply the money. "But," Christopher reflects, "it wouldn't be playing the game!" Again, he wavers momentarily and proposes to "Damn all principles!" in the interest of practicality, but he resolves inevitably in favor of principles and damns the consequences. "Principles," he concludes, "are like a skeleton map of a country--you know whether you're going east or north."[53]

In his treatment of the collision, then, Ford artfully exploits a relatively insignificant occurrence for a variety of technical ends. It has important symbolic implications; it serves as a structural focal point; and in looking forward to Christopher's altercation with Hotchkiss over the treatment of horses it contributes to Ford's propagandistic intention. And, as we have further observed, it helps to characterize Christopher and to establish his conventional pre-war principles. Moreover, the incident serves to establish the relationship between Christopher and Campion--a combination of mutual respect and disdain--and to mark a stage in the developing love between Christopher and Valentine. Even the commonplace remarks of the carriage driver who is routed out of bed to

---

[53] Ibid., p. 144.

take Valentine home are integrated into the thematic development. His comment with reference to Christopher:

> Always the gentleman . . . a merciful man is merciful also to his beast. But I wouldn't leave my little wooden 'ut, not miss my breakfast, for no beast. . . . Some do and some . . . do not.[54]

elucidates the gentlemanly altruism which is central to Christopher's character.

While these observations hardly exhaust the critical riches of the scene and while they do no more than suggest the art with which Ford constructed it, they are sufficient to indicate that the treatment of the collision is the work of an exceptional craftsman employing all of his craft and that Parade's End cannot be dismissed as a minor effort. For the collision scene is not atypical of the care Ford lavished on the whole cycle. It is through focal scenes such as this, which look backward and forward and establish important motifs, and through a systematic interplay of parallels and contrasts that Ford achieved a remarkable sense of unity in what was for him an unusually long fiction. Some of the contrasts are obvious, such as the scene in No More Parades in which Christopher dances with Sylvia in the darkened hotel and the scene in A Man Could Stand Up in which he dances with Valentine before they set out on their new life. On a broader scale there is the contrast throughout Some Do Not... between the careers of Christopher and Macmaster, a contrast which embodies the theme of social criticism which is at the heart of that novel. As Christopher declines in social prestige and comfort, Macmaster rises; in the end Macmaster, of course, is

---

[54] Ibid.

elevated to knighthood, and Christopher is disgraced both publicly and privately. Similarly, Edith Ethel rises to the position of grande dame of a London salon while Valentine suffers eventual ostracism by good people. In Last Post, as Christopher and Valentine experience an upswing of fortune and emerge as the hope of the future, Macmaster is reported dead and Edith Ethel is exposed as a ludicrous egotist pursuing her own selfish ends in a moral vacuum.

Among the less immediately obvious contrasts which help to effect thematic and structural unity are the relationships Christopher has with the lower classes at different times in the narrative. In Some Do Not... he assumes the traditional paternalistic role which permits him to advise the cabman on the best line to take with his ailing horse and to patronize the unusually promising Macmaster. Because they are not social equals, it is even possible for him to achieve some degree of intimacy with Macmaster; it is perfectly within the tradition for Christopher to make of him something of a confidante and even to explain his personal motives. To the tradesman born, Macmaster cannot be assumed automatically to understand the gentleman. It is altogether proper, on the one hand, for Tietjens to finance Macmaster's education and, on the other, to discuss his marital difficulties with him. Except for the absence of affection, Mark shares a very similar relationship with Ruggles:

> Half Scotchman, half Jew, Ruggles was very tall and resembled a magpie, having his head almost always on one side. Had he been English, Mark would never have shared his rooms with him; he knew indeed few Englishmen of sufficient birth and position to have that privilege. . . . Mark knew nothing of Ruggles' origins, then--so that, in a remote way, their union resembled that of Christopher with Macmaster. But whereas Christopher would have given his satellite the shirt off his back, Mark would not have lent

> Ruggles more than a five-pound note, and would have turned him out of their rooms if it had not been returned by the end of the quarter.[55]

Mark and Christopher can live on terms of relative intimacy with Ruggles and Macmaster precisely because they are separated from them by an absolutely unbridgeable social gulf. In these relationships we see a familiar Fordian estimate of the gentlemanly tradition: the same conventions that make for a comfortable and orderly life preclude satisfactory human contacts. One can discuss intimacies with and be generous to an inferior, but one can never establish a footing of equality with him; with equals one cannot go beyond surface amenities. In Last Post Mark makes the incisive observation that the relationships he and Christopher have had with social inferiors have invariably proved disastrous. "It was their failing as Tietjenses that they liked toadies. He himself had bitched all their lives by having that fellow Ruggles years ago sharing his rooms."[56] But Christopher and Mark behave in these relationships perfectly within their tradition, and in so far as their dilemmas stem from the unsatisfactory human contacts that tradition imposes upon them their dilemmas are an indictment of that tradition.

Christopher's aloofness from the general run of humanity and his reticence with members of his own class recommend him as a gentleman but leave him unsatisfied as a human being. Perhaps the primary tension that exists in Christopher as a man is the conflict between his need for communication and his fidelity to a code

---

[55] Ibid., p. 205. [56] Ibid., p. 831.

of behavior which demands silence on vital issues. Paul Wiley's suggestion that O Nine Morgan's death in Christopher's arms is a blood ritual for him in which he washes off his class and identifies himself with the lower orders seems a bit overingenious, but Wiley's point that from No More Parades on Tietjens enjoys a new and more meaningful relationship with the lower classes is well taken and central to an understanding of Christopher's development as a character.[57] He will meet his men on their own terms, and the friendship he knows with Sergeant-Major Cowley, though not a bond between equals, is different in kind from what he has known with Vincent Macmaster. The uproarious cameraderie of the Armistice celebration which concludes A Man Could Stand Up is a sharp contrast to the effete propriety of the Macmaster's salon and the restrained lunacy of the Duchemin breakfast table. The two latter characterize the social world of the pre-war Tietjens while the former signals a new mode of existence for him.

As we have already hinted, the whole problem of human relations is intimately tied to the breakdown of communications. It is no accident that the one military circumstance that distresses Christopher above all others is the inadequacy of the lines of communications both among troops and between the forces in the field and headquarters. In his brief tenure as acting company commander he does all he can to establish communications with neighboring troops and to straighten out the lines of command. The image of men cut off from each other because of the meddling of civilians who have excluded

---

[57] Paul L. Wiley, Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1962), p. 229.

practice in communications from the training program of troops recurs often enough to emerge as one of Ford's major symbols for the experience of the war. But the need for intimate communication implicates for Tietjens far more than existence in the trenches: it is in her capacity as someone to talk to as an equal that Christopher conceives Valentine Wannop as love object. In A Man Could Stand Up he muses:

> The beastly Huns! They stood between him and Valentine Wannop. If they would go home he could be sitting talking to her for whole afternoons. That was what a young woman was for. You seduced a young woman in order to be able to finish your talks with her. You could not do that without living with her. You could not live with her without seducing her; but that was the by-product. The point is that you can't otherwise talk. You can't finish talks at street corners; in museums; even in drawing rooms. You mayn't be in the mood when she is in the mood--for intimate conversation that means the final communion of your souls. You have to wait together--for a week, for a year, for a lifetime, before the final intimate conversation may be attained . . . and exhausted. So that . . .
>
> That in effect was love. It struck him as astonishing. The word was so little in his vocabulary.[58]

In his development of the theme of the breakdown of communications Ford once again managed to fuse the private history of Tietjens with the public events of a decade and simultaneously to underscore his propagandistic message without violating the unity of his art.

Ford relies heavily in Parade's End on the time-shift and the centering of attention on climactic scenes, but the application of these techniques differs considerably from their employment in The Good Soldier. In the earlier novel the narrator repeatedly reconsiders a handful of key scenes, shedding new light on them for the reader with each reconsideration while going through a learning process himself.[59] In Parade's End Ford employs a shifting point of

---

[58] Parade's End, p. 629. [59] See supra, pp. 201-204.

view which permits him to place us in the mind of almost every character as well as allowing him the luxury of occasionally omniscient narration. The emphasis, thus, is not on the learning process of a first person narrator but on the lives and attitudes of several characters. Sometimes scenes are reported from a variety of viewpoints, such as the scene at the top of the stairs in which Sylvia announces to Christopher and Valentine that she has cancer. This actually takes place on Armistice night, a few hours after the party which concludes A Man Could Stand Up; but we do not learn of it until Last Post, in which it is referred to by Marie Léonie, Gunning, Sylvia, and Valentine. The effect gained by the multiple viewpoint is similar to the effect that key scenes in The Good Soldier achieve. Marie Léonie makes an incidental, reasonably objective, reference to the event. Gunning recounts the newspaper report of Sylvia's court action for restitution of conjugal rights in which Sylvia's charge that Christopher had pushed her down the stairs backfired and appeared as merely a vulgar fiction.[60] Sylvia herself recognizes in her recollection of the scene the beginning of a wholly new relationship between her and Christopher. Finally, for Valentine, and for the critical reader, the scene constitutes a confrontation of the old and the new, the last futile effort by Sylvia and the old order to assert a claim on Christopher's loyalties.

Such scenes are, however, atypical of Parade's End; it is rare that a scene is re-examined from several points of view. More

---

[60] Sylvia's behavior in what turns out to be a legal fiasco is, as she realizes, the final bitter fulfilment of Father Consett's prophecy that she will be driven to vulgar extremes.

frequently scenes serve as climactic moments at which the characters review what has happened in the past and, occasionally, look forward to the future. If we view the scenic structure of The Good Soldier as largely centripetal, with the major scenes serving as centers upon which the various narrative strands converge, then we may see Parade's End as largely centrifugal, with each scene serving as a point of departure from which lines of development emanate. Actually, in both novels the structure is much more complex than such a simple scheme might suggest, for the major scenes in each also serve as climaxes in a simultaneous linear structure. Nevertheless, the generalization holds true that in The Good Soldier the movement is toward the major scene, in Parade's End out from it. This difference is attributable to the different relationship between time-present and time-past in the two novels. In The Good Soldier almost all of the action has taken place before the novel begins; the action of the time-present is the actual process of recollection in which the narrator naturally returns many times to important moments in order fully to grasp their significance. In Parade's End, on the other hand, the time-shift is employed in order to elucidate the circumstances that have given rise to the climactic scenes occurring in the time-present. In both cases there is a reciprocal relationship in the way that past and present clarify each other, but in The Good Soldier Dowell's mental processes are intended primarily to reveal the meaning of events that have already occurred, while in Parade's End recollections of the past function primarily to provide a frame of reference for what is presently taking place.

An examination of the time-scheme of Parade's End reveals

the way in which the scenic structure operates, for while the cycle covers the public events of a decade, the total time-present of the four novels is about six days. Each of these days represents either symbolically or literally a climactic moment both in Tietjens' life and in the life of England and the modern world. The time-shift is employed in order to recapitulate the events leading up to the present moment and to define the pattern of events which find their culmination in it. Part One of Some Do Not... takes place during the two days that elapse between Christopher and Macmaster's departure on the train on Friday morning and the collision between horse and automobile on Sunday morning. There is then a gap of about five years, and Part Two covers Christopher's last day of leave before shipping overseas for the second time. No More Parades covers about thirty-six hours, involving three days--from the night of O Nine Morgan's death, through the next full day, which Christopher spends in Rouen with Sylvia, to the following morning in which he first has a long interview with Campion and then goes on parade with him for the last time. A Man Could Stand Up takes place entirely on Armistice Day, with a long flashback depicting Christopher at the front temporarily in charge of his company. Last Post also involves in the time-present a single day--the day of Mark's death and Sylvia's letting go of Christopher. Each novel is thus framed by a time-present which marks the notable stages in the development of the entire pattern of events.

The few days shown us in Part One of Some Do Not... are sufficient to define Christopher's anachronistic integrity as a member of a class which no longer accepts the responsibility

attendant upon its privileges, and to introduce us to Sylvia and to Valentine--the decadent and the emergent. The single day which constitutes Part Two is equally sufficient to illustrate the appalling chaos of a war effort directed by a combination of unprincipled modern politicians and the incompetent members of an already decayed ruling class. The thirty-six hours of No More Parades successfully sounds the knell of a way of life; Christopher clings to his conventions but realizes that there will be no more "swank," no more parades. In A Man Could Stand Up Valentine willingly abandons the old order in a matter of a few hours on a day that marks the beginning of a new era for the entire world. Her resolution, however, depends on the prior break that Christopher has made during his brief tenure as commander in the passage related through flashback. The day of Mark's death in Last Post is the final dramatic revelation of the passing of the old and the emergence of the new hope for the future.

Parade's End is primarily the story of Christopher Tietjens, and until Last Post the point of view is predominantly but by no means exclusively his. By shifting his point of view Ford avoids the obvious pitfall of the first person narration and gains solidity for his central character by presenting him as seen from a variety of angles. More important, however, is the flexibility he gains in the presentation of expository flashbacks. As we have noted, the organizational scheme of the novels requires a great deal of retrospective exposition; moreover Ford was under another, extra-literary, compulsion to provide great blocks of expository matter. The four novels were originally published as separate volumes between 1924 and 1928. For purely commercial reasons it was necessary to

recapitulate what had gone before in order to make the later volumes saleable. Presumably any novelist who knows his trade will take advantage of necessity and make such a recapitulation also a revelation of the character who is recalling the past for the reader's benefit. The problem for Ford, however, was to avoid repetition. This he did by using a different character as expository agent in each of the last three novels. In No More Parades Christopher records the history of his marriage in a notebook in order to get the facts straight in his mind. Stated thus, out of context, the device may appear to be clumsy and obvious. But in the novel there is a convincing need for Tietjens, who has been under great mental strain and is baffled by Sylvia's sudden appearance in France, systematically to examine his past in order to understand his present situation vis à vis Sylvia. In A Man Could Stand Up it is Valentine who appropriately summarizes the past. The action of the novel is framed by the events of Armistice Day seen almost exclusively through her eyes. It is she who must decide Christopher's future, and so it is essential that we know the view she takes of the circumstances that have led to her present decision. In Last Post we learn of the action subsequent to the war from several points of view, but the prewar history of the affair comes to us largely through Mark, who as retiring deity broods over the entire action and assesses its significance.

The shifting point of view has several other more or less predictable advantages. It provides for easy contrasts of the attitudes of representatives of differing social classes; it invests scenes examined from a variety of viewpoints with an otherwise

unattainable complexity; it contributes to clarity of characterization. Moreover, it reinforces the important theme of the breakdown of communications as it helps to illustrate the way in which characters misunderstand one another. On the purely literal level it demonstrates the dangers of viewing things exclusively through the eyes of sympathetic characters: for instance, it never becomes clear just how disreputable Sylvia has succeeded in making Christopher appear until we enter the consciousness of General Campion late in No More Parades; we then become aware that on the basis of what he has been told Campion is perfectly justified in his misgivings concerning Tietjens.

Although he shifts point of view frequently, often within a given scene, Ford never oversteps the boundaries of the consciousness of the moment. In presenting scenes he sometimes renders and sometimes narrates through a character. In either case he remains scrupulously faithful to his impressionistic method, so that even when a character recalls action for the benefit of another character--as Christopher describes his dinner with Waterhouse for Macmaster in Some Do Not...--the speaker relates what took place entirely from his own angle of vision. In scenes that are rendered in the present, we experience a series of sense impressions along with the character in whose consciousness the narrative resides. The collision, for example, is rendered in the following terms:

> Not ten yards ahead Tietjen [sic] saw a tea-tray, the underneath of a black-lacquered tea-tray, gliding towards them, mathematically straight, just rising from the mist. He shouted, mad, the blood in his head. His shout was drowned by the scream of the horse; he had swung it to the left. The cart turned up, the horse emerged from the mist, head and shoulders, pawing. A stone sea-horse from the fountain of Versailles! Exactly that!

> Hanging in air for an eternity; the girl looking at it, leaning slightly forward.
>
> The horse didn't come over backwards: he had loosened the reins. It wasn't there any more. The damnedest thing that could happen! He had known it would happen.[61]

It is not until several paragraphs later that one is entirely sure what has happened--not until the horse has been brought to a stop and observed to be bleeding and Campion has run up expostulating that the accident was not his fault.

In Last Post, of course, the point of view is radically different from that of the preceding novels owing to Christopher's absence for all but a single page. We view events primarily through Mark, but we also enter the consciousness of Sylvia, Valentine, Marie Léonie, Michael Mark, the local peasants. Christopher appears on the scene only briefly and never as point of view character; yet he seems to be eternally present. What we see in Last Post are the ramifications, both literal and symbolic, of Christopher's resolution in A Man Could Stand Up to embark on a new way of life. Throughout the first three novels, while Christopher's attitudes are in process, his point of view is dominant; but by Last Post his stand has already been taken, and he has ceased to evolve. There is, thus, nothing to be added from his point of view, his function now being to serve as a fixed point by which to measure the behavior and attitudes of the other characters. As the action of Last Post develops, all of the living characters (Macmaster and Perowne are dead) who have played a part in Christopher's personal history are assembled for judgment and final dispensation in the light of the new

---

[61] Parade's End, p. 139.

conditions of the modern world. Despite his own retrospective misgivings concerning the success of the novel, in absenting Christopher from the immediate action and abandoning his point of view, Ford pursued the most appropriate course for achieving his purpose in the novel. To retain Christopher as point of view while employing him as touchstone, Ford would have been forced to make him sit in judgment of the others while having ceased to develop himself. Not only would this have been entirely out of character for Tietjens but it would have robbed the novel of its major impact--the effect of the self-examinations the other characters must undertake in order to come to terms with the implications of Christopher's abdication from his class.

Christopher's life finally stands as a criticism of the inadequacy of the mode of existence of the ruling classes, not of the system of values that ideally informs their behavior. As he accurately diagnoses his own case, Christopher is unsuited for life in the twentieth century because he is a living reminder of how radically his class has departed from the spirit of the tradition that is its only raison d'être. In the long interview with Campion that concludes No More Parades he observes:

> Ruggles told my father what he did because it is not a good thing to belong to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in the twentieth. Or really, because it is not good to have taken one's public school's ethical system seriously. I am really, sir, the English public schoolboy. That's an eighteenth-century product. What with the love of truth that--God help me!--they rammed into me at Clifton and the belief that Arnold forced upon Rugby that the vilest of sins--the vilest of all sins--is to preach to the head master! That's me, sir. Other men get over their schooling. I never have. I remain adolescent. These things are obsessions with me.[62]

---

[62] Ibid., p. 490.

And even his final judgment in Last Post, "if a ruling class loses the capacity to rule--or the desire!--it should abdicate from its privileges and get underground,"[63] is a criticism not of what the ruling classes symbolize but of what they have in fact become.

Christopher's own values are simply those of the Christian gentleman, with a touch of knight errantry. His personality is complicated by the fact that he is the inheritor of two allied but distinct gentlemanly traditions. He is the son of a north Yorkshire father, from whom he inherits his obstinate stoicism, his dedication to service for privileges received, and a large measure of mental toughness. From his mother, who is not Mark's mother, he inherits a strain of southern sentimentality and a desire for what he likes to call Anglican sainthood. It is his northern toughness that makes him an ideal critic of society and his southern softness that makes him its ideal victim. Both traditions inspire a self-effacing altruism which Christopher cherishes and which proves disastrous for him. As Ford comments omnisciently, "It is, in fact, asking for trouble if you are more altruist than the society that surrounds you."[64]

When Mark, who thinks of Christopher as "a soft sort of bloke," is mildly surprised by his obstinate refusal to forgive him and their father for accepting Ruggles' account of his affairs, Christopher reminds him, "I'm as North Riding as yourself!"[65] But Christopher also admits to himself that,

> His private ambition had always been for saintliness: he must be able to touch pitch and not be defiled. That he knew marked him off as belonging to the sentimental branch of humanity. He

---

[63] Ibid., p. 818. [64] Ibid., p. 207. [65] Ibid., p. 217.

> couldn't help it: Stoic or Epicurean; Caliph in the harem or Dervish desiccating in the sand; one or the other you must be. And his desire was to be a saint of the Anglican variety . . . as his mother had been, without convent, ritual, vows, or miracles to be performed by your relics![66]

By Last Post, when he has become convinced that Christopher is not going to relent in his refusal to take Groby, Mark is willing to recognize the Yorkshire in his brother; but he also shrewdly observes that Christopher's maternal heritage is his undoing:

> She [Christopher's mother] had passed around Groby for a saint. An Anglican saint, of course. That was what was the matter with Christopher. It was the soft streak. A Tietjens had no business with saintliness in his composition! It was bound to get him looked on as a blackguard![67]

And it is his "soft streak," as Mark thinks of it--his generosity, his self-sacrificing, his unwillingness to impugn others even in his own defense--that destroys his reputation. In Last Post Marie Léonie reflects that "Apparently there was no one in the world who did not dislike Christopher because they owed him money."[68] For the sake of their child he refuses to defend himself against Sylvia's calumny: "It was better," he considers, "for a boy to have a rip of a father than a whore for mother!"[69] He comes to Valentine's aid on the golf course and is immediately regarded as her lover. He even accepts what appears to be certain death (Campion's proposal that he return to the trenches) for the sake of troop morale and to avoid embarrassing his godfather.

Everything Christopher does, then, during Some Do Not... and No More Parades is motivated by a literal adherence to his

---

[66] Ibid., p. 187.

[67] Ibid., p. 725.

[68] Ibid., p. 777.

[69] Ibid., p. 77.

altruistic tradition, which he unrealistically hopes will persist in the face of twentieth century change. When he finally accepts the fact that there will be no more parades, that his class and his tradition have decayed from within, he abandons what is no longer meaningful and hopes to re-establish the essential values he admires in a new and more viable form. The break that he makes in A Man Could Stand Up is foreshadowed not only in No More Parades but as early as Some Do Not.... On the purely literal level he cannot but realize the indictment of English society inherent in Sylvia's behavior, in Macmaster's success, and in his father and brother's acceptance of Ruggles' report. Faced with the unpleasant prospect of Valentine's loss of reputation, he muses lengthily on the deplorable state of English society, which reflects its own corruption in its predisposition to place the worst possible construction on every act it judges: "Church! State! Army! H.M. Ministry: H.M. Opposition: H.M. City Man. . . . All the governing class! All rotten! Thank God we've got a navy! . . . But perhaps that's rotten too!"[70] For Christopher the final, unforgiveable, betrayal of its traditional values by the ruling class is expressed in its conduct of the war. His total memory loss as a result of shell-shock symbolizes the breach with the past that his war experience engenders.[71] It is to be noted that his mind is not damaged beyond his loss of memory;

---

[70] Ibid., p. 106.

[71] In a comment I find unintelligible Meixner speaks of Christopher's "pitiful and ironic loss of his great memory from shell-shock: fate's punishment for his sin of hubris" (Meixner, p. 205). By hubris Meixner may mean Tietjens' rebellion against his class, but this has not yet taken place, nor has he yet considered seducing Valentine.

he must, however, make entirely new beginnings in his understanding of the world.

In contrast to Christopher are the several other members of the ruling class and the aspiring careerists below them. Climbers like the Macmasters despise him because they are indebted to him and feel a need to discredit him in order to justify their ingratitude. As we have remarked, there is a loud note of social criticism in the simultaneous rise of Macmaster and fall of Tietjens which strongly echoes the major theme of The Inheritors.[72] More complex, however, is Christopher's relationship to other members of the ruling class because they provide contrasts among themselves. We may distinguish representatives of three different aspects of decay: there are those, like Sylvia and her satellites, who are morally corrupt and betray their tradition and its conventions; there are those, like Mark Tietjens, who continue to observe their conventions but reject responsibility for the conduct of the world's affairs; there are those, like Campion and possibly Fittleworth, who persist in their traditional roles but whose efficacy is greatly diminished largely because their standards are neither comprehensive nor flexible enough to admit of the special conditions of the modern world. In contrast to all of them stands Valentine Wannop, who, we must remember, is also of quite good birth. She is, of course, Christopher's female counterpart. Like him, she has enormous personal integrity and a rather quixotic strength of conviction. Although

---

[72]F. M. Hueffer and Joseph Conrad, The Inheritors (London: William Heinemann, 1901). See supra, pp. 125-30.

she does not decide to live with Christopher until Armistice Day, her break with tradition as it is manifest in her suffragette activities in Some Do Not... actually precedes Christopher's break in A Man Could Stand Up.

Sylvia, on the other hand, is wholly reactionary and unscrupulously destructive. Christopher draws the contrast between her and Valentine in the following terms:

> . . . she [Valentine] and Sylvia were the only two human beings he had met for years whom he could respect: the one for sheer efficiency in killing; the other for having the constructive desire and knowing how to set about it. Kill or cure! the two functions of man. If you wanted something killed you'd go to Sylvia Tietjens in the sure faith that she would kill it: emotion, hope, ideal; kill it quick and sure. If you wanted something kept alive you'd go to Valentine: she'd find something to do for it. . . . The two types of mind: remorseless enemy, sure screen, dagger . . . sheath![73]

She is the perfect representative of a ruling class that clings tenaciously to its prerogatives although it has abandoned its responsibilities. Lacking any purpose, she is, as she declares, "bored . . . bored . . . bored,"[74] and releases her energy in the destruction of the maddeningly admirable Christopher. In her purely personal relationship with her husband she is motivated largely by what Mark calls "sex cruelty," but in her broader, her symbolic, role she is characterized by an almost total irresponsibility. Most of her actions are initiated without premeditation and without a clear idea of their consequences. Indeed, when she decides on the spur of the moment to go to Rouen in No More Parades, she has no

---

[73] Parade's End, p. 128.

[74] Ibid., p. 32. She says the same thing also on p. 156 and elsewhere.

idea of what she even hopes to gain by it. It is simply another example of her "pulling the strings of shower baths" in a pointless flight from boredom. Similarly, her public denunciations of Christopher become a kind of obsessive game to determine just how outrageously irresponsible she can be in the way of defamation and still be believed.

Despite her irresponsibility she claims all of the traditional privileges of her class and until Last Post refuses to recognize the social changes that have made her an anachronism. She travels to Rouen without proper papers because she chooses not to bother about them--and gets away with it. Deeply religious in a superstitious way, she finds retreat at her customary convent distasteful for any extended period because "the lay-sisters, and some of the nuns, were altogether too much of the lower classes for her to like to have always about her."[75] When Christopher informs her that as a soldier he must "go where he was ordered to go and do what he was told to do," she cannot believe that Tietjens of Groby could be anything but a free agent. "You! You!" she replies, "Isn't it ignoble. That you should be at the beck and call of these ignoramuses. You!"[76] And, the most disturbing thing to her about Father Consett's prophesying is his prediction that in the end she would be driven to "perpetrate acts of vulgarity."[77] For, despite her corruption Sylvia is thoroughbred and possessed of an almost absurd sense of personal dignity. Her refusal to let Christopher go, ostensibly based on her inability as a Catholic to divorce,

---

[75] Ibid., p. 424. [76] Ibid., p. 431. [77] Ibid., p. 805.

is in a general way symbolic of her determination to claim what is hers and of her unwillingness to admit social change.

She does not realize that as a figure widely known for her appearances in the illustrated weeklies rather than at charity bazaars she has already vulgarized her tradition. But in her court action against Christopher she does at last see herself as vulgar, and for the first time in her life she feels mortified. A more striking betrayal of her tradition, however, is her instigation of the felling of Groby Great Tree. On the literal level, she has done something that is not done. Moreover, in so far as Groby Great Tree is the symbol for traditional old England in destroying it she contributes to the demise of her way of life. In the last statement we get from her point of view she recognizes that her day is done and that Christopher and Valentine have found what has escaped her--peace:

> Her main bitterness was that they had this peace. She was cutting the painter, but they were going on in this peace; her world was waning. It was the fact that her friend Bobbie's husband, Sir Gabriel Blantyre--formerly Bosenheir--was cutting down expenses like a lunatic. In her world there was the writing on the wall. Here they could afford to call her a poor bitch--and be in the right of it, as like as not![78]

However monstrous critics have found her, Sylvia does have a number of saving graces. To begin with, she is probably the most intelligent character in the book besides Christopher, and it is she who most fully comprehends his merits. As we have seen, she finds it unthinkable that he should be "at the beck and call" of his military superiors; and she readily admits that while she finds

---

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 808-809.

life with him intolerable, he has spoilt her for any other man:

> . . . to have to pass a week-end with any other man and hear his talk after having spent the inside of the week with Christopher, hate his ideas how you might, was the difference between listening to a grown man and, with an intense boredom, trying to entertain an inarticulate schoolboy. As beside him, other men simply did not seem ever to have grown up. . . .[79]

At times she even feels protective toward him, as she does when she backs him in their interview with Port Scatho on Christopher's last day in London. On this occasion she allows herself to show a genuine affection for Christopher which convinces Mark that she is simply "soppy" over him. But what most recommends her is, curiously, her superstitious religiosity. Like Anne Jeal in The "Half Moon,"[80] she is a compound of the best and the worst of Roman Catholicism as Ford saw it. Inherent in her superstitious and deplorably selfish religious views is a strong element of genuine simple faith. In the end it is her religious fear that convinces her that "God had changed sides at the cutting down of Groby Great Tree"[81] and that she must free Christopher for Valentine and their unborn child by applying to Rome for a dissolution of her marriage to him. As Arthur Mizener has commented, "She is, by Ford's queer mercy, saved in the end by the remnants of her Catholicism (all real faith is for Ford simple, childlike, almost superstitious)."[82]

---

[79] Ibid., p. 389.

[80] Ford Madox Hueffer, The "Half Moon" (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909). See supra, pp. 139-40.

[81] Parade's End, p. 805.

[82] Arthur Mizener, "A Large Fiction," Kenyon Review, XIII (Winter, 1951), 145.

Sylvia's Catholicism and her view of God's changing sides with the felling of Groby Great Tree are closely related to a pattern of ideas that grows out of Ford's recurrent references to Speldon on sacrilege. The original Tietjens, we are told, came over with Dutch William and displaced the rightful Papist owners of Groby. As a result, according to Speldon, a curse has hung over the house of Tietjens from its beginnings as landed English gentry. With Michael Mark, a Papist, now installed at Groby and the tree and all it represented overthrown, the curse has been lifted. To Sylvia's superstitious mind, at least, such a view is extremely attractive: a Catholic deity having seen Groby returned to Catholic ownership is now willing to reward Christopher both for his personal virtues and for his part in putting Groby back into Catholic hands. As a symbol of the Anglican aristocracy, Groby Great Tree is also a symbol for the wrongs done Catholic nobility, especially in the time of Dutch William, in the usurpation of their property. Ford seems to be suggesting that a pall has always hung over the tradition which the Tietjenses represent because of its origin in injustice. In his attempt to return to the principles which have given to the tradition its core of meaning, Christopher reverts to a time which pre-dates the arrival of William and the original Tietjens on English soil and finds his model in George Herbert.

The return of Groby to Catholic ownership is an act of expiation for the sins of his class, but, as his selection of Herbert for his model clearly implies, Christopher is not suggesting a return to feudal Catholicism, as Ford had done in part in <u>The</u>

Fifth Queen trilogy,[83] for the Catholic tradition has failed in England as well as the Anglican. None of the Catholic figures represents either an ideal or a particularly Catholic hope for the future. Sylvia's degenerate superstition, while it may include a grain of saving faith, is without moral strength; Father Consett's genuine religion has been rejected by modern England as forcefully as Mark's brand of honor. And Michael Mark, the actual heir to Groby, declares against feudal Catholicism in announcing himself a Marxist as well as a Papist and in disapproving of an agricultural way of life in a mechanical age. The thematic purpose, then, of the ideas that develop out of the references to Speldon seems to be to underline the negative qualities of the tradition of the English ruling class and to allow Christopher to renounce the spoils of his fathers' sins. Except for the part it plays in Sylvia's decision to release Christopher, Catholicism does not operate as a positive force in the world of Parade's End, and it certainly does not emerge as a panacea for an ailing society. Had Ford chosen to do so it would have been a simple matter to establish young Michael Mark qua Catholic as a symbol of future hope. Instead, hope for the future resides with the unborn Chrissie, who, his parents dream, will embody the simple piety of a George Herbert and preserve the way of life of an England that loves the old shepherd-parson existence.

---

[83] Ford's tudor trilogy consisting of The Fifth Queen (London: Alston Rivers, 1906), Privy Seal (London: Alston Rivers, 1907), and The Fifth Queen Crowned (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909), all published under Ford Madox Hueffer. See supra, pp. 141-43.

In naming the novels of Parade's End Ford, for once, overcame his characteristic ineptitude in the selection of titles for his work. In settling upon Some Do Not..., No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up, and Last Post, he pinpointed the germinal ideas which give rise to both the action and the thematic development of each of these books. The title phrases recur either in the thoughts or the conversation of the central characters during moments in which their personal vicissitudes reflect the circumstances of modern society. Merely to list the titles in their proper order is practically to outline the intellectual movement of the entire cycle. The skill with which Ford weaves these phrases into the narrative stands in sharp contrast to his amateurish reports of the crumbling of logs and the sudden swell of eerie shadows every time a character experiences a reversal of fortune or a melodramatic premonition in The Shifting of the Fire[84] and illustrates as effectively as any single aspect of technique can just how far Ford had come as a novelist since his first attempt at fiction.

In Some Do Not... the title phrase occurs six times at crucial moments in the narrative. Macmaster uses the phrase at the end of the first chapter; the carter uses it, as we have noted, to define Christopher's selflessness in the collision scene; it appears again during Christopher's interview in Whitehall when he demands to be allowed to return to France; a tramp uses it with regard to Valentine immediately after she agrees to become Christopher's mistress;

---

[84] H. Ford Hueffer, The Shifting of the Fire (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892). See supra, p. 121.

and Christopher himself uses it, with slight variations, twice in the final renunciation scene, in which he and Valentine decide that they are not the sort to want a sordid, one-night fling before he goes back to the front.[85] Every repetition contributes to a cumulative effect so that with each new appearance the phrase makes a greater impact. And yet, its use never seems forced; it seems always to arise naturally in the thoughts or the conversation of the character who introduces it and never as the heavy-handed device of an intrusive author.

Although we have spoken of the cumulative effect of its repetition, it should not be supposed that the first appearance of the title phrase is liable to go unnoticed. Since the reader, presumably, is aware of the title of the novel, even its first appearance in the text constitutes a kind of repetition which calls attention to itself. In Some Do Not... Ford gives the first instance a slightly greater emphasis than it would normally have in its first appearance by making it part of a quotation which is centered on the page. It is particularly important that Ford call attention to the phrase because it stands as the concluding comment on Chapter One, which establishes the social theme of the book and of the entire tetralogy.

In Joseph Conrad Ford asserts that openings were for him matters of extreme importance: they must both establish the tempo of the whole and reflect its major ideas.[86] The difficulty, as

---

[85] Parade's End, pp. 22, 144, 225, 280, 281, 283 respectively.

[86] Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (London: Duckworth & Co., 1924), p. 173.

Ford saw it, was to make the opening sufficiently dramatic to grip the reader and sufficiently reflective to "get the characters in" and to accomplish the necessary exposition. In Some Do Not... we find Ford's most brilliant success in the handling of an opening: he not only "gets in" his characters and his exposition within the framework of a dramatic scene but also suggests the terms of the broad social theme which is to dominate the entire fiction.

> The two young men--they were of the English public official class--sat in the perfectly appointed railway carriage. The leather straps to the windows were of virgin newness; the mirrors beneath the new luggage racks immaculate as if they had reflected very little; the bulging upholstery in its luxuriant, regulated curves was scarlet and yellow in an intricate, minute dragon pattern, the design of a geometrician in Cologne. The compartment smelt faintly, hygienically of admirable varnish; the train ran as smoothly--Tietjens remembered thinking--as British gilt-edged securities. It travelled fast; yet had it swayed or jolted over the rail joints, except at the curve before Tonbridge or over the points at Ashford where these eccentricities are expected and allowed for, Macmaster, Tietjens felt certain, would have written to the company. Perhaps he would even have written to the Times.
>
> Their class administered the world, not merely the newly created Imperial Department of Statistics under Sir Reginald Ingleby. If they saw policemen misbehave, railway porters lack civility, an insufficiency of street lamps, defects in public services or in foreign countries, they saw to it, either with nonchalant Balliol voices, or with letters to the Times, asking in regretful indignation: "Has the British This or That come to this!" Or they wrote, in the serious reviews of which so many still survived, articles taking under their care, manners, the Arts, diplomacy, inter-Imperial trade, or the personal reputations of deceased statesmen and men of letters.[87]

By placing his characters in a railroad carriage Ford foregoes the expository advantages of introducing them in a more characteristic setting but manages nevertheless to establish their social class with admirable economy and to place them in a dramatic situation.

---

[87] Parade's End, p. 3.

They are doing something--making a trip--which engages our interest as the action of the moment and leads us naturally to wonder where they are going and why, so that we welcome rather than resent the expository information which is supplied. Moreover, to a sophisticated reader a journey almost inevitably carries metaphorical associations, so that we are dimly aware from the beginning that the train, in Robie Macauley's words, "is not running from London to Rye as they [Tietjens and Macmaster] think, but from the past into the future, and ahead of them on their one-way journey is a chaotic country of ripped battlefields and disordered towns."[88]

The details of the two paragraphs define the class to which Tietjens and Macmaster belong in terms of the attitudes and modes of behavior its members assume. But, once having placed Tietjens and Macmaster in the same class, Ford immediately proceeds to distinguish between them. Paragraph three begins with the words, "Macmaster, that is to say, would do all that: of himself Tietjens was not so certain";[89] and drops the first hint that we may expect the unconventional from Christopher while Macmaster can be depended upon to act according to form. Macmaster is scrupulously dressed according to the fashion for young public officials. "Tietjens, on the other hand, could not remember what coloured tie he had on."[90] As the scene develops, of course, we become aware that Macmaster, pursuing a "long and careful road to a career in a first-class Government office,"[91] is attempting to climb to the social heights that

---

[88] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[91] *Ibid.*

Christopher already inhabits by virtue of birth. As John W. Aldridge has observed, Macmaster dare not disregard the prescribed mold, while Christopher, "because of his secure position in his class, . . . can afford the luxury of personal untidiness just as he can afford the luxury of independence in thought and manner."[92]

What also becomes apparent is that Macmaster is obsessed with the surface conventions of the ruling classes while Christopher, who is largely oblivious to appearances, takes his stand on moral principles. Inevitably, in a hollow society it is Macmaster that rises and Tietjens that is branded pariah. The contrast between the two defines the major conflict explored in the novel, as what Macmaster represents overwhelms what Christopher stands for. The final irony comes when Macmaster is dubbed knight for performing a service so unthinkably dishonorable in Christopher's view that he jokingly shows Macmaster how it may be done. At the party celebrating his distinction Macmaster, having achieved his place in the sun, asserts his triumph by doing what he has never dared before--correcting a superior. "Established, you see!" as Christopher remarks.[93]

The great desideratum of Macmaster's life is to become an accepted member of the ruling class. What he wishes is the prestige and the social amenities that such membership promises, not to exist on a higher moral plane or to dedicate himself to fulfilling the responsibilities that privilege imposes. What he admires is

---

[92] John W. Aldridge, In Search of Heresy: American Literature in an Age of Conformity (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), p. 101.

[93] Parade's End, p. 283.

Christopher's social position not his moral nicety. He can accept with equanimity proofs of his own hypocrisy; what he cannot regard without envy is the deference Christopher receives as a matter of course. The concluding words of the first chapter show us a Macmaster not intent upon emulating Christopher's high morality but chafing at his own humble birth:

> Tietjens only caught the Rye train by running alongside it, pitching his enormous kit-bag through the carriage window and swinging on the foot-board. Macmaster reflected that if he had done that half the station would have been yelling, "Stand away there."
>
> As it was Tietjens, a stationmaster was galloping after him to open the carriage door and grinningly to part:
>
> "Well caught, sir!" for it was a cricketing county.
>
> "Truly," Macmaster quoted to himself.
>
> The gods to each ascribe a differing lot:
> Some enter at the portal. Some do not![94]

The opening chapter, then, establishes the central theme of the entire work and concludes with a reference to the title phrase cast in a context which defines that theme.

Similarly, the title of No More Parades strikes the keynote of the whole. The Great War, in Christopher's view signaled the demise of the ruling classes and the discrediting of their tradition. That they had become untrustworthy, hypocritical, and incompetent had been evident to Christopher in the events leading up to the war; their conduct of the war had exposed their inadequacies to the least perceptive of men. The old England with its social privileges and its pomp and ceremony had passed from existence--partly because of

---

[94] Ibid., p. 22. Cassell has identified the lines as an adaptation from Ford's own Mister Bosphorus and the Muses (London: Duckworth & Co., 1923), p. 57, where they originally read: "The Gods to each ascribe a differing lot!/ Some rest on snowy bosoms! Some do not!" See Cassell, p. 259n.

the rise of an industrial ethic which saw no value in traditions, but primarily because of the failure of the ruling class to justify its own existence. Very early in the novel Christopher makes the following declaration in conversation with McKechnie:

> "At the beginning of the war . . . I had to look in on the War Office, and in a room I found a fellow . . . What do you think he was doing . . . what the hell do you think he was doing? He was devising the ceremonial for the disbanding of a Kitchener battalion. You can't say we were not prepared in one matter at least. . . . Well, the end of the show was to be: the adjutant would stand the battalion at ease; the band would play Land of Hope and Glory, and then the adjutant would say: There will be no more parades. . . . Don't you see how symbolical it was--the band playing Land of Hope and Glory, and then the adjutant saying There will be no more parades? . . . For there won't. There won't, there damn well won't. . . . No more Hope, no more Glory, no more parades for you and me any more. Nor for the country . . . nor for the world, I dare say . . . None . . . Gone . . . Na poo, finny! No . . . more . . . parades!"[95]

The action of the entire novel demonstrates the truth of Christopher's judgment, as one by one the props that supported the old social system and gave meaning to the slogans of the Empire are displaced. We hear Sylvia complain that the war has ruined London's night life and praise "the more successful political professionals"--"ignoble beings that, before the war, you would not have thought of having in your house"--because they are the ones who have "kept social matters going at all."[96] We see Levin doing "the unthinkable thing"--prying into the marital affairs of Tietjens of Groby.[97] And, above all, we see the British army and its allies betrayed by Whitehall for political reasons. The ruling class ceases to pretend and the lower orders cease to expect them to act as if there is such a

---

[95] Parade's End, pp. 306-307. [96] Ibid., p. 431.

[97] Ibid., pp. 355-56.

thing as "playing it too low down." At one point Christopher reflects:

> "If they so betray us from Whitehall that fellow Levin has no right to pry into my matrimonial affairs. It is proper that one's individual feelings should be sacrificed to the necessities of a collective entity. But not if that entity is to be betrayed from above.[98]

Here he is no longer the hyper-perceptive critic of society; he is merely the spokesman for the men at the front, who see themselves as expendable pawns in a cynical game of political expediency.

When the title phrase appears, it always makes the same unambiguous statement: the conduct of the war is not merely a matter of well-intentioned mismanagement but an unmistakable symptom of the corruption of England's governing classes. The betrayal by Whitehall manifests itself in the smallest detail of the war. When a replacement unit returns to the depot, it appears to Tietjens to be part of a clear attempt to enforce political blackmail by starving the front lines of reinforcements, and he remarks to McKechnie, "There will be no more parades. . . . The British Army is dishonoured for ever."[99] Finally, in his long interview with Campion, Christopher makes it clear to the General that both his military and his marital difficulties are only to be understood in the much larger context of the failure of their class; he has dedicated himself to principles that no longer obtain and thus run afoul of the existing power structure.

In <u>Some Do Not...</u> the several appearances of the title phrase occur in the mouths of a variety of speakers to each of whom

---

[98] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 357.

[99] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 359.

it implies slightly different things. The phrase serves both to highlight important moments in the narrative and to define, often ironically, the attitudes of the speaker of the moment. In No More Parades, on the other hand, the title phrase is almost always uttered by Christopher, who functions in the novel primarily as social critic. In A Man Could Stand Up we find a combination of the two previous methods; that is, we associate the title phrase with Christopher's state of mind, but our understanding of its meaning is expanded and enriched as others employ it. The primary difference between the situation in A Man Could Stand Up and that in Some Do Not... is that in the later novel all who utter the title phrase agree on its signification. In Some Do Not... the title phrase is used to illustrate fundamental differences in attitude; in A Man Could Stand Up it establishes the essential harmony between Christopher and the Other Ranks.

The phrase first occurs to Christopher when, after pondering the passing of traditions and the betrayal by Whitehall, he decides that the seventeenth century had been the only wholly satisfactory age in England.

> The name Bemerton suddenly came on to his tongue. Yes, Bemerton, Bemerton, Bemerton was George Herbert's parsonage. Bemerton, outside Salisbury. . . . The cradle of the race as far as our race was worth thinking about. He imagined himself standing up on a little hill, a lean contemplative parson, looking at the land sloping down to Salisbury spire. A large, clumsily bound seventeenth-century testament, Greek, beneath his elbow. . . . Imagine standing up on a hill! It was the unthinkable thing there [in the trenches].[100]

The phrase next occurs in the mouth of a Lincolnshire sergeant-major.

---

[100] Ibid., p. 567.

When Tietjens asks him why he wants to stand up on a hill, all he can reply at first is "Ah, but you do, sir!" But he adds, "You want to stand up! Take a look around . . . Like as if you wanted to breathe deep after bein' in a stoopin' posture for a long time!"[101] The desire to stand up on a hill is suggested to both men by their immediate necessity to crouch in the trenches, but it is far more than an expression of discomfort. It is an assertion of individual dignity and a renunciation of those who had contrived to place them in the trenches; it is a sloughing of the old order and a striving upward for a purer atmosphere and a fresh perspective.

During his interchange with the acting sergeant-major Christopher is second in command of his battalion. It is a characteristic position for him, the eternal second in command. He had been born a younger son; he had purposely avoided becoming Senior Wrangler; he had accepted a junior position in the Imperial Department of Statistics. Despite his enormous talents he had always loathed competition and had consistently refused to assume the responsibility of directing the lives of others. It had been enough simply to be a gentleman, to be a Tietjens of Groby. Having rejected Groby and all it stands for, however, and having become aware of his affinity with his men, he learns from the sergeant-major that the Other Ranks have become disaffected with the dypsomaniacal C. O. and have put their trust in him. This is a responsibility he cannot refuse. And the great change in Christopher's character comes at the moment he reluctantly admits to himself that he is eminently

---

[101] Ibid., p. 570.

fitted to take responsibility.[102]

He immediately takes over command; he accepts a sense of competition with McKechnie; he quickly decides the destiny of Private Smith, nee Eisenstein; and he even looks forward to receiving a small windfall in command pay. When Campion attempts unjustly to relieve him of command, he refuses to step down gracefully and asserts his military rights. He has altered profoundly; he has become a man successfully engaged in the practical affairs of life. "He felt himself solid."[103] As always, the figure of Valentine and the desire to live quietly with her run through his mind while he is assuming command. But now he feels ready to claim her, ready to accept the responsibility for their existence and to jettison the scruples that prohibit their union. As Christopher himself reflects on Armistice Day:

> The war had made a man of him! It had coarsened him and hardened him. There was no other way to look at it. It had made him reach a point at which he would no longer stand unbearable things. At any rate from his equals! He counted Campion as his equal; few other people, of course. And what he wanted he was prepared to take. . . . What had he been before, God alone knew. A Younger Son? A Perpetual Second-in-Command? Who knew. But to-day the world changed. Feudalism was finished; its last vestiges were gone. It held no place for him. He was going--he was damn well going!--to make a place in it for . . . A man could stand up on a hill, so he and she could surely get into some hole together![104]

In Last Post we see the "hole" into which Christopher and Valentine have withdrawn, and we hear the bugle playing the Last Post in farewell tribute to the dying feudal aristocracy. Once again, the title phrase is central to the novel's thematic development. It appears in two different contexts, to emphasize the

---

[102] Ibid., p. 585. [103] Ibid., p. 593. [104] Ibid., p. 668.

book's dual theme: the passing of the old order and the rise of the new. The former is personified in the dying Mark and the latter in Christopher. Each represents an opposite extreme of reaction to their class's moral failure in the conduct of the war. Both recognize that what they have stood for is gone: Mark chooses to expire with it while Christopher strikes out in a new direction.

The title phrase first occurs in Mark's recollection of Armistice Day:

> On Armistice Day [he recalls] they had played the Last Post on the steps of the church under Marie Léonie's windows. . . . The Last Post! . . . The Last of England! He remembered thinking that.[105]

Soon afterwards he had learned the terms of the surrender and had withdrawn forever from the world's corruption. In his view the refusal of the Allies to pursue the Germans into Germany was the final insupportable betrayal not only of France but of England's own honor. It was not for him a question of vengeance:

> He had said that it was the worst dis-service you could do to your foes not to let them know that remorseless consequences follow determined actions. To interfere in order to show fellows that if they did what they wanted they need not of necessity take what they got for it was in effect to commit a sin against God. If the Germans did not experience that in the sight of the world there was an end of Europe and the world. What was to hinder endless recurrences of what had happened near a place called Gemmenich on the 4th of August, 1914, at six o'clock in the morning?[106]

To Valentine's objections that the world had changed, that punishment was "abhorrent to the modern mind," that there had been enough suffering already, Mark steadfastly maintains that not to occupy Berlin was "mental cowardice," an abandonment either of clearness of

---

[105] Ibid., p. 727. [106] Ibid., p. 774.

mind or of the principles for which England stood.[107] In either case he was done with the world; he refused further responsibility for running it.

Mark's reactions to the terms of surrender are not dissimilar to Christopher's reactions in No More Parades, but Mark does not experience a rebirth as Christopher does in A Man Could Stand Up. He will neither adapt to the new conditions of the world nor seek to return to first principles. And, so, it is he and not Christopher who finally lays claim to the title of The Last Tory. Although Mark appears only briefly in Some Do Not... and not at all in the middle novels, we are not entirely unprepared to see him emerge in Last Post as the embodiment of unyielding conservatism. As the indispensable head of a permanent department he is presumably efficient in practical matters, and yet he is strikingly naive and almost entirely oblivious of the general run of humanity. He is a genuinely honorable man, but most of his attitudes and most of his actions are dictated by an implicit trust in the cliches and conventions of his class. When Christopher tells him that a bank error has caused one of his checks to be dishonored, Mark is absolutely astounded. "It was to him almost unbelievable that a bank could make a mistake. One of the great banks. The props of England." He can only exclaim, "By God! . . . this is the last of England."[108] When Sylvia visits his rooms, she observes "his copy of The Times airing on a chair-back before the fire--for he was just the man to retain the eighteen-forty idea that you can catch cold by reading a damp news-

---

[107] Ibid., pp. 774-75. [108] Ibid., p. 218.

paper."[109]

On the night of the Armistice celebration Mark himself comments that the bugler ought to play the Last Post for him as well as the war dead since his England has died and he is prepared to go with it. Before he dies, however, he wishes to see Christopher established: partly because he has a great affection for him and recognizes his worth; partly because it is in the tradition to stand by one's heir; partly because he is very fond of Valentine; and partly because he is determined to thwart Sylvia, in whom he sees the corruption of his class epitomized. His one purpose in remaining alive is to "go on willing against"[110] Sylvia; this is his last post, and when Sylvia capitulates, Mark is free simply to drift into oblivion. With his last words he reassures Valentine that Christopher is a good man and that all will come right for them.

As the bugler's Last Post sounds a final tribute to Mark's dead world, it also announces the rise of Christopher and Valentine's new world. Symbolically the great promise of the future lies with their unborn son, who, it is hoped, will be another Herbert of Bemerton. But on the purely literal level, too, things are beginning to go their way. Christopher is engaged in a business for which he is eminently suited, and he is beginning to realize returns from it despite the dishonesty of his American partner. The resolve he had taken in A Man Could Stand Up to claim what is his and to provide for Valentine is manifest in his legal demand that Macmaster's long standing debt to him be settled out of his estate. Moreover, he

---

[109] Ibid., p. 421. [110] Ibid., p. 830.

has come in the way of a number of windfalls: "With a monetary record of visionariness and generosity such as Christopher had behind him, some chickens must now and then come home--some visionary investment turn out sound, some debtor turn honest."[111] More important, of course, than the upturn in Christopher's finances is that, finally, he is to be left in peace to till his garden, to preserve antique beauties, and to raise a son to perpetuate the values of George Herbert.

In Last Post, then, we find a resolution of the conflicts of the first three volumes of the tetralogy. But that is not to say that it does not stand as an admirable novel in itself. It is true, perhaps, that its generally symbolic method contrasts with the greater realism of the earlier novels; but it is not necessary to regard this as a failing.[112] It is more just to regard Last Post as a coda in which the symbolic motifs of the whole composition are briefly explored and receive their final statement.

The tetralogy as a whole is Ford's most powerful expression of his view of the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century. It incorporates all of the themes of his early fiction and manages unobjectionably to make a propagandistic statement that Ford thought vitally important to air. It is, moreover, a tour de force of technical brilliance by a craftsman in constant control of his material

---

[111] Ibid., p. 800.

[112] One of Meixner's major objections to including Last Post in the cycle is based on the book's symbolic nature, which he interprets as a falling off from the admirable realism of the earlier volumes. See Meixner, p. 219.

and his methods. The four novels taken together clearly represent the high water mark in Ford's fantastically productive career. As a writer of fiction he had never before been better, and he was never again to be as good. Even if we grant a slightly greater surface brilliance to The Good Soldier, it is finally to Parade's End that we must turn for the most comprehensive and the most moving fictive statement of Ford's experience of a world he saw crumble around him.

After his brilliant achievements in The Good Soldier and Parade's End, Ford's later novels seem almost painfully anti-climactic. The fiction which precedes his major work commands critical interest simply by virtue of its relative position in the total canon: we are anxious to observe the steps by which he came to his most significant accomplishments, to trace the gropings for themes and techniques through which to express his vision of the world. No such interest attaches to the work which follows the distinguishing productions of writers who, like Ford, reach a peak at the three-quarter mark in their careers. Unless the final efforts of such writers represent new directions, either as technical experiments or as expressions of a new perception of the world, they are of little critical concern beyond their power to suggest the waning of the artist's powers or, perhaps, the decline of his scrupulosity as a craftsman.

After Parade's End Ford published five new novels and an extensively revised edition of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes.[113] In so

---

[113] A Little Less Than Gods (New York: The Viking Press,

far as they are interesting at all, it is for their thematic concern with the conditions of the post-war world. To be sure, they are the work of a practiced craftsman, but they exhibit no new technical departures, and even in their employment of already established techniques they are extremely uneven in quality. Particular scenes are often brilliantly executed, and individual characters (especially among the minor figures) are often admirably drawn. But, in general, the plots are contrived and too heavily dependent on coincidence; the symbolism is obvious and often trite; and there is sometimes a lack of structural unity. Moreover, Ford has, in these books, even descended to barefaced preaching.

In these novels--and in The Marsden Case,[114] which actually preceded Parade's End--Ford's themes involve either bastardy, incest, mistaken identity, an imagined doppelgänger or some combination of these. The concern is always with a pursuit of selfhood in a universe without stable values, a search for identity in a world where traditional guidelines for behavior no longer point a satisfying

---

1928; When the Wicked Man (New York: Horace Liveright, 1931); The Rash Act (New York: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1933); Henry for Hugh (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1934); Ladies Whose Bright Eyes (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1935); and Vive Le Roy (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1936) all published under Ford Madox Ford. In his essay "The Pattern of Ford Madox Ford," The New Republic (April 4, 1955), p. 16, Frank MacShane speaks of another, unpublished post-war novel by Ford entitled That Same Poor Man. In Living Authors, ed. Dilly Tante (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1931), p. 129, there is a reference to two unnamed novels that Ford wrote "in anger" after the war but never published, one of which may be That Same Poor Man. Finally, according to Goldring, p. 271, "at the time of his death he was engaged on a novel, of which about a hundred pages were completed."

[114] Ford Madox Ford, The Marsden Case (London: Duckworth & Co., 1923).

way. Except in The Marsden Case, which deals with the beginning of the war and the years preceding it, and in A Little Less Than Gods, which deals with Napoleon's Hundred Days, the action takes place in a post-war world dominated by the evils of capitalism and growing industrialism. In When the Wicked Man we see a native-Englishman-turned-American deny the traditional values of his youth (personified in the doppelgänger that haunts him) and embrace the commercial amorality of American big business. The Rash Act, in Ford's own words, "is meant to do for the post-war world and the crisis what the Tietjens tetralogy did for the war . . . the chief characteristic of these years is want of courage--physical and moral."[115] In its sequel, Henry for Hugh, the themes of The Rash Act are pursued to an unfortunately illogical conclusion. In the revised version of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes Ford imposes a new ending on what was originally a reasonably good historical fiction in order to promulgate his vision of the small-producer handyman as saviour for a fallen race. In Vive Le Roy, which Kenneth Young describes as a "thriller"[116] and which a Graham Greene would no doubt have called an "entertainment," Ford once again enunciates the vision of the future that had come to obsess his non-fiction.

Although The Marsden Case was written after the war, like Parade's End, it deals with the moral chaos that preceded 1914 and the administrative bungling that characterized the early stages of mobilization. Ford had already explored most of its social themes

---

[115] Quoted in Kenneth Young, p. 36.

[116] Ibid., p. 41.

with greater success than he here achieved in The Good Soldier and he was to develop the others, again more successfully, in Some Do Not... and No More Parades, so that from the point of view of its development of broad social themes The Marsden Case is almost wholly unremarkable. When the narrator explains that "Of course Mr. Heimann had to hang himself; he had experienced the breakdown of a moral ideal";[117] our sense of that breakdown is far less forceful and immediate than the sense of crumbling tradition we get through the eyes of John Dowell or Christopher Tietjens.

Nevertheless, The Marsden Case bears at least a modicum of thematic interest in the way George Heimann's quest for identity prefigures the similar pursuits of Ford's post-Tietjens protagonists. The action of the novel revolves around George's efforts to establish his legitimacy and his right to claim English citizenship. Ford suggests throughout not only that society generally frowns upon poor bastards but also that a meaningful existence depends largely upon the sense of belonging to a tradition which provides an effective frame of reference for the determination of moral values and personal conduct. Ford was, however, far too subtle to allow the uncovering of the evidence that proves George to be the legitimate son of the Earl of Marsden mark an end to his troubles. For, the gentlemanly tradition which he may now legitimately claim as a part of his heritage has ceased to exist. He has become socially acceptable but is still without moral guides. The legitimate son of Lord Marsden, he remains the child of his disjointed century.

---

[117] The Marsden Case, p. 208.

In a letter to Edgar Jepson dated May 8, 1923 Ford wrote of *The Marsden Case*:

> I believe that as a "treatment," it is the best thing I've done--but the subject is not a very good one, though it's one that has haunted me ever since I was eighteen, on and off. It's the story of Ralston, the first translator of Turgenev--a man I liked very much. At any rate, that suggested it to me.[118]

But it is precisely in the "treatment" that Ford fails in *The Marsden Case*. The plot does not progress satisfactorily. George's attempt to discover his parentage is beset by a host of gratuitous obstacles, which finally grow insupportably tiresome as they inspire impatience rather than curiosity. When the plot does move forward, it usually does so by fits and starts which originate in unconvincing coincidences. The plot movement is further impeded by continual digressions, often amusing in themselves but hardly calculated to contribute to the *progression d'effet*.[119] It seems at times as if Ford could not decide whether to focus attention upon the affairs of George Heimann or upon the social criticisms of his first person narrator. Of course, since George's life involves a criticism of society the two emphases necessarily overlap, but too often the narrator's observations have no recognizable connection with the central issues. The final result is a plot without sustained interest floating about in a potpourri of diffuse critiques of modern society.

---

[118] Quoted in Goldring, p. 223.

[119] The most amusing of these digressions cluster around Miss Jeaffreson, who is engaged in a vast number of cultural projects, the most notable of which is the composition of her *Child's Guide to Nietzsche*.

One interesting feature of The Marsden Case is Ford's use of the narrator as a commentator on fictional technique. Jessop's reflections on his manner of telling his story are reminiscent of Dowell's apologetic interruptions of his narrative in order to explain its seeming incoherence. Very early in the novel Jessop makes the following statement:

> . . . I had a life of my own, and my thoughts were already well occupied. So that a good many of the adventures of my young friend Heimann passed as if behind a transparent veil, and, if I don't tell them straightforwardly, as stories are usually told, that is simply because I had so many things on my mind. I try, I mean, to be accurate after my own fashion, which is no doubt not the fashion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, my conscience leading me to reproduce the story only as it occurred to my attention and as it now comes back to me--accurately, with the help of such insight as I possess, but certainly without any invention. That limitation forces me to tell the story in spots--as the spots come back to my mind. I think, in that way, you will get the feeling of the world into which poor Heimann had got, and so you will better understand the pressure to which his poor brain was subjected.
>
> Other people might tell it straightforwardly and, as it were, to a timetable.[120]

And later he says:

> For of course when a man tells his story, and the story is very complicated, to be plain, he must emphasize points in advance, go back to others, advance, go back again, and so on.[121]

None of this is new, but it is interesting to observe that after a ten year gap in his production of fiction Ford should feel it necessary to affirm the theoretical stand he had taken in his pre-war novels. The fact that, unlike Dowell, Jessop is a professional novelist and the principal social critic in the book makes him even more obviously a mouthpiece for Ford's own views on story-telling.

---

[120] The Marsden Case, p. 18. [121] Ibid., p. 261.

After The Marsden Case came the great triumph of Parade's End, and then Ford returned to historical fiction in A Little Less Than Gods. Napoleon's Hundred Days and the execution, or as Ford would have it the escape, of Marshal Ney had long appealed to him as a subject for a historical novel. The idea, he reports, first came to him during a visit to Philadelphia, at which time he met a Southern lady whose mother had allegedly seen Ney in America after his purported death.[122] According to Ford, he and Conrad had planned to collaborate on a novel with Ney as its principal character but had somehow never gotten around to it.[123] After Conrad's death, Ford says, he considered himself "at liberty to take it on again"[124] alone, and upon completing Last Post, he did so.

In the dedicatory preface to A Little Less Than Gods he says that it had always been his intention to tell the history of Ney and of the Hundred Days through the eyes of a young Englishman who was a hero-worshipper with a particular admiration for Napoleon and those who surrounded him.[125] The conditions, it would seem, were perfect for the production of an admirable historical romance. Ford was at the height of his creative power; he had settled on an enormously attractive subject for melodramatic treatment; and he had selected the perfect point of view character, a young hero-worshipper, through whose eyes to render the heroic. And yet, A Little

---

[122] Dedicatory letter to A Little Less Than Gods, pp. v-vi.

[123] Ibid., p. vi. He also mentions the plan to collaborate in Return to Yesterday, p. 193, and in Joseph Conrad, p. 60.

[124] A Little Less Than Gods, p. vi.

[125] Ibid.

Less Than Gods is no more than a very professionally turned out, very mediocre novel.

It has large blocks of absolutely brilliant writing; indeed, from the standpoint of sheer narrative skill the last third of the book is nearly as good as anything Ford ever wrote. But there is a lack of structural unity in the whole and a lack of thematic focus. As it stands, the novel deals less with romantic events than it does with George Fielding's disillusionment as he gradually discovers that his heroes are a little less than gods. Initially he thinks of Napoleon on Elba as "a philosopher, retired from the shock of war and content to recline forever beneath the symbolical shade of the olive whilst watching over and guiding the pursuits of his adoring peasantry"--a demi-god above the petty concerns of ordinary men.[126] When it becomes clear that Napoleon is going to enter the field again, Fielding is even further impressed by the force of his hero's personality. As he looks at Napoleon he thinks: "Less than a godhead could hardly inhabit that frame that confronted him across the table--there were omnipotence, benevolence, humour, the lightning flash, all-knowledge, the power to exact awe, fear, affection, hatred and devotion to the death."[127] From the very beginning Fielding is warned by everyone else not to allow his romantic preconceptions to blind him to the foibles of men and the ruthlessness of power politics, but he is exceedingly slow to learn, so that it takes over three-hundred and fifty pages to make clear to him that there is a qualitative difference between Napoleon and Christ.

---

[126] Ibid., p. 11.

[127] Ibid., p. 127.

The structural shortcomings of A Little Less Than Gods seem to be the result of a failure by Ford to decide upon his fictional purpose. Had he remained true to a single purpose and to the point of view he promises in the preface, he no doubt could have produced a fine novel. On the one hand, it would have been possible to write a good adult swashbuckler based on the Hundred Days as seen through the eyes of George Fielding. On the other hand, Ford very likely could have used George's gradual disillusionment as the vehicle for a serious critical statement regarding human nature and a commentary on an important historical moment. The case is, however, that A Little Less Than Gods does neither: the skilfully drawn episodes of adventure and the atmospheres of intrigue become ends in themselves, and the serious purpose is translated into a series of interminable moral lectures by those who wish George Fielding well. The point of view shifts continually as one or the other of the characters reflects briefly and then mounts the speaker's platform; the result is a deplorable lack of focus and emphasis.

The book is only incidentally the story of Marshal Ney, who appears as the symbol for simple honesty buffeted by the winds of political machination. He is not even one of George's gods, merely "the bravest of the brave" who must succumb to the schemes of lesser men. The successful attempt by his friends to save Ney from undeserved death involves a level of action in which Ford's fancy may run unreined. Here the themes of incest and mistaken identity play important parts. The despised Baron de Fréjus does a far, far better thing than he has ever done by appearing in Ney's place before the firing squad, and in so doing not only saves the Marshal

but frees his young wife for Fielding, who has, of course, fallen in love with her. Any real conflict between her sense of loyalty to her husband, who has after all turned out to be an honorable man, and her love for Fielding is neatly sidestepped by the information that she and Fielding are brother and sister.

The plot to save Ney contributes to the development of the theme of George Fielding's disillusionment as it becomes clear that Ney's integrity stands in contrast to the ruthlessness of the demigods of history and also that true bravery and nobility of soul are expressed in the selfless acts of unsung heroes like the Baron de Fréjus. The incest motif is more difficult to place in the context of the whole. It is possible that Ford was trying to suggest that genuine nobility knows no national boundaries (she is French and he is English) and that the virtuous are all in some sense brothers and sisters, however inconvenient that may be in the consummation of physical passion. More likely, Ford intended Fielding's impetuous and impossible love for Hélène de Fréjus to express another instance of the way in which the circumstances of the world negate the romantic dreams of youth.

Unfortunately, these judgments rely more heavily on critical ingenuity than on the demonstrable implications of the action of the book. The novel itself makes no total impression beyond the rather obvious statement of its title. As a literary construct it is clearly uncoordinated, and yet, Ford is so skilful in the creation of atmospheres and in the construction of isolated episodes that between moral pronouncements it reads exceptionally well. It is probably arguable that the book's deficiencies are

due to the fact that Ford spent less than a total of three months in writing it,[128] but, on the other hand, he spent less than six on The Good Soldier. The most likely explanation is that he ground out a reasonably exciting book that he hoped would sell well in the United States, where Parade's End had gained the greatest audience he ever enjoyed. Whatever the case, if as a whole A Little Less Than Gods says little of Ford as an artist, its parts stand as testimony to his extraordinary ability as a writer.

In When the Wicked Man Ford returned to a contemporary subject, this time to explore the moral corruption of modern big business. The novel traces the internal conflict of Joseph Notterdam, an Englishman by birth who has become the director of a large American publishing house. Plagued by a burdensome conscience and an intellectual commitment to the traditional values he had been taught as a youth, he nevertheless sacrifices, one by one, every moral principle he reveres for the success of the firm. There is an obvious contrast drawn along international lines, with England representing traditional values and the United States cast in the image of ruthless commercialism. Throughout the novel Notterdam is pursued by a doppelgänger which appears as a youthful image of himself and harasses him every time he makes a moral compromise in the name of big business. The doppelgänger, of course, embodies the values of his youth, to which Notterdam is chronically false.

From time to time Notterdam resolves to reform, but he invariably succumbs to the pressures of the new world and to his

---

[128] See ibid., p. 361.

unrestrainable personal vices. Finally, in a nightmarish scene in which he is attempting to seduce the unwilling widow of a young man from his native village whom he had driven to suicide by sharp business practices, Notterdam shoots at his doppelgänger and symbolically admits that he is now in open conflict with traditional morality. As it turns out, his bullets strike a notorious American gangster who also had designs upon the widow Porter, so that Notterdam becomes a public hero. This climactic action takes place in England, to which Notterdam has returned in an attempt to regain his youthful sense of values only to lose them entirely. His hero's welcome back to America is ironically appropriate not only because he has shot and killed the gangster accidentally but also because now that he has lain his doppelgänger to rest and divested himself of any moral scruples whatsoever he may take his place as an American businessman.

Until the conclusion of the book Notterdam, because of his vestigal conservatism and sense of honor, stands in sharp contrast to his more dynamic partner Kratch, who is identified as the utterly ruthless poet of the American dream of economic power. By the end of the book, however, Notterdam accepts the evidences of his own total corruption, and then justifies his career by suggesting that one is inevitably swept along by the spirit of his time and the economic machinery that directs men's lives.

> He seriously considered repentance and reform.
> How do you reform yourself?
> Don't do what you did before.
> That however is impracticable. It is impossible. . . .
> The machine in fact continued and was too strong for you.
> You cannot get rid of bribery, poaching, pure blah--or even

> profiting from the results of murder. The House was going to profit very greatly by his having murdered Porter.
>
> What are you going to do then in middle middle-age? Begin a new career? Stop work? Suppress lewd works like the EMPRESS FAUSTINA? What then? Open a shooting gallery on the publicity of having shot McKeown? Like making a profit out of the publicity gained by the suicide of Porter?
>
> What then? the machine will continue with you or without you. You cannot stop humanity or the onrush of New York.[129]

Inherent in this and similar pronouncements by Notterdam is a dual comment by Ford. First, there is a great deal of truth in what Notterdam says: in a society that has accepted ruthless and amoral profiteering as the norm the honorable man is virtually powerless to oppose the forces of corruption. Second, and perhaps more terrifying, modern big business pressures eventually corrupt even those rare individuals who begin their careers with a strong moral sense, so that in the end, like Notterdam, they silently acquiesce in their own corruption.

When the Wicked Man does not suffer from the structural deficiencies that mar A Little Less Than Gods, but it has even more damaging inadequacies of its own. Its major shortcoming is that it lacks "solidity of specification"; Ford is simply not convincing in his depiction of either the American businessman or the American scene. Almost everything in the novel is projected in terms of the most obvious cliches. This is not a matter of style (in fact Ford's prose in When the Wicked Man is unusually good) but the result of a lack of first hand experience of the situations he attempts to render. The deficiency is particularly glaring in Ford's handling of Notterdam and Kratch's early years in America, during which they

---

[129] When the Wicked Man, p. 345.

roam about the country fighting, drinking, seducing local wenches, setting up incredibly successful enterprises, and then abandoning them for greener pastures and plumper wenches. The entire treatment reads like an unfortunate blend of Bret Harte and Horatio Alger as seen through the eyes of a particularly flamboyant and incompetent Hollywood producer. Nor is the case much altered when Kratch and Notterdam achieve maturity and control of large corporations. Then we see spineless boards of directors meeting around polished mahogany tables, senators being bribed, shady dealings in government securities, flights abroad to escape prosecution, the suppression of news damaging to the corporate image, and sycophants of good family lending the prestige of their names to unsavory schemes. In an earlier chapter we observed with reference to the Fifth Queen trilogy that in those novels because the details ring true we feel we can trust the author completely in his larger judgments.[130] In When the Wicked Man the details ring so false that we trust the author almost not at all.

After When the Wicked Man Ford wrote what are usually judged the best novels of his last phase--The Rash Act and its sequel Henry for Hugh.[131] In these novels he examines the despair of the Thirties that had resulted from the social upheaval of the Great War and the economic upheaval of the Wall Street crash. The protagonist in both books is an expatriate American, Henry Martin Aluin Smith, who has calmly decided to commit suicide because of his penniless

---

[130] See supra, p. 136.

[131] See, for instance, Young, p. 35 and Cassell, p. 283.

condition and his conviction of the futility of existence in a meaningless world. Like Notterdam in When the Wicked Man, he too has a doppelgänger, only in his case it is a living person whose private history, physical appearance, and name all bear a striking resemblance to his own. Hugh Monckton Allard Smith, the double, is also on the verge of suicide when the action begins, but his despair results from his being jilted by his current mistress and not, since he is the head of an incredibly successful British motor car company, from lack of funds. In the course of the action Hugh manages quietly to kill himself; Henry, however, bungles his suicide and instead of trying again assumes the identity of his dead counterpart. Except for a few intimates who know the truth everyone accepts the substitution of Henry for Hugh without question, until the end of the second novel when it is revealed that Henry is not only a member of the American branch of the august English Smiths but also the legitimate heir to Hugh Monckton's motor empire. In the epilogue to Henry for Hugh he resumes his original identity and citizenship, prepares to marry the woman who has nursed him back to health and who has conveniently had her marriage to a dope peddler annulled, and accepts the burdens of responsible capitalism.

In the case of both Smiths the decision to commit suicide is the expression of a desire for peace in a chaotic world. For his epigraph to The Rash Act Ford selected the following excerpt from the Times Law Reports for July 14, 1931:

> "The rash act," the coroner said, "seems to have been inspired by a number of motives, not the least amongst which was the prevailing dissoluteness and the consequent depression that are now world wide."

Here and throughout the novel the suggestion is made that the death wish is less a personal failure than a sensitive reaction to an unsatisfactory milieu. Hugh Monckton literally abandons the world by means of his suicide; Henry, on the other hand, only withdraws temporarily during his convalescence in an isolated villa in Provence. He ultimately gives up his resolution to live hidden and agrees to head the family firm when Eudoxie somewhat sophistically appeals to his sense of responsibility. As she puts the matter:

> "It is . . . that the note of one's life must continue to be renunciation [in a corrupt world]. . . . But the accepting of new burdens, though attended with the trappings of glory . . . *la paume de la gloire* . . . is in itself a higher renunciation than the hermit's retirement to a cell and a diet of herbs and water."[132]

Henry agrees, and becomes the new hope for the world--the industrialist who is also an honorable man, determined, presumably, to turn out the best possible motor cars at the lowest possible price, with paid vacations for the proletariat and handsome dividends for the small stockholder.

Paul Wiley, among others, has seen in *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* a Death-Rebirth cycle in which Henry Martin experiences a baptism in the storm and a rebirth in Provence as he withdraws from the capitalistic world.[133] The difficulty with this reading is that no meaningful change has taken place in Henry Martin. At the end he is no longer penniless, it is true, but both he and his world are just as spiritually bankrupt as they were at the beginning.

---

[132] *Henry for Hugh*, p. 322.

[133] Wiley, pp. 269-77.

As Henry assumes the role of Hugh Monckton, he becomes more and more like him intellectually and spiritually, so that even before the end of The Rash Act, "He was as good as Hugh Monckton himself."[134] But his becoming another Hugh Monckton counts for little when we recall that the original Hugh Monckton found the world intolerable. The suggestion that conditions have altered significantly because of Henry Martin's willingness to accept the responsibilities of the capitalist also lacks persuasive force because Hugh Monckton was himself the soul of responsibility. Indeed, he had hoped that Henry Martin would take his place because he wished to avert the financial panic that would necessarily ensue if his suicide became public. The only difference between Hugh Monckton Allard Smith and the new Henry Martin Aluin Smith is that the latter succeeds in holding the affections of his mistress. In short, the happy ending that Ford imposed on Henry for Hugh is totally inconsistent with everything that precedes it. Had Henry discovered that Hugh's wealth and position were inadequate anodynes for the pain of meaningless existence, had he made an attempt to pursue a radically new existence in the manner of a Christopher Tietjens, one could speak of a pattern of meaning in these novels. As they stand, they offer only two implicit comments on the human condition: since men do in fact die for love, wealthy industrialists had better avoid attachments to capricious Swedish actresses who prove faithful to their husbands; and, penniless American expatriates can find life beautiful, even during a world depression, when they are supplied with wealth, position, and women.

---

[134] The Rash Act, p. 228.

The failure of the positive conclusion results largely from an inadequacy in characterization and motivation. We do not believe in the ending because we have seen no change in Henry and we have been apprised of no convincing reason for him suddenly to accept a place in a faltering capitalistic society. A similar lack of motivation mars the entire narrative. Ford has failed to "justify" even the central actions of the fiction--Hugh's suicide and Henry's assumption of his identity. The only reason for Hugh to kill himself is that an international beauty has refused to share his yacht for an extended cruise. We are told in The Rash Act that Henry "was passionately intent on assuming that other identity,"[135] but it is never clear why he wants to do so. When Henry reflects on the matter in Henry for Hugh the best he can do is to suggest that "the motive for his change of identity with Hugh Monckton seemed almost to have been that of a lark."[136]

Another serious flaw in these novels is their too great dependence on coincidence. The plot requires a great number of similarities between the two main characters in order to make the change of identity possible, but Ford creates so many similarities that instead of lending credibility to the action they finally become incredible themselves. When Henry Martin learns that Hugh Monckton intends to kill himself, he reflects:

> You couldn't think of that fellow as contemplating suicide. He was perfectly cool, as ruddy as a peach and as good-humoured as a nice dog. Besides the coincidence would be too absurd--that about midnight between the fourteenth and fifteenth of August

---

[135] Ibid., p. 237.

[136] Henry for Hugh, p. 269.

> there should be in the same room two Smiths, each contemplating suicide and each considering how similar names would look on a tombstone.[137]

When we add that they are unusually similar in appearance, that both have fallen in love with and been jilted by married actresses of Nordic stock, that both served in the same regiment during the war, that both happened to wind up in the same dance hall the night before their anticipated deaths, that each regards the other as enviably situated in life--the coincidence is indeed too absurd.

In remarking the unsatisfactory motivation, the offensive coincidences, and the inconsistencies in plot and theme, we have been observing Ford's failures in technique. Curiously, there is an objectionable feature of these novels that arises out of his great technical facility in handling sequence novels. Unfortunately for The Rash Act, Henry for Hugh so successfully recapitulates its themes and action that it is rendered superfluous. In Parade's End each volume is necessary to the design of the whole, and every summary of earlier events enhances their scope and significance. In the "affair" of Henry Martin Aluin Smith nothing is gained by the existence of two volumes; had Henry for Hugh been written first it could have been the alpha and the omega with nothing lost.

Ford's last two published novels, the revised Ladies Whose Bright Eyes and Vive Le Roy, are interesting principally for the way their themes illustrate the turn his ideas had taken in the direction of the utopia of the small producer. Both are the work of a skilled craftsman, but neither represents a very serious effort

---

[137] The Rash Act, p. 98.

or a new departure in technique. Aside from a number of stylistic changes, all in the interest of economy, the only thing which distinguishes the revised edition of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes from the original is its ending. In the 1911 version Sorrel decides, after his sojourn in the middle ages that the people of one century are about as good as any other, but that the conditions of the twentieth century have obscured the glories of English tradition. He determines to give up his business interests, restore the ancestral home, and preserve the traditions of medievalism. In the 1935 edition he rejects both the "atrophied" civilization of modern England and its former golden ages. He declares the need for new beginnings and for men who can work with their hands. Unlike Twain's Connecticut Yankee, he has discovered that he has so much taken for granted the skill of others that there is very little he can do for himself, and that that is the condition of most modern men. He resolves finally to make use of his early training as a mining engineer by returning to a valley he knew in the Russian Caucasus--a place where they were "beginning all over again. Inspired of course with faith."[138]

Vive Le Roy exhibits the prodigious technical skill Ford commanded even in his most minor efforts. It is hardly a serious literary endeavor, but it is a remarkably successful tale of intrigue and suspense. Although it is hard to imagine that Ford devoted much thought or energy to it, it is probably the best constructed of his late novels. Particularly notable is the way Ford

---

[138] Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, p. 349.

generates suspense and mystification by rigorously limiting the point of view to characters who are unwilling but important participants in events which they do not understand. The action takes place in Paris in an imagined future in which a counter-revolution has displaced the ruling communists and restored a monarchy to France. The counter-revolution, however, is threatened by the death of the king, whose personal popularity is necessary for its success. Disaster is avoided when Walter Le Roy, an American medical student who looks enough like the king to be mistaken for him in public, is employed, first unwittingly but later willingly, to keep the king's death secret. Assassination attempts, undercover activities, plots and counterplots abound in what turns out to be an excitingly fast-paced novel. There are, of course, extremists, both right-wing and left-wing, who strive to topple the new regime, but it survives with the aid of Le Roy and a number of other supporters.

This is no ordinary monarchy, however. It is, as Penthièvre, the Great Chamberlain, describes it in a passage that might have been lifted from Provence[139] or Great Trade Route,[140] directed by men who dream of a France of small producers. This is not to suggest that they have ignored modernity.

> On the contrary, they looked to the Future that lay beyond these shoutings. The machine must be curbed--selectively: Above all selectively. It was not for nothing that their august Prince was one of the most fearless of aviators and the most skilled of cavaliers. Let that be the symbol. In

---

[139] Ford Madox Ford, Provence: From Minstrels to Machines (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938).

[140] Ford Madox Ford, Great Trade Route (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937).

> regenerated France you would travel and transport comestibles on avions . . . or on pack-horses. There would be nothing between. . . . And in the whole of broad France there would be no specimen of the dead and damned, soul-destroying thing known as a factory.[141]

Why the quality of Ford's fiction declined radically after Parade's End is difficult to determine with any real precision. As the brilliance of isolated passages in these books demonstrates, it was not due to any decline in his ability. The fact that these novels are deficient in conception rather than in the execution of details leads naturally to the surmise that Ford devoted very little serious thought to them and hoped somehow to muddle through on the strength of his surface virtuosity. The success of Parade's End had given him a ready market in the United States, and he seems to have taken the opportunity to turn an artistically dishonest dollar by grinding out a handful of quick novels with Americans as protagonists. The serious work of the last decade of his life was his non-fiction--his memoirs and reminiscences, his literary criticism and history, his philosophical and sociological discourses. The modern novel is doubtless a lesser genre than it might have been for his failure to take his fiction seriously when he was at the height of his power, but in novels like The Good Soldier and the Tietjens books and in a half-dozen others he enriched it to a degree achieved by few others.

---

[141] Vive Le Roy, pp. 72-73.

BIBLIOGRAPHY[1]

Primary Sources

Children's Books

Hueffer, Ford Madox. The Brown Owl: A Fairy Story. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.

_____. The Feather. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.

_____. The Queen Who Flew: A Fairy Tale. London: Bliss, Sands, and Foster, 1894.

_____. Christina's Fairy Book. London: Alston Rivers, 1906.

Verse

Fenil Haig [pseud.]. The Questions at the Well. London: Digby and Co., 1893.

Hueffer, Ford Madox. Poems for Pictures. London: John MacQueen, 1900.

_____. The Face of the Night. London: John MacQueen, 1904.

_____. From Inland and Other Poems. London: Alston Rivers, 1907.

_____. Songs from London. London: Elkin Mathews, 1910.

_____. High Germany. London: Duckworth & Co., 1911.

---

[1]The following bibliography though extensive is by no means complete. It includes only works cited in the text or found to be useful in some way. The bibliography of Ford's writings lists all of his major works but omits pamphlets and essays published in periodicals and not republished in book form. For the most exhaustive bibliography now available see David Dow Harvey, Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1939: A Bibliography of Works and Criticisms (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

_____. Collected Poems. London: Max Goschen, 1913.

_____. Antwerp. London: The Poetry Workshop, 1915.

_____. On Heaven and Other Poems. London: John Lane, 1918.

Ford, Ford Madox. Mister Bosphorus and the Muses. London: Duckworth & Co., 1923.

_____. New Poems. New York: W. E. Rudge, 1927.

_____. Collected Poems. Introduction by William Rose Benet. New York: Oxford University Press, 1936.

Novels

Hueffer, H. Ford. The Shifting of the Fire. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.

Hueffer, Ford Madox. The Benefactor: A Tale of a Small Circle. London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1905.

_____. The Fifth Queen: And How She Came to Court. London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1906.

_____. An English Girl: A Romance. London: Methuen & Co., 1907.

_____. Privy Seal: His Last Venture. London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1907.

_____. The Fifth Queen Crowned: A Romance. London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908.

_____. Mr. Apollo: A Just Possible Story. London: Methuen & Co., 1908.

_____. The "Half Moon": A Romance of the Old World and the New. London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909.

_____. A Call: The Tale of Two Passions. London: Chatto & Windus, 1910.

_____. The Portrait. London: Methuen & Co., 1910.

_____. Ladies Whose Bright Eyes: A Romance. London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1911; revised edition without sub-title, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1935, under Ford Madox Ford.

Daniel Chaucer [pseud.]. The Simple Life Limited. London: John Lane, 1911.

_____ [pseud.]. The New Humpty-Dumpty. London: John Lane, 1912.

Hueffer, Ford Madox. The Panel: A Sheer Comedy. London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1912. Published in the United States as Ring for Nancy: A Sheer Comedy. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1913.

_____. Mr. Fleight. London: Howard Latimer, Ltd., 1913.

_____. The Young Lovell: A Romance. London: Chatto & Windus, 1913.

_____. The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion. London: John Lane, 1915. My references are to Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion. Introduction by Mark Schorer. New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1957.

Ford, Ford Madox. The Marsden Case: A Romance. London: Duckworth & Co., 1923.

_____. Some Do Not.... London: Duckworth & Co., 1924.

_____. No More Parades. London: Duckworth & Co., 1925; New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925.

_____. A Man Could Stand Up. London: Duckworth & Co., 1926; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1948.

_____. A Little Less Than Gods: A Napoleonic Tale. New York: The Viking Press, 1928.

_____. Last Post. London: Duckworth & Co., 1928; The Last Post. New York: The Literary Guild of America, 1928.

_____. When the Wicked Man. New York: Horace Liveright, 1931.

_____. The Rash Act. New York: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1933.

_____. Henry for Hugh. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1934.

_____. Vive Le Roy. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1936.

_____. Parade's End. Introduction by Robie Macauley. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950. (The four Tietjen's novels in one volume: Some Do Not..., No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up, The Last Post.)

Collaborations

Hueffer, F. M. and Joseph Conrad. The Inheritors: An Extravagant

Story. London: William Heinemann, 1901. My references are to the London: Gresham Publishing Co., Ltd., 1925 edition.

_____ and Joseph Conrad. Romance. London: Smith, Elder, 1903.

Hueffer, Ford Madox and Violet Hunt. Zeppelin Nights: A London Entertainment. London: John Lane, 1916.

Ford, Ford Madox and Joseph Conrad. The Nature of a Crime. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1924.

Criticism, Memoirs, and Discursive Prose

Hueffer, Ford Madox. Ford Madox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896.

_____. The Cinque Ports: A Historical and Descriptive Record. London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1900.

_____. Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, n.d. [1902].

_____. Hans Holbein the Younger: A Critical Monograph. London: Duckworth & Co., n.d. [1905].

_____. The Soul of London: A Survey of a Modern City. London: Alston Rivers, 1905.

_____. The Heart of the Country: A Survey of a Modern Land. London: Alston Rivers, 1906.

_____. The Spirit of the People: An Analysis of the English Mind. London: Alston Rivers, 1907.

_____. England and the English. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1907. (Omnibus edition including The Soul of London, The Heart of the Country, and The Spirit of the People in one volume.)

_____. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Critical Monograph. London: Duckworth & Co., n.d. [1907].

_____. Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections: Being the Memories of a Young Man. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1911; published in the United States as Memories and Impressions: A Study in Atmospheres. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911.

_____. The Critical Attitude. London: Duckworth & Co., 1911.

_____. Henry James: A Critical Study. London: Martin Secker, 1913.

_____. Between St. Dennis and St. George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

_____. When Blood Is Their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

_____. Thus To Revisit: Some Reminiscences. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1921.

Ford, Ford Madox. Women and Men. Paris: Three Mountains Press, 1923.

_____. Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance. London: Duckworth & Co., 1924.

_____. A Mirror to France. London: Duckworth & Co., 1926.

_____. New York Essays. New York: W. E. Rudge, 1927.

_____. New York Is Not America. London: Duckworth & Co., 1927.

_____. The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Conrad. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1929.

_____. No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction. New York: The Macauley Company, 1929.

_____. Return to Yesterday. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1931.

_____. It Was the Nightingale. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1933.

_____. Portraits from Life: Memories and Criticisms. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937; published in England as Mightier Than the Sword. London: Allen & Unwin, 1938.

_____. Great Trade Route. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937.

_____. Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine. London: Allen & Unwin, 1938.

_____. The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our Own. New York: The Dial Press, 1938.

Prefaces to Works By Others

Stories from De Maupassant. Translated by E. M[artindale], with a preface by Ford Madox Hueffer. London: Jonathan Cape, 1927.

Conrad, Joseph. The Sisters. Introduction by Ford Madox Ford. New York: Crosby Gaige, 1928.

Acland, Peregrine. All Else Is Folly. Preface by Ford Madox Ford. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1929.

Hemingway, Ernest. A Farewell to Arms. Introduction by Ford Madox Ford. New York: The Modern Library, 1932.

Secondary Sources

Aldington, Richard. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 456-458.

Aldridge, John W. In Search of Heresy: American Literature in an Age of Conformity. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956.

Allen, Walter. The English Novel: A Short Critical History. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958.

Anderson, Sherwood. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 458-459.

_____. "Legacies of Ford Madox Ford," Coronet, XIII (August, 1940), 135-136.

Baker, Carlos. Hemingway: The Writer as Artist. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956.

Baker, Ernest A. A Guide to Historical Fiction. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1914.

_____. Guide to the Best Fiction in English. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.

_____. The History of the English Novel. 10 vols. London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1924-1939.

Bartlett, Paul Alexander. "Letters of Ford Madox Ford," Saturday Review of Literature (August 2, 1941), pp. 3-4, 14.

Beach, Joseph Warren. The Twentieth Century Novel. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1932.

Bender, Todd K. "The Sad Tale of Dowell: Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier," Criticism, IV (Fall, 1962), 353-368.

Benet, William Rose. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium,"

New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 459-460.

Bishop, John Peale. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 460-462.

Booth, Wayne C. The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Bowen, Stella. Drawn from Life. London: Collins Publishers, n.d. [1940].

Brewer, Joseph. "Ford Madox Ford: A Memoir," Saturday Review of Literature (July 8, 1939), p. 8.

_____. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 462-466.

Cassell, Richard A. Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961.

Chew, Samuel C. "The Nineteenth Century and After (1789-1939)," A Literary History of England. Edited by Albert C. Baugh. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948.

Church, Richard. The Growth of the English Novel. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1951.

Coffman, Stanley K., Jr. Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951.

Conrad, Jessie. Joseph Conrad as I Knew Him. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926.

Conrad, Joseph. Letters from Joseph Conrad, 1895-1924. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Edward Garnett. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928.

Cox, James T. "Ford's Passion for Provence," English Literary History, XXVIII (December, 1961), 383-399.

Cummings, E. E. Poems, 1923-1954. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954.

Dahlberg, Edward. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 466-469.

Dictionary of National Biography. Edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921.

Dictionary of National Biography: Supplement 1931-1940. Edited by L. G. Wickham Legg. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Dillon, George. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 469-470.

Dransfield, Jane. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 470-471.

Dreiser, Theodore. "The Saddest Story," The New Republic (June 12, 1915), pp. 155-156.

Engle, Paul. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 471-472.

Espey, John J. "The Epigraph to T. S. Eliot's 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar,'" American Literature, XXIX (January, 1958), 483-484.

Firebaugh, Joseph J. "Tietjens and the Tradition," Pacific Spectator, VI (Winter, 1952), 23-32.

Fletcher, John Gould. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 472-474.

Forster, E. M. Aspects of the Novel. London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1927.

Frierson, William C. The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942.

Galsworthy, John. Letters from John Galsworthy, 1900-1932. Edited with an Introduction by Edward Garnett. London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934.

Gerber, Helmut E., (ed.). "Ford Madox Ford: An Annotated Checklist of Writings About Him," English Fiction in Transition, 1880-1920, I (Spring-Summer, 1958), 2-19.

Gill, Brendan. "One Yes, Two Maybes," The New Yorker (October 13, 1951), pp. 141-142.

Goldring, Douglas. The Last Pre-Raphaelite. London: Macdonald & Co., 1948; published in the United States as Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford. New York: E. P. Dutton Co., 1949.

_____. Reputations. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1920.

_____. South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle. London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1943.

Gordon, Ambrose, Jr. "A Diamond of Pattern: The War of F. Madox Ford," Sewanee Review, LXX (Summer, 1962), 464-483.

Gordon, Caroline. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 474-475.

_____. "The Story of Ford Madox Ford," Highlights of Modern Literature. Edited by Francis Brown. "Mentor Books"; New York: The New American Library, 1954, pp. 113-118.

Gorman, Herbert. "Ford Madox Ford, A Portrait in Impressions," Bookman (New York), LXVII (March, 1928), 56-60.

Gose, Elliott B., Jr. "Reality to Romance: A Study of Ford's Parade's End," College English, XVII (May, 1956), 445-450.

_____. "The Strange Irregular Rhythm: An Analysis of The Good Soldier," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXII (June, 1957), 494-509.

Gray, James. "Parade's End," Saturday Review of Literature (October 21, 1950), p. 16.

Greene, Graham. "The Dark Backward: A Footnote," London Mercury, XXXII (October, 1935), 562-565.

_____. The Lost Childhood and Other Essays. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951.

Haffley, James. "The Moral Structure of The Good Soldier," Modern Fiction Studies, V (Summer, 1959), 121-128.

Hamnett, Nina. Laughing Torso. New York: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932.

Harris, Markham. "A Memory of Ford Madox Ford," Prairie Schooner, XXIX (Winter, 1955), 252-263.

Harvey, David Dow. Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1939: A Bibliography of Works and Criticism. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Hicks, Granville. "Ford Madox Ford--A Neglected Contemporary," Bookman (New York), LXXII (December, 1930), 364-370.

_____. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 443-456.

Hoffman, Frederick J. The Modern Novel in America, 1900-1950. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1951.

_____. The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade. New York: The Viking Press, 1955.

"Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 441-491.

Hunt, Violet. I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926.

Hynes, Samuel. "The Epistemology of The Good Soldier," Sewanee Review, LXIX (Spring, 1961), 225-235.

Jones, Edith R. "Stephen Crane at Brede," Atlantic Monthly, CXCIV (July, 1954), 57-61.

Joyce, James. Letters of James Joyce. Edited by Stuart Gilbert. New York: The Viking Press, 1957.

Kenner, Hugh. "He Wrote of Giants," Kenyon Review, XI (Autumn, 1949), 696-699.

Kettle, Arnold. An Introduction to the English Novel. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.

Kunitz, Stanley J., (ed.). Authors Today and Yesterday. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1933.

Laughlin, James. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, p. 476.

Lid, R. W. "Ford Madox Ford and His Community of Letters," Prairie Schooner, XXXV (Summer, 1961), 132-136.

_____. "On the Time-Scheme of The Good Soldier," English Fiction in Transition, 1880-1920, IV, 2 (1961), 9-10.

_____. "Tietjens in Disguise," Kenyon Review, XXII (Spring, 1960), 265-276.

Lowell, Robert. "Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1938 [sic]," Kenyon Review, VI (Spring, 1955), 22-23.

Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Ludwig, Richard M. "The Reputation of Ford Madox Ford," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXVI (December, 1961), 544-551.

Macauley, Robie. "The Good Ford," Kenyon Review, XI (Spring, 1949), 269-288.

MacShane, Frank. "The English Review," South Atlantic Quarterly, LX (Summer, 1961), 311-320.

_____. "Ford Madox Ford: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him: Supplement, with Additions and Emendations by Helmut E. and Helga S. Gerber," English Fiction in Transition, 1880-1920, IV, 2 (1961), 19-29.

_____. "Ford Madox Ford: Collections of His Manuscripts, Periodical Publications by Him, Prefaces and Miscellaneous Contributions to Books by Others," English Fiction in Transition, 1880-1920, IV, 2 (1961), 11-18.

_____. "Ford Madox Ford and His Contemporaries: Techniques of the Novel," English Fiction in Transition, 1880-1920, IV, 2 (1961), 2-11.

_____. "The Pattern of Ford Madox Ford," The New Republic (April 4, 1955), pp. 16-17.

_____. "To Establish the Facts," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXI (Spring, 1962), 260-265.

May, Henry F. The End of American Innocence. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1959.

McCormick, John. Catastrophe and Imagination: An Interpretation of the Recent English and American Novel. London: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1957.

Meixner, John A. Ford Madox Ford's Novels. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962.

_____. "The Saddest Story," Kenyon Review, XXII (Spring, 1960), 234-264.

Mencken, H. L. "The Conrad Wake," The American Mercury, IV (April, 1925), 505-507.

Mizener, Arthur. "A Large Fiction," Kenyon Review, XIII (Winter, 1951), 142-147.

Modern Fiction Studies: Special Ford Madox Ford Issue, Volume IX, Number 1 (Spring, 1963).

Morey, John Hope. "Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford: A Study in Collaboration" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Department of English, Cornell University, 1960), Dissertation Abstracts, XXI (1960), 1568.

Morley, Christopher. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 476-477.

_____. "A Note on Conrad," Saturday Review of Literature (January 14, 1928), p. 519.

Morris, Lloyd. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, p. 477.

_____. "Mr. Ford's Saga," Saturday Review of Literature (December 4, 1926), p. 365.

Porter, Katherine Anne. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 478-479.

Pound, Ezra. "Mr. Hueffer and the Prose Tradition in Verse," Poetry, IV (June, 1914), 111-120.

_____. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 479-483.

Pritchett, V. S. The Living Novel. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947.

_____. "With a Double Turn of the Screw," New York Times Book Review (September 16, 1951), p. 5.

Putnam, Samuel. Paris Was Our Mistress: Memories of a Lost and Found Generation. New York: The Viking Press, 1947.

Roberts, R. Ellis. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 483-486.

Schorer, Mark. "Foreword," Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction. Edited by Johr W. Aldridge. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952.

_____. "An Interpretation," introduction to The Good Soldier, New York: Vintage Books, 1957, pp. v-xv.

Scott, Evelyn. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, p. 486.

Stein, Gertrude. The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1933.

Stevens, George. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, p. 487.

Stevenson, Lionel. The English Novel: A Panorama. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.

Tante, Dilly, (ed.). Living Authors. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1931.

Tate, Allen. "FMF," The New York Review of Books, I (Spring-Summer, 1963), 5.

_____. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 487-488.

_____. "Techniques of Fiction," Forms of Modern Fiction. Edited by William Van O'Connor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948, pp. 40-45.

Tindall, William York. Forces in Modern British Literature, 1885-1956. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.

"Uncle Toby on Kanchenjunga," Time (September 25, 1950), p. 102.

Untermeyer, Jean Starr. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 489-490.

Van Doren, Carl. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, p. 470.

Van O'Connor, William, (ed.). Forms of Modern Fiction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948.

Wagenknecht, Edward. Cavalcade of the English Novel. 1954 Edition. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1954.

Walter, E. V. "The Political Sense of Ford Madox Ford," The New Republic (March 26, 1956), pp. 17-19.

Ward, Maisie. Gilbert Keith Chesterton. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1943.

Wells, H. G. Experiment in Autobiography. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.

Welty, Eudora. A Curtain of Green. Introduction by Katherine Anne Porter. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1941.

Wiley, Paul L. Novelist of Three Worlds: Ford Madox Ford. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962.

Williams, William Carlos. The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams. New York: Random House, 1951.

_____. The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950.

_____. "Homage to Ford Madox Ford--A Symposium," New Directions, Number 7. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1942, pp. 490-491.

_____. Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams. New York: Random House, 1954.

_____. Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams. Edited with an Introduction by John C. Thirwall. New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957.

Wimsatt, William K., Jr. and Cleanth Brooks. Literary Criticism: A Short History. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1957.

Wolfe, Thomas. The Letters of Thomas Wolfe. Collected and Edited, with an Introduction and Explanatory Text by Elizabeth Nowell. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956.

Young, Kenneth. Ford Madox Ford. "Writers and Their Work, No. 74"; London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1956.

Zabel, Morton Dauwen. Craft and Character: Method and Vocation in Modern Fiction. New York: The Viking Press, 1957.

54

01