FORD MADOX FORD:
THE DEVELOPMENT AND CRAFT OF A NOVELIST

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Frank Walden Thompson

1958

FORD MADOX FORD:
THE DEVELOPMENT AND CRAFT OF A NOVELIST

By

Frank Walden Thompson

A THESIS

Submitted to the College of Science and Arts
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
Applied Science in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

1958

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In Forces in Modern British Literature, William York Tindall states: "Of lesser writers, Ford Madox Ford was closest to midstream."[1]

One is fortunate to find any mention of Ford in Tindall's work at all, because, judging from the large balance of contemporary criticism, Ford is a forgotten writer. If he were, as Tindall states, a minor writer close to the "midstream," there would be indeed little necessity for more than Tindall has given him. However, Ford's name persists in creeping into the footnotes and occasionally into the text itself of our best critics. Edmund Wilson, Mark Schorer, T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Ezra Pound, and others have mentioned Ford with approval and, in some cases, with fondness. Graham Greene said: "But I don't suppose failure disturbed him much: he had never really believed in human happiness, his middle life had been made miserable by passion, and he had come through--with his humour in tact, his stock of unreliable anecdotes, the kind of enemies a man ought to have, a half-belief in a posterity which would care for good

[1]William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature: 1885-1956 (New York:Vintage Books, 1956) p. 205.

writing."[2] Any man who could elicit this statement from Greene deserves a closer look. The purpose of this paper is to provide that look.

The artist, his work, and his technique are necessarily interwoven, and any attempt to separate them is, of course, artificial. Nevertheless, I have done so, hoping thereby to make the whole clearer by an examination of its parts.

The first chapter of this paper examines Ford's conception of the responsibilities of the artist. The moral and aesthetic responsibilities which every serious writer must possess are described in terms of Ford's own writings. The influences which helped to shape Ford's attitudes are also described and examined.

The second chapter analyzes the work itself. Ford's technique, his architectronics are studied. If Ford is to gain any future reputation, he will have to be judged on the basis of his craftsmanship. For this reason Chapter II discusses Ford's techniques at some length.

Chapter III discusses Ford's collaboration with Joseph Conrad and attempts to show the influence this period had on the future careers of both writers. The

[2]Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays (New York:Viking, 1952) p. 91.

three novels written in collaboration are analyzed and their relationship to Ford's later work noted.

As a summation, Chapter IV attempts to locate Ford's place as an artist in terms of his own standards and ideas discussed in the earlier chapters. The summation, while not intending to describe the critical neglect of Ford's writings as fair or unfair, is intended as one answer to the question of why he has been neglected.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Because Ford Madox Ford is little more than a name to most readers, it might be useful to present a brief biographical sketch before turning to his work as a novelist. Although an artist's work and his life are inextricably intertwined, not all of the events of his life are germane to his work. The following sketch presents only those incidents of Ford's life which have some bearing on his work. In most cases the reader will find references to these incidents in the main text.

Ford Hermann Hueffer was born into a pre-Raphaelite family on December 17, 1873. His father, an immigrant from Germany, was a distinguished music critic for the London Times. His mother was a daughter of Ford Madox Brown, a distinguished member of the pre-Raphaelite circle of painters. Another daughter of Brown's was married to William Michael Rossetti. Thus Ford was distantly related to the famous Rossetti family.

Although pre-Raphaelism was nearly dead, the Aesthetic Movement was in full flower, and its hothouse conception of art for art's sake was impressed on Ford at an early age. The pre-Raphaelites were very clannish, and as they were constantly at each other's homes, Ford listened to many conversations about art and artists during his formative years.

Ford was educated at private schools and became very proficient in Latin and French. He published his first book, a fairy story, at eighteen. Earlier the same year, he became a Catholic, a faith that was followed by most of his family except his parents and his maternal grandparents. At his baptism he added the names, Joseph, Leopold and Madox.

Two years later Ford eloped with Elsie Martindale, who was then seventeen, and went to live near Romney Marsh in Kent. This marked the first of Ford's several "escapes" to the country. Although Ford did little outside of growing vegetables and writing occasionally, the young couple was not in need of money. The death of a distant relative in Germany had given them a small but comfortable legacy.

Shortly after Ford's first child, Christina, was born, Joseph Conrad asked Ford to collaborate with him. Several of Conrad's acquaintances had recommended Ford as an ideal collaborator for Conrad. Conrad hoped that through such a collaboration he would be able to develop a better style. Edward Garnett, a mutual friend of the two writers, was probably the first to suggest the possibilities of collaboration.

The collaboration began in the autumn of 1898 and lasted roughly ten years. Three books resulted from this

collaboration, Romance, The Inheritors, and The Nature of a Crime. Ford's claim that he aided Conrad in other books, chiefly The Rescue and The End of the Tether, is probably true. It is also probably true that Conrad assisted in the writing of several books published under Ford's name.

Ford and Conrad developed a close friendship during the years of collaboration which was strengthened by their mutual concern for good writing. However, Conrad was a very demanding person and was extremely difficult to work with. Writing did not come easily to one who had been born a Pole and had known French before he had known English. The tortures of composition often drove him into unspeakable agonies. Ford, who was sensitive and extremely impressionable, became more and more nervous as the years of collaboration passed. Furthermore, Conrad, who was constantly in debt, borrowed often from his collaborator. The result was that both writers eventually found themselves in debt and faced with the necessity of constant writing in order to feed their families. In 1904 Ford suffered a complete nervous breakdown and left England for the continent. Although he returned after a few months, the two major novels resulting from the collaboration were finished and the period of collaboration itself was almost at an end.

In 1908 Ford helped to establish the English Review which was certainly one of England's greatest literary journals. Under Ford's editorship, it gained a reputation which lasts even today.

It was during this time that Ford not only broke off the collaboration with Conrad, but also severed relationships with his wife. Just what brought about this separation is not fully known. However, it is probably quite true that Ford was not a well man. One of the backers of the English Review was Violet Hunt, and, although she was several years older than Ford, they found each other mutually attractive. Like Ford, Violet Hunt had come from a pre-Raphaelite background, and she was the center of a glittering group of literary dilettantes which Ford was attracted to. In 1909 Ford went to live with Miss Hunt.

The complications which arose from this situation were numerous. Unwittingly, and rather blunderingly, Ford had attracted a great deal of publicity concerning his private life. Because his wife had refused to give him a divorce, Ford conceived the grand idea of returning to Germany and taking up citizenship there. By renouncing his English citizenship and marrying Violet Hunt in Germany, Ford was convinced that his difficulties would correct themselves. Complications arose when Germany

failed to grant him citizenship. Unfortunately, during an interview with a newspaperman, Ford referred to Violet Hunt as Mrs. Hueffer. The following day, a picture of Ford and Violet Hunt appeared in a London paper with the caption, "Mr. and Mrs. Hueffer in Germany." The real Mrs. Hueffer sued the paper, and the paper allowed the suit to be brought to trial. The ensuing scandal cost Ford most of his former friends, including Henry James and Joseph Conrad.

During the following years spent at South Lodge, Violet Hunt's home, Ford gained many new friends, among them Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Richard Aldington. By 1913 the affair was nearly at an end. Partly out of love for Ford and partly because of the disparity in their ages, Violet Hunt was extremely jealous, and the romance, which had begun so passionately, rapidly cooled. Whether to escape this affair or whether out of feelings of patriotism, Ford enlisted in the army when the war broke out in 1914. This act did much to heal the rift between Conrad and himself, and Ford made Conrad his literary executor.

Ford served throughout the war honorably and well. Little is known about his war service, except that he was gassed while fighting in France and later received a severe case of shellshock. He emerged from the war no longer a young man and with a very sincere desire to

avoid people and literary society. On his return, however, he met and fell in love with a young Australian girl named Stella Bowen. The two of them established housekeeping on a small farm in Surrey. It was here that Ford changed his name from Hueffer to Ford. The lack of money and the necessity for writing drove them finally to Provence where living was much cheaper. Here Ford began the first novel of his monumental Tietjens saga, Some Do Not.

In 1923 Ford went to Paris. There he found that some influential Parisiens were anxious to start a literary periodical. Although Ford turned down the Parisiens' money, because there were strings attached to it, the idea of a new literary journal appealed to him. He therefore started the famous transatlantic review. The English Review had published Ford's friends in 1908, Conrad, James, Hardy, Galsworthy, etc. Fifteen years later, Ford was again editing a literary journal and publishing the work of his friends, this time Pound, Hemmingway, Stein, etc. Thus, in the space of 15 years, Ford had spanned a tremendous distance in English letters. The transatlantic review lasted only a year, and the end of 1924 found Ford back in Provence.

During the last half of the twenties, Ford lived in Provence and in Paris, but he also took several trips to New York. In 1928 he fell in love with a woman in New York, and his relationship with Stella Bowen was broken off.

During the thirties, Ford was extremely popular in the United States, and his books sold well enough to allow him to travel a great deal. In 1938 he took an appointment at Olivet College as distinguished visiting professor. He left there in 1939 to return to Provence where he died on June 26th.

Ford's life was not a very happy one, and the unhappiness is reflected in the profound pessimism of his work. An examination of his work will show that perhaps, if he had lived a happier life, he would have been a much greater artist.

Note

The best biographical sources for Ford's life are his numerous autobiographies, especially Memories and Impressions, Thus to Revisit, and It Was the Nightengale. Douglas Goldring's Trained for Genius and South Lodge are also valuable. For the Violet Hunt episode, see Violet Hunt's I Have This To Say. Ford's own commentary of his collaboration with Joseph Conrad can be found in Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance.

CHAPTER I

The Responsibilities of the Artist

A novelist's attitude toward his art is perhaps his most important feature, because his attitude will determine the seriousness and the value of his efforts. His attitude is far more important than the way he has handled the tools of his trade. Many have mastered a competent prose style but have been incapable of giving it content. An understanding of a novelist's attitude toward his work will of necessity include an understanding of his reason for writing. An old theory states that a writer writes because he has to write. If this be true, what is the necessity that forces him to write? The answer lies in what he feels to be the responsibilities of the novelist. The novelist's primary concern is plot, because to most readers of novels the end of the story is all important. The reader reads to discover the end of the affair. Thus, Ford Madox Ford, like other writers in the realistic tradition, concentrated all his faculties on bringing the reader to the culmination of his story.

To Ford writing was a highly skilled trade, but he believed that the novelist's skill should never be seen by the reader. The presence of the writer in a story lessens the impact of that story on the reader. Any reflection of the artist in his work should be the

unconscious reflection of his talent. Ford said of the pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic Movement,

> Its defect as a movement was that its supporters, . . . aimed rather at displaying personal cleverness than at the concealment of themselves beneath the surface of their works. They had not yet learnt the sternest of all lessons--that the story is the thing, and the story and then the story, and that there is nothing else that matters in the world.[1]

Ford felt that the purpose of the novel was to entertain as well as instruct. To be entertained the reader must forget that he is reading a story and begin to live the story. This feeling accounts for Ford's insistence that the writer keep himself out of his story. ". . . an authentic rendering--a rendering made with extreme artistic skill--will give you more the sense of having been present at an event than if you had been corporeally present, . . . To produce that or similar effects is the ambition of the novel of today.[2] The motivation behind this theory was realism.

Ford saw the history of the novel as a long progression toward realism, and he judged all novelists in the light of whether they wrote realistically or not. If a writer is to write realistically, he must not allow his cleverness

[1]Ford Madox Ford, The English Novel (Philadelphia:Lippencott, 1929) p. 141.

[2]Ibid., pp. 62-63.

to spill out and be seen. Self-effacement must always be his watchword.

> And what more than anything is impressive about his figure (Richardson) is that one knows almost nothing about it: he is as little overdrawn as are his characters whereas the besetting sin of almost all other English novelists from Fielding to George Meredith is that they seem to cut their characters out with hatchets and to colour them with the brushes of house-painters and, never, even at that, being able to let them alone, they are perpetually pushing their own faces and winking at you over the shoulders of Young Blifil, Uncle Toby, the Widow Wadman, Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness, Becky Sharp, Evan Harrington, and the rest. That is usually applauded by orthodox Anglo-Saxon criticism and to talk of the gallery of portraits left by this or that novelist is considered to be high praise indeed. But, as a matter of fact, the overdrawing of characters is merely a symptom of the laziness and contempt for their vehicle that is the too usual hall-mark of the English writer of nuvvles.[3]

Does this mean, then, that the artist's personality must never enter into his work? The answer, of course, is no. The absence of self in a tale would turn it into a mere report, reducing it to the level of journalism.

> It is obvious that the author, being the creator of his characters, may, if he will, create himself. As long as he creates his own character so as to be interesting and to fit into the scheme of the work, he may let this portion of himself preach whatever doctrines he desires.[4]

[3] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[4] Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), The Critical Attitude (London: Duckworth, 1911) p. 34.

Thus not only are the characters the artist draws filtered through his personality and imagination, but, according to Ford, the artist may create a character embodying himself as long as this creation does not disrupt the pattern of the whole and is essential to the story.

Ford's standards of what an artist should be and what he should not be place a heavy responsibility on the artist. Ford bitterly attacked the English novelists' failure to assume these responsibilities. He says that the artist's "actual and first desire must be always the expression of himself--the expression of himself exactly as he is, not as he would like other people to think him, the expression of his view of life as it is, not as he would like it to be."[5] The idea came from the French novelists. Remy de Gourmont had voiced it in almost the same words in "The Book of Masks."

> The capital crime for a writer is conformity, imitation, submission to rules and teachings. The work of a writer should not only be the reflection but the magnified reflection of his personality. The only excuse a man has to write is to write himself, to reveal to others the sort of world which is reflected in his individual mirror; his one excuse is to be original; he must say things not yet said and say them in a form not yet formulated.[6]

[5] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[6] Remy de Gourmont, Remy de Gourmont: Selections, chosen and translated by Richard Aldington (London:Chatto and Windus, 1932) pp. 39-40.

If "Rossetti, isolated from society, revived Keats and offered an art without moral or social purpose,"[7] Ford's writing was to progress in the opposite direction. The concept of art for art's sake was an empty concept to him, full of contradictions. One of his best-realized characters explodes after hearing a poem of Rossetti's read:

> Damn it. What's the sense of all these attempts to justify fornication? England's mad about it. . . . I tell you it revolts me to think of that obese, oily man who never took a bath, in a grease-spotted dressing-gown and the under-clothes he's slept in, standing beside a five-shilling model with crimped hair, or some Mrs. W. Three Stars, gazing into a mirror that reflects their fetid selves and gilt sunfish and drop chandeliers and plates sickening with cold bacon fat and gurgling about passion.[8]

The habit the later pre-Raphaelite painters had of tacking on a moral and thereby demonstrating a superficial moral basis for their art made pre-Raphaelism seem sterile to Ford. Pre-Raphaelite art was a hothouse flower, an art separated from mankind.

Ford did not believe that art could be placed in a vacuum, because art being concerned with humankind cannot therefore be separated from it. Unlike the pre-Raphaelites Ford detested the heavy-handed moralizer and preferred not to moralize but to write with a moral point of view. He once wrote, ". . . essentially the function of the novel

[7]William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature (New York:Vintage Books, 1956) p. 6.

[8]Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End (New York:Knopf, 1950) p. 17.

is to render life, even though its ultimate aim should be to make life a better thing."[9] If the writer does not moralize or preach, how is he "to make life a better thing?" He does this through the careful selection of his material. This selection is his moral choice. The artist records an affair, and, through reading about this affair, the reader is able to make some kind of judgment about life. The artist

> does not . . . expect to improve the world by advocating anything. He doesn't suggest that divorce laws or marriage laws or prison laws or social laws should be altered. He merely gives you material. Upon the views which you may gather from this material you are at liberty to form your verdict and to direct your votes when the questions of divorce, marriage, crime, or society may come before you in a practical sense.[10]

Ford saw a peculiar need for the novel in the twentieth century. He believed that people needed "gossip" in order to maintain normal and mentally healthy lives. "Gossip" is Ford's term by which he meant that people needed to know other people's problems, faults, arguments, and thoughts. He felt that this need was not being fulfilled in today's large cities because of the increasing breakdown in human communication. Yet people needed to know gossip, because, in his terms, it was educational.

[9]Ford, The Critical Attitude, p. 15.

[10]Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), Henry James (London:Secker, 1913) p. 28.

One profits by another's mistakes. Newspapers cannot supply this need, because their stories are isolated incidents. Furthermore, the writing in those newspapers specializing in gossip is too highly colored. Also, in order to be of news value, newspaper stories must be far from the commonplace. While a few of the stories people read in the newspapers might have some value, these few are quickly forgotten just because they are too highly colored and widely isolated from events familiar to us. The value of the novel lies in its ability to render the commonplace gossip and to make the reader remember it.[11]

The function of the novel then is to instruct, which is really a moral function.

> It is in short unbearable to exist without some view of life as a whole, for one finds oneself daily in predicaments in which some sort of pointer is absolutely necessary. Even though no novel known to you may exactly meet your given case, the novel does supply that cloud of human instances without which the soul feels unsafe in its adventures and the normal mind fairly easily discerns what events or characters in its fugitive novels are meretricious in relation to life however entertaining they may be as fiction.[12]

This is not platitudinous. Ford believed the artist to be the only one left who was concerned with human

[11]Ford, The English Novel, pp. 18-19.

[12]Ibid., p. 20.

values. Therefore, the function of the novelist was to pose the problems peculiar to his time and to work out the logical outcomes of the problems, be the outcomes happy or sad. Ford states this function in The Critical Attitude:

> For, if the arts have any function at all, that function is truly educational--nay, it is truly scientific. The artist today is the only man who is concerned with the values of life; he is the only man who, in a world grown very complicated through the limitless freedom of expression for all creeds and all moralities, can place before us how those creeds work out when applied to human contacts, and to what goal of human happiness those moralities will lead us.[13]

No one writes without the pressure of other people, of other times, of other movements upon him. The most profound pressure that Ford felt had been with him since earliest childhood, for Ford was born into the strange hothouse world of pre-Raphaelism. His maternal grandfather was Ford Madox Brown, the famous pre-Raphaelite painter. His father was a music critic for The Times and a vociferous supporter of Wagner whose music was so baffling the masses. Ford numbered the talented Rossettis among his cousins, and his earliest remembrances included all the greats of pre-Raphaelism, from William Morris to Swinburne. As a child, Ford was forced to wear "a green corduroy suit with gold buttons, which showed up

[13]Ford, The Critical Attitude, pp. 27-28.

his platinum blond curls . . . one of his stockings was scarlet, the other green."[14]

It was only natural that such a childhood should affect Ford and his art.

Because they found the present world crass and ugly, the pre-Raphaelites turned to the past for their subject matter. The past they turned to, however, was a past that had never existed--a past found only in Malory's Morte d'Arthur, Shakespeare, or Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes." The pre-Raphaelite movement was a strange and interesting one. Founded on a common desire to return to a past imperfectly seen because of faulty scholarship, the movement nevertheless was vitally interested in the present. The pre-Raphaelite painters commonly painted medieval, or some other historical period, scenes with the figures representing their friends or fellow painters. Because of this duality between past and present, the pre-Raphaelites were never very sure themselves just where they belonged or what they believed.

> The group had acted as the medium for the Romantic Poetry, with the Gothic and religious Revival, with the reaction against the Industrial Revolution; with Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley, Pugin and Pusey, the anti-Victorian thinkers Ruskin and Carlyle, though with the Italian masters of the later Middle Age, who provided

[14]Douglas Goldring, Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford (New York:E. P. Dutton, 1949) p. 18.

> its curious name, it had very little to do. It had also the realist, reforming spirit of 1848.[15]

Because the duality between the pre-Raphaelite dream world of the past and the violent realism of the present was so great, the movement could not last long. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, through dope, lost himself in a dream world inhabited by Dante's Beatrice. Millais, successful too young, succumbed to the materialism of the moment. William Morris struggled to resolve the duality by bringing the past to the present. Morris and his small band of followers made many artistically beautiful things in their medieval shop which sold fairly well. But in the end Morris' ideas bankrupted him. Speaking of Morris in The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy William Gaunt says, ". . . the dream had charged full tilt into reality and nothing had happened at all."

Although the pre-Raphaelites were essentially painters, they left their mark on Ford Madox Ford, the writer. Their mark is perhaps most easily seen in Ford's attitude toward the artist. He says in The English Novel,

> It was Flaubert who most shiningly preached 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 and carrying the subject--the Affair--he has selected for rendering, remorselessly out to its logical conclusion.[16]

[15]William Gaunt, The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942) p. 25.

[16]Ford, The English Novel, p. 129.

While Ford may have sought justification for the "doctrine of the novelist as Creator" in the works of Flaubert, the doctrine was certainly embraced by the pre-Raphaelites as well. Many of Ford's attitudes toward the responsibilities of the artist can be traced to the pre-Raphaelites. Having been raised as a boy in the pre-Raphaelite world, he accepted some pre-Raphaelite doctrine. Still more of his make-up as an artist, however, was in violent reaction against pre-Raphaelite preachings. While Ford could imagine the writer as the aloof "Creator," he could not conceive of the artist isolating himself as Dante Gabriel Rossetti had done.

> With the idea that a writer should have been a man of action before he begins to write I am cordially in agreement; indeed, I doubt whether any writer has ever been thoroughly satisfactory unless he has once had some sort of normal existence. No greater calamity could befall one than to be trained as a genius. For the writer looks at life and does not share it. This is his calamity; this is his curse.[17]

The key word in the above quotation is "before." The writer must experience life and form some conclusions about it <u>before</u> he begins to write. Once he begins to write he must stand aloof from society in order to be "Creator." The aloofness must never take the form of the haughtiness, snobbishness found in Oscar Wilde. Ford believed that an attitude like Wilde's destroyed the artist's material.

[17]Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), <u>Memories and Impressions: A Study in Atmosphere</u> (New York:Harper & Bros., 1911) p. 268.

> A novelist had better share the superstitions of, than high-hat, humanity. He will thus more understand his matter. . . . Yet the novelist must pass unobserved in a crowd if he himself is to observe. And the crowd is his clay; of his observations of it he will build his monuments to humanity. . . . But the first thing the novelist has to learn is self-effacement--that first and that always. Not for him flowing locks, sombreros, flaming ties, eccentric pants. If he gets himself up like a poet, humanity will act towards him as if he were a poet . . . disagreeably. That would not matter were it not that he will see humanity under a false aspect. Then his books will be wrong.
>
> His effort should be to be at one with his material. Without that he will not understand its emotions and reactions. Superstitions, belief in luck, premonitions, play a great part in human motives. A novelist who does not to some extent enter into those feelings can hardly understand and will certainly be unable to render to perfection most human affairs. Yes, you must sacrifice yourself. You must deny yourself the pleasure of saying to your weaker brothers and sisters: "Haw! No superstitions about me." Indeed you must deny yourself the pleasure of high-hatting anybody about anything. You must live merrily and trust to good letters.[18]

If the concept of the artist mingling with society was counter to the pre-Raphaelite code of art for art's sake, certainly the concept of the artist as observer of life would have been in sympathy with pre-Raphaelite beliefs. The pre-Raphaelites were in one sense realists:

> In effect, they said that true beauty is to be found in Life alone, and that true beauty is to

[18]Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (New York: Liveright, 1932) pp. 295-6.

> be brought into works of Art solely by rendering what they saw.[19]

But the pre-Raphaelites quickly changed from realists to something else. In the first place they were handicapped by a dream, the dream of juxtaposing reality over a medieval backdrop. "And the method was this: they fitted real people and real backgrounds to imaginary scenes or vice versa . . ."[20] To some extent the paradox of trying to mix past and present, reality and dream is understandable. Before the pre-Raphaelites, painters had been copying the style of the great Italian masters. The style was imitated by placing just as much shadow in a painting as the masters had and by always painting on a brown surface to give the work a golden-brown glow. None of these paintings contained colors which were true to nature. The pre-Raphaelite movement was a natural reaction away from the falseness and imitativeness of Academy painting. A return to the colors of nature was demanded. At the same time the horrors of the Industrial Revolution were becoming obvious. Because of its history of guilds and skilled craftsmen, of men working with their hands and taking pride in their work, the medieval period was much

[19]Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Critical Monograph (London:Duckworth & Co., 1906) p. 82.

[20]Gaunt, The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy, p. 26.

admired by the pre-Raphaelites. They began to use medieval themes or subjects for their paintings, but, in order to be true to nature, they used themselves as models, often against a contemporary backdrop.

Several of the ideas embraced by the pre-Raphaelites were later taken up by Ford. The desire for realism which lay behind the pre-Raphaelites' abandonment of the old techniques of copying the masters shaped many of Ford's beliefs about his art. Ford's view of the history of the novel, his concept of the novel's function, his idea of style and technique were all derived from a belief in realism. The influence that the pre-Raphaelite preoccupation with the past had on Ford is much harder to delineate. Apparently there was some subtle influence. In Parade's End Ford retreats to the past in very much the same manner as the pre-Raphaelites did. The protagonist in Parade's End is almost a figure from a pre-Raphaelite painting, an anachronism. Ford himself came close several times during his life to falling into the same trap that William Morris fell into--that of living in the past oneself. Twice Ford left the city to live in the country the life of a "small producer." He would be independent, he would raise and harvest his own needs, he would return to the soil. The return was not successful.

The pre-Raphaelites also influenced Ford in a negative way. Shortly after they had started to paint in the

new manner, they found something else to put in their pictures.

> For already they had pronounced the doctrine that a picture must enshrine some worthy idea. It was not sufficient that it should be well painted. Thus quickly had they reverted to one at least of the doctrines of the Grand Style, and set themselves back, as it were, to the days before Gainsborough existed. They had, in fact, missed thus early the road along which modern art was travelling. It was, I think, Monet who said: "The principal person in a picture is the light": The Pre-Raphaelites had by 1849 arrived at the conclusion that the principal person in a picture was the Incident pointing a moral (I am, by the way, not revealing a preference but stating a fact.)[21]

Ford's parenthetical remark must be called an understatement, because he detested any work of art which was blatantly moral. As we pointed out earlier the artist, according to Ford, does not ram a moral down the throats of his audience but instead gives his audience material: "Upon the views which you may gather from this material you are at liberty to form your verdict . . ."[22]

When Ford was born in 1873 the pre-Raphaelite movement was already 24 years old and was giving way rapidly to the Aesthetic movement. Where the pre-Raphaelites had withdrawn from society and yet remained a part of it through the inevitable "moral," the Aesthetes remained in society but withdrew their art from it. The Aesthetic

[21]Ford, The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, p. 114.

[22]Ford, Henry James, p. 28.

movement reached England in the early 1860's brought from Paris by Whistler and Swinburne. In Paris the revolt against the Middle Class was still in full swing, a revolt touched off thirty years earlier by Gautier's Mademoiselle de Maupin.

Whistler was interested in his art, not in moralizing. He was interested in the present, not in the past. He studied his craft earnestly. However, after a short time in England Whistler and Dante Gabriel Rossetti became good friends, although Rossetti's painting seemed idiotic to Whistler.

> To one habituated to the cleverness of Parisian cafés, who was passing from realism to the still more exacting cultivation of form as understood by the Japanese, the practice of painting elaborate costume pictures and subjects from Dante was nonsense. That sort of thing might be poetry, but poetry was poetry and painting was painting. Whistler's implacable hostility to the alien form of expression appears in his celebrated remark "Why not frame the sonnet," when Rossetti was considering in what frame to put a picture which he had accompanied, as he frequently did, by a poem.[23]

While Whistler and Swinburne were largely responsible for the Aesthetic movement in England, the movement's chief spokesman was Walter Pater. Pater had originally been influenced by Swinburne, but he had also gone back to the source of Swinburne's inspiration too, the French Aesthetics, Gautier and Baudelaire. Pater,

[23]William Gaunt, The Aesthetic Adventure (New York:Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1945) p. 39.

more than all the others, made a religion out of art. Pater set out to become art's chief prophet, spokesman, and high priest.

> It was in the late 'seventies that the various efforts of Whistler, Swinburne, and Pater to interpret Art for Art's Sake began to make an impression on English society and to be combined, after a muddled fashion typical both of the country and the age with the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites, into a confused whole called "Aestheticism." "Are you intense?"[24]

To the pre-Raphaelites of the 'seventies the new aestheticism was almost incomprehensible, even though the new movement had taken over many of the pre-Raphaelite theories of art. The Aesthetes, of course, had no moral point in their art--their art, they claimed, was merely art and nothing more. Indeed, as the movement became older and gained more converts and young disciples, it became more decadent and more perverse, taking on the aspect of decay and rottenness.

The Aesthetic movement lent itself well to poetry, painting, and drama but not to the novel. Only one novelist of much stature emerges from the movement, George Moore. It is possible that the excesses of the movement did not appeal to the English novelist or that it took longer for ideas of the movement to be translated into the

[24]Ibid., p. 66

novel form. However, many of the novels written twenty years later were to have much of the Aesthetic movement about them.

The year of Ford Madox Ford's birth, 1873, saw the publication of a book which contained statements that were to influence much of Ford's writing. The book was The Renaissance by Walter Pater, and the statements were found mainly in the brief Preface to the book. Pater had said that since beauty was relative to human experience, its definitions must not be in terms of universals but in terms of that which is true for the individual--each one who views a work of art has his own definition of its beauty. Therefore

> in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly. . . . What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do; and, as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realise such primary data for one's self, or do not at all. . . . the picture, the landscape, the engaging personality in life or in a book, La Gioconda, the hills of Carrara, Pico of Mirandola, are valuable for their virtues, as we say, in speaking of a herb, a wine, a gem; for the property each

> has of affecting one with a special, a unique, impression of pleasure.[25]

Here we have a critic viewing a work of art and deriving pleasure from the work through the impressions he receives from it. To satisfy this critic and others like him, does it not follow that in writing a novel the artist should avoid direct statement in favor of impression? The impression is far more apt to seem real and to last longer in the reader's memory than the direct statement. Ford, along with Conrad and Henry James, was to develop this style and technique of writing known as Impressionism.

Ford does not, in his critical or his autobiographical writings, mention Walter Pater. Certainly Pater could not have been unknown to him. The reason for this avoidance of Pater probably lies in Ford's dislike of the pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic movement. The reasons for his dislike are many. He did not have a particularly happy childhood surrounded by aging pre-Raphaelites (although he certainly was not adverse to turning a pound or two in later years with stories based on his memories of those greats). Ford did not, as we have seen, vouchsafe the principle of art for art's sake, a principle which was, in fact, completely opposed to his theory that art supplies a need that people in general have. Rather than pay allegiance to Pater, Ford preferred to claim that he

[25]Walter Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London:Macmillan and Co., 1935) pp. viii-ix.

had been influenced by Flaubert, Henry James, and, in emulation of James, by Turgenev. These influences will be described after this sample of Ford's criticism which should show his debt to Pater, at least in the field of criticism:

> As an artist--as a mere writer--Anthony Trollope had most of the vices of George Eliot. He is never remarkably engrossing, his writing has no particular justness of phrase, his novels are hardly constructed at all, but meander one into another without any particular bounds, without there being any particular reason why any given book should begin or end here or there. Yet, although Trollope's books do not very much cry aloud to be read, we can take up with interest "Barchester Towers" in a hand from which nervelessly "Adam Bede" drops. The reason is that never taking himself with any attempt at solemnity, Trollope was content to observe and to record, whereas George Eliot, as if she had converted herself into another Frankenstein, went on evolving obedient monsters who had no particular relation to the life of her time--monsters who seduced or admitted themselves to be seduced, who murdered their infants or quoted the Scriptures just as it suited the creator of their ordered world. Trollope, on the other hand, observed the world he lived in: his characters walk upon the ground; perhaps they are even a little flatfooted, but his observations have the light of facts, filtered through the screen of a personality. That the personality was not a very rare, was not a very subtle one, is perhaps the reason why we do not read him with very great avidity. But because the personality, was so honest so humble and above all, so conscientious, he helps us to live in a real world, he affords us real experiences. And precisely because George Eliot had no conscience, precisely because she gives us a world that never was, peopled by supermen who, we may thank God, never could have been, she is now a moral force practically extinct, is hourly losing impetus. And she has as an artist no existence whatever. Having studied "Das Leben Jesu," she became inflated by the idea of the

> writer as prophet, she evolved monstrous works which contained her endless comments upon Victorian philosophy, forgetting that our Lord, Who was the supreme influence, because He was the supreme artist, limited Himself in His recorded fiction to the barest statement of fact, to the merest citation of instance.
>
> Having stated so much we may pause to concede that probably the great majority of humanity would say that the converse of what we have stated is the actual fact. They would say, that George Eliot was the great artist because she presented them with an unreal, with an idealised world, which is what they demand of art. George Eliot, that is to say, takes them out of themselves. Mr. Trollope makes them think. With this, of course, we cannot quarrel, since it is merely a matter of terms. We prefer . . . to consider that the artist is the renderer of human vicissitude--the creator of a world of his own in which conscientiously, as he sees it, effect follows cause. We should not, supposing each of them to render life as he saw it, quarrel with Fielding, whose idea of cause and effect is that drinking makes a man a fine genial fellow any more than with the late M. Zola, who wrote a book called "L'Assommoir." Actually "Tom Jones," since it is a product of the author's experience of life, whereas Zola's book is a product not of experience, but of tabulations--"Tom Jones" will probably have a more persistent vitality. It is a rendering of life; it is, such as it is, a picture of manners. It interests because it excites our curiosity. After all, we most of us read because we want to know. . . We want to know how people used to live in past days, we want to know what was the outcome of a given affair. We want to be, as a Stevensonian writer would put it "at grips with life."[26]

The above quotation is particularly interesting because it neatly includes most of the points we have discussed in this Chapter. Ford says Trollope's "novels are hardly

[26]Ford, The Critical Attitude, pp. 56-58.

constructed at all." We will see Ford's concern for construction, technique, and style in the next chapter. Trollope was a better writer than George Eliot because he "was content to observe and to record" whereas she "went on evolving obedient monsters who had no . . . relation to the life of her time." We have seen that according to Ford the good novel "does supply that cloud of human instances," his dislike of unrealistic "monsters" is certainly motivated by a passionate desire for realism. Obviously, Ford's criticism is impressionistic--the criticism of personal opinion based on Ford's own bias and not essentially established by facts--the critical approach expounded by Pater.

Ford's primary debt, then, was to Pater, the pre-Raphaelites, and the Aesthetic movement, in spite of his preference for Flaubert, Henry James, and Turgenev. Conrad, because of the unique background in Polish and French culture, was much more the direct disciple of Flaubert. The task of trying to discover, considering Ford's admiration of Flaubert, what came from Conrad or from the Aesthetic movement is an impossible one. Ford's desire to be a conscientious student of life may well have come from Flaubert, probably directly through Conrad. Flaubert expounded the doctrine of realism, the portraying of things as they really are. The action of environment

upon the individual which Ford stuck to conscientiously throughout his writing can certainly be seen in Madame Bovary. Charles Weir says:

> In Madame Bovary more explicitly than ever before in any work of literature, the characters and their actions are related to the environment which has produced them and in which they move. In one sense, Emma Bovary is hardly a free agent: the education that she has received, the farm on which she has grown up have shaped her character. And the struggle for which she is so poorly equipped and in which, by no choice of her own, she finds herself engaged, is not against herself or some other person--not even against fate in a Greek or an Elizabethan sense--but against the intellectual and social milieu in which she has unwillingly been placed, the stifling atmosphere of a provincial French village. Here Flaubert certainly struck a note which was to become more and more characteristic of the modern novel, no matter what label it bore. A new element of plot was clearly recognized: whatever the clash of human wills might be, whatever the inner conflicts of the character, there was still another influence--assisting, limiting, or thwarting--to be reckoned with, the society which surrounded him.[27]

Ford's final great work, Parade's End, demonstrates most clearly this Flaubertian theme of society and its pressures upon the individual. Flaubert insisted that a novel stand as a work of art. He felt that it need serve no other purpose than to be an aesthetic object and as such should not contain a heavy-handed

[27]Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, introduction by Charles I. Weir, Jr. (New York:Rinehart & Co., 1948) p. x.

moral. To create an aesthetic object, he believed, it was necessary to approach the art of writing a novel with the craftsman's eye. The novel needed to contain craftsmanship not only in each line but as a whole as well.[28] Earlier in this chapter Ford's preoccupation with realism has been noted. In the next chapter and in the chapter on Ford's collaboration with Conrad, his desire for the craftsman's technique, the craftsman's skill, will be shown. It is easy to overstress Ford's debt to Flaubert, and the student of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century must always remember that Flaubert had a tremendous impact on many of the novelists of that period including Henry James, Conrad and Ford. In Conrad's case, Flaubert's influence was probably more direct than that which other English novelists received indirectly through the Aesthetic movement.

Henry James had much more of a direct influence on Ford's work. Around 1901 Ford took a cottage at Winchelsea which was fairly close to Henry James's home in Rye. James at that time was considered one of the foremost living writers, and it was not unnatural that Ford should have assiduously cultivated James's friendship. As a matter of fact, the character of Densher in Henry James's

[28] Ibid., pp. x-xi.

Wings of the Dove was "a projection of Ford."[29] That Henry James personally taught Ford much about the craft of writing is doubtful, although it is very likely that during the course of their friendship they discussed the technique of writing many times. It is much more certain that Ford learned a great deal about his craft from Henry James's novels. Ford tried, as did James, to get inside the minds of his characters. Unlike James, Ford generally tried to do this through the technique of first-person narrative. In Parade's End, however, which is third-person narrative, Ford used much the same technique as James did in What Maisie Knew, although Ford did not confine this technique of seeing the action through the eyes of one character, as we see the action through the eyes of Maisie, but rather shifted from one character to another. Robert Spiller says that James "was quite certain that the only reality lies in the impressions made by life on the spectator, and not in any fact of which the spectator is unaware. Realism is therefore merely the obligation that the artist assumes to represent life as he sees it, which may not be the same as life as it 'really' is."[30] We have seen Ford's desire to present life as he saw it,

[29]Goldring, Trained for Genius, p. 99.

[30]Robert E. Spiller, The Cycle of American Literature (New York:Mentor Books, 1957) p. 134.

to work out the logical answers to the problems that life presented to him as a thinking individual.

Ford wrote his novels "to make life a better thing," to feed the hunger for "gossip" that people felt, and he did this by writing about life as he saw it not as he wished it might be. These then were the responsibilities Ford felt toward his craft and his fellow man. One other responsibility has not been mentioned until now. We have referred to Ford as a craftsman, and, perhaps, the deepest responsibility he felt was the necessity for craftsmanship within his trade of literature. The years before World War I and after 1900 saw Ford preaching to the young writers the doctrine of good prose.[31] Ford's doctrine is best summed up by one who looked to him as a leader during those years. Ezra Pound reiterates that the function of literature in the state

> has to do with the clarity and vigour of "any and every" thought and opinion. It has to do with maintaining the very cleanliness of the tools, the health of the very matter of thought itself. Save in the rare and limited instances of invention in the plastic arts, or in mathematics, the individual cannot think and communicate his thought, the governor and legislator cannot act effectively or frame his laws, without words, and the solidity and validity of these words is the care of the damned and

[31]Ezra Pound, Polite Essays (London:Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937) p. 57.

> despised litterati. When their work goes rotten--by that I do not mean when they express indecorous thoughts--but when their very medium, the very essence of their work, the application of word to thing goes rotten, i.e., becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive or bloated, the whole machinery of social and of individual thought and order goes to pot.[32]

Let us turn then and examine how Ford Madox Ford used his words.

[32] Ibid., p. 164.

CHAPTER II

Technique

Shortly after Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad began their collaboration in the autumn of 1898, they were struck by the necessity of self-effacement from their style. Both admired Flaubert and had noted how the great French author managed to keep his own personality from his writing. Then, too, they noticed the seemingly effortless writing of the American author, W. H. Hudson. This they decided was the perfect style:

> The trouble, however, with Conrad and myself was this: we could not get our own prose keyed down enough. We wanted to write, I suppose, as only Mr. W. H. Hudson writes--as simply as the grass grows. We desired to achieve a style--the habit of a style--so simple that you would notice it no more than you notice the unostentatious covering of the South Downs. The turf has to be there, or the earth would not be green.
>
> Our most constant preoccupation, then, was to avoid words that stuck out of sentences either by their brilliant unusualness or their "amazing aptness." Either sort of word arrests the attention of the reader, and thus "hangs up" both the meaning and the cadence of a phrase. We 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.[1]

[1]Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (New York:Liveright, 1932) p. 216.

The rigid discipline of self-effacement kept Conrad and Ford in constant search for le mot juste, the word which would not dazzle the reader with the authors' cleverness but which would exactly convey the impression the authors wished the reader to feel. Feel is a key word here, because feeling is exactly what Ford and Conrad were striving for. They wanted the reader to sense or feel their story rather than be conscious of reading it. The reader, therefore, must never be aware of the author's hand.

> The struggle--the aspiration--of the novelist down the ages has been to evolve a water-tight convention for the framework of the novel. He aspires--and for centuries has aspired--to construct his stories and so to manage their surfaces that the carried away and rapt reader shall really think himself to be in Bermuda on the first of Waterloo days or in Grand Central Station waiting for the Knickerbocker Express to come in from Boston though actually he may be sitting in a cane lounge on a beach of Bermuda in December. This is not easy.[2]

To make the reader think he is in one place when he is really in another, the author must not only avoid cleverness in his writing, which would draw the reader's attention from the story to the author, but the author must also avoid making direct statements. Direct statements tend to keep the reader aware that the author is only telling a story. Since he is telling a story, the

[2]Ford Madox Ford, The English Novel (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1929) p. 86.

writer cannot help writing statements, but he can avoid writing direct, flat statements. He can make his statements render impressions.

Impressionism was taken over from the French by Henry James, and, during the 1890's, James became its leading exponent. Stephen Crane also experimented with it, and, at Pent Farm, Ford and Conrad wrestled to perfect it. The idea behind impressionism was this. The reader read of an affair which was filtered through the mind of the author. Thus what the reader read was not so much the narration of an affair but the impressions of the author viewing the affair. Through the eyes and mind of the author, then, the reader would be immersed in the sights and sounds of the affair, the main purpose being to make the reader forget he was reading. Herbert Read in English Prose Style offers the clearest definition of impressionism.

> "Impressions" are received and recorded by the nervous organism. They may be held in their sensational vividness (and the capacity so to hold them is a peculiarity of the artist) and then projected back into forms which match the impressions. But alternatively they may be allowed to 'sink in' and arouse whatever reactions and associations may linger in the memory. They then become transformed into expressive symbols of the experience of the receiving personality. In each case we have a structure of words--one extravert and objective, the other introvert and subjective.[3]

[3]Herbert Read, English Prose Style (Boston:Beacon Press, 1952) p. 145.

We have thus two types of impressionism, the extravert and the introvert. Read goes on to say that it is possible to define the extravert type in terms of rhythm. If the writer is trying to convey the impression of intensity, or stress, or excitement, he will convey it through the rhythm of his prose. Notice in the following passage how the tension builds toward the climax through the use of rhythm.

> Monks began to sing; a great brass instrument grunted lamentably; in the body of the building there was silence. The bishop and his supporters moved about, as if aimlessly, in front of the alter; the chains of the gold censors clicked ceaselessly. Seraphina's head had sunk forward out of my sight. All the heads of the cathedral bowed down, and suddenly, from round the side of the stall, a hand touched mine, and a voice said, "It is time."[4]

In the introvert type of impressionism, as Read has said, the impressions depend upon the mind and the memory for their effect; ". . . the mirrors beneath the new luggage racks immaculate as if they had reflected very little . . ."[5] This fragment, of course, has been lifted from context, and the image appears startling standing by itself. Yet, in context the image is hardly noticed, and only the impression of newness remains. This is the

[4]Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Heuffer (Ford), Romance, Concord Edition (Garden City:Doubleday, Page and Co., 1923) p. 241.

[5]Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 1950) p. 3.

impression that sinks in, not the implication that mirrors become dirty because they have reflected a great deal.

As mentioned earlier, when Ford and Conrad began their collaboration they were heading in the same stylistic direction as James and Crane.

> I think we both started out with at least this much of a new form in our heads: we considered a novel to be a rendering of an affair. We used to say, I will admit, that a subject must be seized by the throat until the last drop of dramatic possibility was squeezed out of it. I suppose we had to concede that much to the cult of the strong situation. Nevertheless, a novel was the rendering of an affair: of one embroilment, one set of embarrassments, one human coil, one psychological progression. From this the novel got its unity. No doubt it might have its caesura--or even several; but these must be brought about by temperamental pauses, markings of time when the treatment called for them. But the whole novel was to be an exhaustion of aspects, was to proceed to one culmination, to reveal once and for all, in the last sentence--or the penultimate--in the last phrase, or the one before it, the psychological significance of the whole.[6]

Impressionism was the perfect style for a novel of this form. Each impression building on to the one before until suddenly the final impression reveals the truth or solution, giving added meaning to the remembrance of the preceeding impressions.

If a story is to uncoil like this, each word must be chosen with care, each impression carefully thought out.

[6]Ford, Return to Yesterday, p. 203.

Next to the ending, therefore, the beginning of the story is of greatest importance. Should the beginning be thoughtful, or should it plunge right into the story? In either case the beginning must give a hint of what is to come. As conscious artists Ford and Conrad gave a great deal of thought to beginnings.

> 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 were. 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 a book or story should be of the tempo of the whole performance. That is the règle generale. 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. "The Nigger of the Narcissus" begins:
>
> "Mr. Baker, chief mate of the Narcissus, stepped in one stride out of his lighted cabin into the darkness of the quarter deck . . ."
>
> "The Secret Agent":
> "Mr. Verloc, going out in the morning, left his shop nominally in charge of his brother-in-law.. . ."
>
> "The End of the Tether":
> "For a long time after the course of the steamer Sophala had been altered . . ."
> this last being the most fitting beginning for the long-short story that "The End of the Tether" is.
>
> "Romance," on the other hand, begins:
> "To yesterday and to-day I say my polite vaya usted con dios. What are those days to

> me? But that far-off day of my romance, when from between the blue and white bales in Don Ramon's darkened store room in Kingston . . ." an opening for a long novel in which the dominant interest lies far back in the story and the note must be struck at once.
>
> "The Inheritors" first lines are:
> "Ideas," she said. "Oh, as for ideas . . ." an opening for a short novel[7]

By his own admission and by example, Ford preferred the thoughtful beginning to Conrad's usual dramatic beginning.[8] Most of Ford's openings have the same thoughtful approach, the same reminiscent quality. Two openings written after the collaboration with Conrad are:

The Good Soldier:

"This is the saddest story I have ever heard. We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons of the town of Nauheim with an extreme intimacy--or, rather, with an acquaintanceship as loose and easy and yet as close as a good glove's with your hand."

A Man Could Stand Up:

"Slowly, amidst intolerable noises from, on the one hand the street and, on the other, from the large and voluminously echoing playground, the depths of the telephone began, for Valentine, to assume an aspect that, years ago

[7]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (Boston:Little, Brown and Co., 1924) pp. 181-83.

[8]Ibid., p. 183.

it had used to have--of being a part of the supernatural paraphernalia of inscrutable Destiny."

The first sentence of the opening to The Good Soldier holds forth to the reader the promise of an interesting story. The second sentence starts the reader on a series of reminiscenses and impressions that will, when strung together, tell the saddest story. The note of the story is struck in the second sentence with the image of the glove. The "known with intimacy" is quickly changed to a "loose and easy acquaintanceship," which is really all one has with one's gloves. We are quite familiar with the outside of our gloves, and yet all we know of their insides is what we feel. The story the narrator is about to tell us is the story of one who thought he knew some people quite well, but who has come to realize that all he knew of them was the surface they showed. The story is the saddest story, because of what it took to make the narrator see. Thus the first sentence could very well be the last, because at either end of the book it is a summation of the story.

The opening to A Man Could Stand Up has to serve different functions. The book forms the third book of a tetralogy, and this opening must not only remind the reader of what has gone before but hint of what is to come. It must act as a bridge. The book opens on

Armistice Day, but the reader does not know that it does. The noise in the street and playground is a hint that something has happened which is yet to be revealed. The tone of the opening while clearly speaking of the present still manages to convey a sense of past events and action through the words "years ago it had used to have." The opening also promises some sort of fulfillment to come by using the word "Destiny." As we shall see later, fulfillment does come for Valentine in the third book of the Parade's End tetralogy.

Both the dramatic and reflective openings have disadvantages. As Ford says,

> 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.[9]

The two openings of Ford's quoted above were from his later work and clearly show the effects of this compromise. Of the two, I think The Good Soldier is the more successful, for it is reflective and at the same time the reader cannot miss being gripped by the story.

There is an important aspect of technique here. All three of the books resulting from Ford's and Conrad's

[9]Ibid., pp. 183-84.

collaboration were written in the first-person, as was The Good Soldier, Ford's greatest achievement. It was obviously a useful form for impressionism. I have mentioned before that it was Ford's and Conrad's chief aim to so beguile the reader as to make him forget he was reading and begin to participate vicariously in the events described. The reader identification with the pronoun I is, of course, obvious. I think this identification was obviously what the two writers were striving for in The Inheritors. There is a great deal of dialogue in the book, much of it in half sentences. The plot is fast-paced and yet never well explained. It has a certain dreamlike quality to it. The subtleties or nuances are never fully realized by the narrator, and the reader never knows more than the narrator. The protagonist, who is the narrator, is left in the end with the feeling that he has irrevocably lost something he had once had, but had never known the value of before. All these points lead the reader to identify himself with the narrator. The half-sentence does much for self identification. Dialogue in half-sentences can become quite confusing, but what is said is really unimportant. Half-sentences come much closer to daily speech, since the speaker often assumes previous knowledge on the listener's part. Hence, the speaker does not complete his sentence but pauses and

hurries on to his next sentence. In reading, however, the process of assimilating ideas goes at a slower rate, generally because the ideas are more complex. Thus, half-sentence dialogue in the wrong place could distract the reader and destroy the illusion of being immersed in a story. This is why the half-sentence can only be used at certain spots in the story. The opportunities for the half-sentence must come where what is spoken by the characters is of little importance. A better way of putting this would be to say that while the total impression to be gained from a scene in which half-sentence dialogue is used may be important, the actual words and bits of sentences spoken by the characters must have little importance. The important thing to be gained from such a scene, then, is the total impression. The half-sentence goes far in communicating an impression. It can convey anger, disbelief, grief, almost any emotion, if properly handled. It can do this through one of the techniques of impressionism mentioned by Read, rhythm. The sudden torrent of words, the pause, the interruption, the question started but never asked all contribute to definite rhythm patterns. If these half-sentences are interspersed with reflections from the narrator on his feelings of the moment, one can easily see how an impression is conveyed. Then too, if the reader is plunged from half-sentences to

reflection and back to half-sentences, identification becomes easier. The rhythm, as it were, will pick the reader up and carry him along. Although it is hardly possible to "pick the reader up and carry him along" through a single quotation, this quotation from The Inheritors may serve as an example of what has been described:

> "I don't believe you," I proclaimed, "I won't . . . You are playing the fool with me . . . trying to get around me . . . to make me let you go on with these--with these--It is abominable. Think of what it means for me, what people are saying of me, and I am a decent man--You shall not. Do you understand, you shall not. It is unbearable . . . and you . . . you try to fool me . . . in order to keep me quiet . . ."
>
> "Oh, no," she said. "Oh, no."
>
> She had an accent that touched grief, as nearly as she could touch it. I remember it now, as one remembers these things. But then I passed it over. I was too much moved myself to notice it more than subconsciously, as one notices things past which one is whirled. And I was whirled past these things, in an ungovernable fury at the remembrance of what I had suffered, of what I had still to suffer. I was speaking with intense rage, jerking out words, ideas, as flood-water jerks through a sluice the debris of once ordered fields.
>
> "You are," I said, "you are--you--you--dragging an ancient name through the dust--you . . ."[10]

[10]Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story (New York:Doubleday, Page and Co., 1914) pp. 193-94.

Identification with the narrator-protagonist is one aim of the first-person narrative. Obviously identification was attempted in The Inheritors. We know it was attempted because of the over-abundance of dialogue. In a book of first-person narrative, written with the philosophy that a reader should lose himself in the story, a great amount of dialogue must exist for a purpose. Any dialogue, especially a lot of dialogue, supposedly recorded by someone who was present becomes suspect to the reader. For the reader well knows that no one can remember exact conversations word for word for very long. And when the narrator purports to remember conversations and proceeds to record them, the reader becomes well aware that he is only reading after all. This leads to a far more subtle use of the first-person narrative and, I think, to a far easier form. In this form the reader sits, as it were, at the feet of the narrator. The reader is conscious that he is reading a story, but he is unconscious that it is fiction. That is, he believes in the narrator. He believes that the narrator was there, saw those things, and talked to those people. I am, of course, speaking of a temporary suspension of disbelief. This cannot be done unless the narrator himself is an integral part of the story he is telling. He must not be an impartial observor merely standing and watching from the background. Which

role the narrator will assume in the story is very important. In all three of the Conrad-Ford collaborations, the narrator is the protagonist. Romance, the longest and most successful of the collaborations, is the story of the adventures of one John Kemp. Kemp is also the narrator. Romance is a conventional adventure story with a strong plot full of action and suspense. It shows careful planning and conscientious writing. The story is told chronologically without stylistic subtleties. If the reader is immersed at all in the story, it is because of plot and atmosphere. He is immersed as he would be in any tale of adventure and pirate gold--that is, through his imagination and his longing for adventure. The term "strong plot," of course, implies that it is built well and that it progresses steadily toward a dénouement: Will he or won't he get the girl? One does not find out until the last page. The atmosphere is carefully created and emerges very strongly, its power, to a great extent, coming from the judicious use of rhythms.

In The Nature of a Crime, the third and final collaboration, first-person narrative is employed with an added stylistic device. The narrator tells his story through a series of letters to his mistress. Such a device cannot be sustained for long, and, fortunately, the book is not a long one. It records some dialogue so that

the effect that one is reading the narrator's letters might possibly be weakened for some. A further defect is that the reader has difficulty in believing the character of the narrator. He seems to be overdrawn. He is supposed to be scornful and superior, but he is too much so. Again, his prose is too precious and overwritten. As an example:

> It is very curious--the world now. I walked slowly down here from Gordon Square. I walked slowly--for all my work is done. On the way I met Graydon Bankes, the K. C. It would have astonished him if he could have known how unreal he looked to me. He is six feet high, and upon his left cheek there is a brown mole. I found it difficult to imagine why he existed. And all sorts of mists hurried past him. It was just outside the Natural History Museum. He said that his Seaford Railway Bill would come before Committee in June. And I wondered: what is June? . . . I laughed and thought: why June will never come![11]

In spite of these defects The Nature of a Crime is a long step toward Ford's very fine novel, The Good Soldier. For in The Nature of a Crime, the logical and orderly progression of events that characterized Romance is gone. In its place we find the much more lifelike disorder of the narrator's thoughts. The narrator sets out to tell of one thing, but memories of other things crowd in on his mind, and he must set them down too. Thus chronological time is broken up, and the time that is recorded is the

[11]Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), The Nature of a Crime (London:Duckworth and Co., 1924) p. 18.

time existing in the narrator's mind. This technique is well illustrated in the first three pages of The Nature of a Crime. The news the narrator wishes to tell his mistress is that he is a ruined man and that he is going to commit suicide. He begins, "You are, I suppose, by now in Rome." This makes him think of Rome and, in turn, of a dream he had of Rome the day before. The mistress was in the dream which brings his mind back to her, from her it jumps to her husband whom he had seen the day before. Thinking of yesterday reminds him of the letter he found which will lead him to suicide. He begins to write of this, but out of consideration for his mistress' feelings he only hints at suicide. The consideration again reminds him of her and Rome. Thus, three pages are filled with only a hint of what is troubling the narrator. We are receiving impressions, then, in the order that they are received by the narrator and not in the order of their occurrence. It is, as it were, as if the reader were sitting at the feet of the narrator listening to him tell his story, rather than as if the reader were reading it. In effect, this device makes the narrator more human. It is obvious that this humanizing of the narrator would not work unless he is made a part of the story he is telling.

The three novels of collaboration are not mere curiosities, for they form stepping-stones to the best work of both authors. Romance, conventional in many ways, still

shows the developing rhythms of impressionism and the progression d'effet that Conrad and Ford thought so necessary. As we shall see in the next chapter, Romance also strikes the same chord that Conrad's later and better works were to sound so strongly. In The Inheritors we find the first attempt to plunge the reader into the story by stylistic means rather than by plot alone. And finally, in The Nature of a Crime, we discover the final subtlety of first-person narrative achieved--the destruction of chronological time and the substitution of time in terms of the narrator.

In the preface to the American edition of The Good Soldier, Ford said:

> Until I sat down to write this book--on the 17th of December, 1913--I had never attempted to extend myself, to use a phrase of race-horse training. Partly because I had always entertained very fixedly the idea that--whatever may be the case with other writers--I at least should not be able to write a novel by which I should care to stand before reaching the age of forty; partly because I very definitely did not want to come into competition with other writers whose claim or whose need for recognition and what recognitions bring were greater than my own. I had never really tried to put into any novel of mine all that I knew about writing. I had written rather desultorily a number of books--a great number--but they had all been in the nature of pastiches, of pieces of rather precious writing, or of tours de force. But I have always been mad about writing--about the way writing should be done and partly alone, partly with the companionship of Conrad, I had even at that date made

> exhaustive studies into how words should be handled and novels constructed.
>
> So, on the day I was forty I sat down to show what I could do--and the Good Soldier resulted. I fully intended it to be my last book. I used to think--and I do not know that I do not think the same now--that one book was enough for any man to write, and, at the date when the Good Soldier was finished, London at least and possibly the world appeared to be passing under the dominion of writers newer and much more vivid. . . . So I regarded myself as the Eel which, having reached the deep sea brings forth its young and dies--or as the Great Auk I considered that, having reached my allotted I had laid my one egg and might as well die.[12]

The above passage shows Ford's burning desire for craftsmanship. It is interesting to note that although Conrad continued to use the first-person narrative after the years of collaboration, Ford, with the notable exception of his "Great Auk's Egg", dropped the first-person narrative technique. Since it is always difficult to separate style and technique from plot and motives, and since I wish to deal with The Good Soldier more thoroughly in the next chapter, I shall only point out now the style of The Good Soldier in relation to the novels of collaboration.

The Good Soldier is narrated by one of the participants of the story. The events that have happened to this participant have been both revealing and shocking. He is now trying to sit back and remember the events in some kind

[12]Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier (New York:Albert & Charles Boni, Inc., 1927) pp. v-vi.

of order and thereby find some meaning in them. Time, in terms of the narrator, which we saw operating in The Nature of a Crime, is here used with extreme facility. The book is constructed somewhat on the lines of a detective story. The narrator has all the threads, all the necessary material to make up the story in his memory. As he sits in his study telling his tale, he is anxious that it should be told right. He wants to tell his story chronologically. He begins at what he thinks is the beginning, but he soon finds that he has not started far enough back in his story. He is, therefore, forced at times to stop the forward motion of his story in order to go back in time and supply the reader with important information he has neglected to mention. Having all the facts, the narrator also cannot help now and then hinting at what is to come, particularly when he realizes, possibly for the first time, that what he is writing at the moment is going to lead soon to a bigger revelation. Thus, remarks he makes on one page seem less cryptic as we read the next page. The total effect is similar to a detective story in that after the book is read, certain heretofore unexplainable episodes and remarks are understood.

The Good Soldier is much more successful than The Nature of a Crime because the narrator is much more realistic

and human. The things that make him more human are weaknesses rather than qualities. Because he is an actual participant in the story, his version is not to be trusted. He is always anxious to present himself in the most favorable light. He likes to pretend that he was only an observor and that the happenings he describes did not touch him. The reader knows better. At times the narrator fancies himself a philosopher, stopping the action to moralize and make some philosophic point. At other times, he identifies himself with one of the other, more colorful characters. The book is indicative of the degree of craftsmanship Ford had attained. The narrator of The Good Soldier is at once the central figure of his own narrative and yet on the surface he is not a central figure but only a detached observor. It is the narrator's development, or lack of development, which must and does come through the story he is telling.

Ford's final great work is the monumental Tietjens Saga, composed of four separate novels published together under the title, Parade's End. The four books are obviously meant to be read together, although they were not published in one big volume until eleven years after Ford's death and twenty-two years after the last of the four was written. In Parade's End Ford switched from the first-person narrative he had used so successfully in The Good Soldier to third-person narrative. However, he retained

the time-shift that he and Conrad had first used in The Nature of a Crime. In the terms with which I have described the time-shift in The Good Soldier, one may well ask how Ford could have retained it in third-person narrative. Ford in Parade's End does not use the standard author-as-observor viewpoint. Instead, he presents a scene through the conscious mind and subconscious of one of its participants, much as Henry James did in What Maisie Knew. Many of the thoughts and facts that presumably would not be in the conscious mind of the participant during the particular scene being recorded are, nevertheless, thoughts and facts which are part of the participant's background and subconscious mind. A scene is recorded in terms of a participant of that scene. Thus, we find a time-shift in terms of this participant as his subconscious mind shifts from the present to something in the past that has bearing on the present scene. This constant shifting is never so abrupt as to be annoying. For example, in Some Do Not, the first book of Parade's End, Tietjens is on a train with his friend, Macmaster. We absorb the scene through Tietjens' eyes.

> There sat Macmaster; smallish; Whig; with a trimmed, pointed black beard, such as a smallish man might wear to enhance his already germinated distinction; black hair of a stubborn fibre, drilled down with hard metal brushes; a sharp nose; strong level teeth; a

> white, butterfly collar of the smoothness of porcelain; a tie confined by a gold ring, steel-blue speckled with black--to match his eyes, as Tietjens knew.
>
> Tietjens, on the other hand, could not remember what coloured tie he had on. He had taken a cab from the office to their rooms, had got himself in a loose, tailored coat and trousers, and a soft shirt, had packed quickly, but still methodically, a great number of things in an immense two-handled kit-bag, which you could throw into a guard's van if need be. He disliked letting his wife's maid pack for him. He even disliked letting porters carry his kit-bag. He was a Tory--and as he disliked changing his clothes, there he sat, on the journey, already in large, brown, hugely welted and nailed golf boots, leaning forward on the edge of the cushion, his legs apart, on each knee an immense white hand--and thinking vaguely.[13]

Eleven pages later we find the same scene only through the eyes of the other participant.

> But there sat Tietjens, in his grey tweeds, his legs apart, lumpish, clumsy, his tallowy, intelligent-looking hands dropping inert between his legs, his eyes gazing at a coloured photograph of the port of Boulogne beside the mirror beneath the luggage rack. Blond, high-coloured, vacant apparently, you couldn't tell what in the world he was thinking of. The mathematical theory of waves, very likely, or slips in someone's article on Arminianism. For, absurd as it seemed, Macmaster knew that he knew next to nothing of his friend's feelings. As to them, practically no confidence had passed between them. Just two: On the night before his starting for his wedding in Paris Tietjens had said to him:
>
> "Vinny, old fellow, it's a back door way out of it. She's bitched <u>me</u>."

[13]Ford, <u>Parade's End</u>, pp. 3-4.

And once, rather lately, he had said:

"Damn it! I don't even know if the child's my own."[14]

Each of these two identical scenes has been painted by a different mind. In the first scene Tietjens muses on his friend's appearance. The description of Macmaster could very well have been thought by Tietjens, word for word. But following the picture of Macmaster there is a turning inward of Tietjens' thoughts, and the reader gets a description of Tietjens himself. It is not a word for word description, however, nor is it a description which would have entered Tietjens' conscious mind. The first sentence, "Tietjens, on the other hand, could not remember what coloured tie he had on." is a logical thought progression from the phrase preceding it, ". . . a tie confined by a gold ring, steel-blue speckled with black--to match his eyes, as Tietjens knew." It is logical to assume that a man might precede from musing on his friend's tie to thinking that he could not, without looking at it, remember the color of his own tie. It is also logical that his conscious mind should go on to remember the occasion of his dressing that morning. "He had taken a cab from the office to their rooms, had got himself into a loose, tailored coat and trousers, and a soft shirt, had

[14]Ibid., p. 15.

packed quickly, but still methodically, a great number of things in an immense two-handled bag, which you could throw into a guard's van if need be." At this point it might be argued that this is merely descriptive thinking on Tietjens part and that there is no indication here of subconscious thought. But there is. The key word is "methodically," because it is a judgment or a descriptive adverb of his own actions. One consciously thinks in terms of adjectives--"tailored coat," "soft shirt"--but not in terms of adverbs, particularly adverbs like methodically as applied to oneself. This adverb is a warning that Tietjens is sliding into his subconscious. The following sentences prove it. The pride, the independence, subconsciously felt, which are a part of him stand out. "He disliked letting that 'man' touch his things; he had disliked letting his wife's maid pack for him . . ." The third-person time-shift in Parade's End should be obvious from the two quotations. The first quotation begins with Tietjens musing over his friend's appearance, shifts to Tietjens' toilet that morning and to his independent bias, and finally ends with Tietjens' own appearance. The second quotation, eleven pages later, describes the same instance in time that the first quotation did only from a different character's viewpoint. It is placed in time through the fact that it begins exactly

where the first quotation left off, a description of Tietjens. Again the time-shift operates from Tietjens' appearance to a speculation on what he is thinking and from that to exactly what he has confided to Macmaster.

Ford said of Conrad and himself, ". . . 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."[15] Ford, to a great extent, came the closest to perfection in rendering impressions in Parade's End. This perfection can be seen in the following passage from Parade's End which introduces a character for the first time:

> A tall, white-haired, white-moustached, red-cheeked fellow limped after Tietjens, who was getting his immense bag out of the guard's van. He clapped the young man on the shoulder and said:
>
> "Hullo! How's your mother-in-law? Lady Claude wants to know. She said come up and pick a bone tonight if you're going to Rye." He had extraordinarily blue, innocent eyes.[16]

If the reader were forced to stop reading at this moment and do something else for a period of time, his description of this newly introduced character would certainly begin with, "He had blue eyes." This is the striking feature about this character. Ford wants to give this

[15]Ford, Joseph Conrad, pp. 194-95.

[16]Ford, Parade's End, p. 21.

impression, therefore he begins with a commonplace description, lets his character speak a line or two of inconsequential chatter, and then arrests our attention with an added line of description. The fact that it is added gives it the necessary strength. The sentence itself is not startling, its position is. The passage conveys the impression Ford wanted.

Ford says in Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance,

> One unalterable rule that we had for the rendering of conversations--for genuine conversations that are an exchange of thought, not interrogatives or statements of fact--was that no speech of one character should ever answer the speech that goes before it. This is almost invariably the case in real life where few people listen, because they are always preparing their own next speeches.[17]

He continues with an obvious illustration of this technique. However, a close examination of his writings fails to bring out a similar illustration. But a close examination of his later work reveals a keen sense of the rhythms, patterns, and habits of everyday speech. The works of collaboration and the early post-collaboration works tend to indicate that he was trying too hard. The later works show a much more deft hand, as in this example from Parade's End:

[17]Ford, Joseph Conrad, pp. 200-201.

Tietjens said:

> "Hullo, General," and added: "I believe she's much better. Quite restored. This is Macmaster. I think I shall be going over to bring my wife back in a day or two. They're both at Lobscheid . . . a German spa."

The general said:

> "Quite right. It isn't good for a young man to be alone. Kiss Sylvia's finger-tips for me. She's the real thing, you lucky beggar." He added, a little anxiously: "What about a foursome to-morrow? Paul Sandback is down. He's as crooked as me. We can't do a full round at singles."
>
> "It's your own fault," Tietjens said, "You ought to have gone to my bone-setter. Settle it with Macmaster, will you?" He jumped into the twilight of the guard's van.[18]

In the middle of his speech, Tietjens introduces his friend Macmaster to the General. The General naturally begins his speech by acknowledging the introduction, "Quite right. It isn't good for a young man to be alone." This last is made somewhat disconcerting by the fact that Tietjens has just finished saying, "They're both at Lobschied," meaning his wife and mother-in-law. Therefore, the "Quite right." is in answer to "This is Macmaster.", while the "It isn't good . . ." is in answer to "I think I shall be . . .". The general comments on Tietjens' wife and adds an invitation for golf. Tietjens' first reply is not to the golf invitation

[18]Ford, Parade's End, p. 21.

but to the general's lameness, leaving the golf arrangements to Macmaster. All this, of course, loses its spontaneity under close scrutiny, but in normal reading the passage seems quite natural. I might add that it reads best when read aloud, for it does demand closer attention than we might normally give it. For example, when reading to oneself one is apt to read the line "It isn't good for a young man to be alone" as "It isn't good for a young woman to be alone," thinking of the preceding speech of Tietjens'.

Again, in a later section of Parade's End, we find this same close attention to human intercourse. The golf party is sitting in the clubhouse waiting for their turn on the links. Macmaster has just been handed a copy of a telegram that Tietjens has sent to his wife. At a table nearby, two men are sitting loudly discussing their mistresses. The reader receives a fleeting impression of them through Macmaster's mind. The impression is neither favorable nor unfavorable. Macmaster continues to read the telegram; the words making little sense to him since he is still worried over an earlier incident. He has the impression that the other three members of his party are sitting as stiffly as pokers. He thinks that he shall undoubtedly beat them, since he is the best golfer of the four. Suddenly he exclaims, "Good God!" He has just realized that the telegram means that Tietjens is going

to Germany. Tietjens immediately says in answer to Macmaster's exclamation, "'Yes. It is unbearable. If you don't stop those swine, General, I shall.'" The "swine" that Tietjens refers to are the two men discussing their mistresses. Macmaster's mind has been occupied with other thoughts and has been too busy to notice that his companions have found the two men at the next table increasingly offensive. It is Ford's skill that the reader recognizes all this at the same time Macmaster does. What more natural thing than Macmaster's exclamation or Tietjens' interpretation of it. A side comment, which has little place in a discussion of style but which is inescapable at this time, is that this incident is a good example of Ford's essentially ironic viewpoint. To Tietjens, the General, and the General's friend, the presence of such boors in the clubhouse is embarrassing and unspeakable. The mere act of politely suggesting to them that they should discuss their private affairs somewhere else is upsetting to the General. "The General came back to his seat. He was trembling with vexation. 'It makes one as beastly a bounder as themselves,' he said. 'But what the devil else was one to do?'" The three men feel that in a correct society such unpleasant incidents would not occur and that the presence of these crude interlopers is somehow a threat to the existence of the old way of life.

Yet it is not the boors, the fools who threaten the old way of life, it is the men whose exclamations they misinterpret. "Macmaster realized that, for these Tories at least, this was really the end of the world. The last of England!"[19]

We have seen that Ford believed that the writer had certain responsibilities toward his art. These responsibilities, which included duty, a moral point of view, and the fulfillment of a public need for "gossip", necessitated a presentation conditioned by the writer's subject and true to the life surrounding him. This necessity demanded the establishment of a realistic style, a style which would be faithful to the rhythms and patterns of contemporary speech and a technique of presentation closely following or copying the realities of action in everyday life. The responsibilities that Ford felt were the responsibilities of the artist and the style that had been demanded by these responsibilities needed plots which would closely follow life as it really was. Until the publication of the Good Soldier, however, Ford had for the most part failed to live up to the standards he had set for himself. As we have seen earlier, Ford felt that this was the one good book.

[19]Ibid., pp. 57-9.

Ford had every right to be proud of The Good Soldier, because it is a magnificent novel. It is as nicely constructed and as tightly woven as is possible--it is, in short, the culmination of many years of training.

The Good Soldier, because of its complexity, is not an easy book to evaluate or to explain. The plot is, or seems to be at any rate, fairly easy to follow. Dowell, who narrates the story, and his wife, Florence, meet the Ashburnhams, Edward and Leonora at Nauheim, a fashionable spa. The Dowells are wealthy Americans who spend their time at spas, because Florence has a heart condition. The Ashburnhams are aristocratic English. They are at the spas, because Edward has a heart condition. The four strike up a friendship which Dowell believes to be quite wholesome. Edward is a dashing fellow, quite romantic, a former Captain in the army with a flair for women. In fact his life with Leonora has been one affair after another--all with the best of intentions. Leonora, a Catholic, would not think of leaving him. Florence Dowell, a seemingly giddy person, has not allowed her husband near her since their marriage because of her heart condition. Dowell, an unimaginative fellow, thinks this is the best of all possible worlds. The shock comes when Florence's world falls apart. Dowell discovers she was

promiscuous before their marriage and Edward, with whom she has been having an affair known to Florence but not to Dowell, falls in love with Nancy, his young ward. Florence resorts to suicide. This is too much for Leonora and she strives to keep Nancy and Edward apart. To Edward, an affair with Nancy would be unthinkable. A romanticist, he wants Nancy to go away but still love him. Leonora succeeds in getting Nancy to leave but also to stop loving Edward. This is too much for him and he commits suicide. Leonora marries an old love, and Dowell is left as owner of Edward's property and with Nancy, who has gone insane at the news of Edward's death, as his ward.

The foregoing is a simple resumé of the plot. The actual book is not so easy, because Dowell is the narrator. The Good Soldier has to be approached from several levels of understanding. It is essentially the story of Dowell's discovery that social conventions merely mask reality. This theme, or various manifestations of it, occupied Ford before, particularly in The Inheritors, Dowell believes that he and his friends are "all good people."

> We took for granted that we all liked beef underdone but not too underdone; that both men preferred a good liqueur brandy after lunch; that both women drank a very light Rhine wine qualified with Fachingen water--that sort of thing. It was also taken for granted that we were both

> sufficiently well off to afford anything that we could reasonably want in the way of amusements fitting to our station . . .[20]

But the truth is that the Ashburnhams did not have the wealth they were thought to have. Behind the mask of Rhine wines, liqueurs, and carriages stood the reality of poverty. Leonora in telling Dowell of a nearly consumated love affair says: "And then suddenly the bitterness of the endless poverty, of the endless acting--it fell on me like a blight, it spoilt everything. Yes, I had to realize that I had been spoilt even for the good time when it came."[21] The horror of it is that it is poverty on two levels, not only physical poverty but moral poverty as well.

The moral poverty of these four people dovetails into the afore-mentioned theme of reality and the mask of social conventions. The four main characters should be examined separately in this light.

Florence Dowell uses her wealthy husband as a shield of respectability to hide her promiscuousness. She uses her supposedly weak heart to hide from her husband her unfaithfulness. On the surface she is a charming but somewhat giddy woman. She appears to delight in touring famous historical places and beautiful scenes; spouting

[20]Ford, The Good Soldier, p. 34.

[21]Ibid., p. 9.

facts and tidbits of information, which she has picked up from guidebooks, to her companions. Of course it is a fraud. Dowell says: "She could find her way, with the sole help of Baedecker, as easily about any old monument as she could about any American city where the blocks are all square and the streets all numbered, so that you can go perfectly easily from Twenty-fourth to Thirtieth."[22] When Florence's affair with Ashburnham is discovered, when she realizes the mask is gone and her moral poverty exposed, she commits suicide.

Edward Ashburnham, like Florence, allows the mask of social convention to hide his inability to remain faithful. Perhaps of the four of them he has the easiest time in keeping up appearances. As an English gentleman his poise, correct ties, correct wines, polo, etc.,are almost automatic. His heart condition, like Florence's is a façade.

> You understand that there was nothing the matter with Edward Ashburnham's heart--that he had thrown up his commission and had left India and come half the world over in order to follow a woman who had really had a "heart" to Nauheim. That was the sort of sentimental ass he was. For, you understand, too, that they really needed to live in India, to economise, to let the house at Branshaw Teleragh.[23]

[22] Ibid., p. 38.

[23] Ibid., p. 49.

It is interesting to note that Dowell excuses Edward by saying that he was just this sort of sentimental ass. As I have said before, Edward's façade is his code as an English gentleman. He uses it to protect himself from reality, but because it is so much a part of him he confuses it with reality. He finds the idea of sleeping with his ward, Nancy, unthinkable, yet he still loves her. When she leaves he commits suicide. Thus Edward, who has no moral basis, must attach himself in the end to social convention which does not have a moral basis either. The result is disillusionment and self destruction.

Leonora Ashburnham is on the surface a patient and understanding wife, well-founded in reality. She is aware of Florence's and Edward's affair, and she is aware of her husband's past infidelities. She is also aware of the fraud which masks reality. But she lives the lie just as the others do. Dowell gives us a hint when he says: "Yes,Leonora was extraordinarily fair and so extraordinarily the real thing that she seemed too good to be true."[24] Leonora desires security and children, in other words all that Edward is incapable of giving her. She thought, however, that she was close to achieving these things with Edward, until she learned that he and Florence were having an affair. When Florence dies and Edward takes

[24]Ibid., p. 8.

up with Nancy, Leonora's façade crumbles. "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."[25] Leonora coldly and with a vengeance sets out to obtain the life she has always wanted. She destroys Edward and drives Nancy insane. ". . . only Leonora, active, persistent, instinct with her cold passion of energy was 'doing things.' . . . It worked out in the extinction of two very splendid personalities--for Edward and the girl were splendid personalities, in order that a third personality, more normal, should have, after a long period of trouble, a quiet, comfortable, good time."[26] She immediately remarries after Edward's death, thereby securing what she has always wanted. Like Edward she wanted to believe in social conventions, and, when she found the truth too difficult, she exchanged one code for another.

Although Edward Ashburnham is "The Good Soldier," the novel is really about Dowell, the narrator. Dowell is the man who has been taken in by social convention. He, as narrator, is attempting to tell what happened when all the things he believed in turned out to be sham.

[25] Ibid., p. 189.

[26] Ibid., p. 236.

Naturally he is confused, and consequently his story is confused. The startling thing about Dowell is that he lived in a world of social convention and never once saw behind it. He is the social-convention man, his character is composed of the fraud. And the thing which this fraud covered in Dowell is far more frightening than moral poverty. The reality of Dowell is that he is incapable of genuine feeling, neither hatred or love are in his makeup. "You have no idea how quite extraordinarily for me that was the end of Florence. From that day to this I have never given her another thought; I have not bestowed upon her so much as a sigh."[27] What Dowell cannot understand is the loss of what seemed to him to be reality. He recognizes that the others were not what they seemed to be, and yet were not some of these things real? It is the central irony of The Good Soldier that while it professes, at least on the surface, to be a tale of the exposure of social conventions masking reality, it is in fact stating that appearances are sometimes reality. Let us examine this more closely. Dowell in his bewilderment looks back on their lives together before they exploded:

> . . . our intimacy was like a minuet, simply because on every possible occasion and in

[27] Ibid., p. 121.

every possible circumstance, we knew where to go, where to sit, which table we unanimously should choose; and we could rise and go, all four together, without a signal from any one of us, always to the music of the Kur orchestra, always in the temperate sunshine, or, if it rained, in discreet shelters. No, indeed, it can't be gone. You can't kill a minuet de la cour. You may shut up the musicbook, close the harpsichord; in the cupboard and presses the rats may destroy the white satin favours. The mob may sack Versailles; the Trianon may fall, but surely the minuet--the minuet itself is dancing itself away into the furthest stars, even as our minuet of the Hessian bathing places must be stepping itself still. Isn't there any heaven where old beautiful dances, old beautiful intimacies prolong themselves? Isn't there any Nirvana pervaded by the faint thrilling of instruments that have fallen into the dust of wormwood but that yet had frail, tremulous and everlasting souls?

No, by God, it is false! It wasn't a minuet that we stepped; it was a prison--a prison full of screaming hysterics, tied down so that they might not outsound the rolling of our carriage wheels as we went along the shaded avenues of the Taunus Wald.

And yet I swear by the sacred name of my creator that it was true. It was true sunshine; the true music; the true splash of the fountains from the mouth of stone dolphins. For, if for me we were four people with the same tastes, with the same desires, acting--or, no, not acting--sitting here and there unanimously, isn't that the truth? 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? So it may be with Edward Ashburnham, with Leonora his wife and with poor dear Florence.[28]

[28]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

The foregoing resembles to a great extent the utterances of a man who cannot believe that his world has cracked around him. It is a welter of contradictions, and yet each one has a certain validity of its own. The image of the minuet is an apt one. People associating with each other do possess a certain rhythm and harmony. We have the slight hint of rottenness at the core before it is actually stated in the figure of the rat in the cupboard. But Dowell goes back to the reality of the harmony, the dance. After the symphony is over the music no longer exists physically, but it does have existence still in the mind, in the imagination. The musicians may or may not live sordid lives; this does not matter, for they created something beautiful while they were together.

But suddenly Dowell wrenches the mask off and changes his metaphor to that of a prison. Is this reality? Yes, on one level it is. And yet the fountains, the sunshine, etc. were true too. In his schoolboyish analogy of the apple, Dowell strikes very closely to the truth. On one level appearances are reality, or, to put it another way, they are the lie functioning as reality. Florence and Nancy are unable to live without it, Edward is not able to live with it, and Leonora trades it for another. Only Dowell survives because he is incapable of understanding

the horror of reality, and he can understand the reality of appearances.

In the end Dowell recognizes that men must live with the mask of appearances or illusion, and he promptly proceeds to accept it by likening himself to Edward Ashburnham, a procedure so laughable and ridiculous that the irony of it cuts like a sword.

> Society must go on, I suppose, and society can only exist if the normal, if the virtuous, and the slightly-deceitful flourish, and if the passionate, the headstrong, and the too-truthful are condemned to suicide and to madness. But I guess that I myself, in my fainter way, come into the category of the passionate, of the headstrong and the too-truthful. For I can't conceal from myself the fact that I love Edward Ashburnham--and that I love him because he was just myself. If I had had the courage and the virility and possibly also the physique of Edward Ashburnham I should, I fancy, have done much what he did. He seems to me like a larger elder brother who took me out on several excursions and did many dashing things whilst I just watched him robbing the orchards, from a distance. And, you see, I am just as much of a sentimentalist as he was. . . .[29]

Since Ford was so enamored of writing, it is not surprising that The Good Soldier did not prove to be his swan's song, his Great Auk's egg. For various reasons, however, Ford wrote little above the potboiler class until 1923 when he began Some Do Not, the first of the Tietjens tetralogy. Although published separately, the

[29]Ibid., p. 257.

four Tietjens novels, Some Do Not, No More Parade's, A Man Could Stand Up, and The Last Post were obviously meant to be taken as a whole. In 1950 they were combined and published as a whole under the title Parade's End.

Post-war England proved a shock to many of her people. As a contemporary of Ford's described it:

> To be born in it, and then to have to witness, over a period of half a century, at first the gradual and, after 1919, the terrifyingly rapid collapse of the moral standards of a once great governing class; to live to see shame and dishonour, avarice, stupidity, treachery and broken faith taking the place, in the highest quarters, of nobility of purpose and pride in the maintenance of great traditions; to grow to boyhood in a country governed by a Gladstone, a Disraeli, or a Salisbury, and to die when the hand of your birth was at the mercy of such men as ruled over us during the armistice years, was, for an artist like Ford, who was also in every meaning of the word a "gentleman" and a "Christian", by no means a happy experience.[30]

Once again Ford's theme was to be the crumble and decay of the old order and the rise of the new, the lie functioning as truth. Some Do Not begins in time several years before World War I and ends shortly after the war. These years were years of flux, transition and change,and through them strides the unchangeable man, Christopher Tietjens. Tietjens believes that the only way for a man to survive amidst the crumbling of society, the

[30]Douglas Goldring, South Lodge:Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle (London:Constable & Co., Ltd., 1943) p. 205.

break-up of the old order, is to cling to the ideals which once made the world a pleasant place to live in. High Toryism, order, stability, altruism, truth, and enlightenment are Tietjens' ideals; he is the eighteenth century man. Tietjens is aware that his anachronistic ideals are in conflict with the reality of change. But he is also aware of the madness of those around him who are desperately trying to adjust to the rottenness that the war has exposed. In the following description of plot, the four novels are considered as a whole.

The opening lines of Parade's End set the stage for change.

> 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, hygenically of admirable varnish; the train ran as smoothly--Tietjens remembered thinking--as British giltedged 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.[31]

[31]Ford, Parade's End, p. 3.

The time will come when there will be no more such order and newness, when letters to the Times will be meaningless.

Macmaster serves as a foil for Tietjens. He is approximately Tietjens' age and works with Tietjens in the Department of Statistics. In everything else he is Tietjens' exact opposite. He is ambitious, a Whig, the son of a Scottish shopkeeper, a psuedo-literary. Later, when Tietjens goes into the war, Macmaster turns and persecutes him for his altruism.

On one level persecution is the theme of Parade's End. It is small wonder that Tietjens' contemporaries cannot understand this anachronism, and that what they cannot understand they turn and rend. The symbol of the hatred felt toward Tietjens, the symbol of the persecution against him is his wife, Sylvia. Shortly after Tietjens' marriage to Sylvia, she has a child. There is some question as to whether it is Tietjens' or not. When the novel opens she has already skipped to France with another man, become bored, and asked Tietjens to take her back. She is, in short, a wanton, beautiful and desirable but full of spleen and hate. If Tietjens would only beat her or revile her or even merely reproach her she could love him. Instead, because he is so impossibly good, she hates him with a cold fury.

Sylvia's mother attempts to explain Sylvia to the family priest:

> "There's this to be said for Sylvia," Mrs. Satterthwaite went on. "There are times when a woman hates a man--as Sylvia hates her husband. . . . I tell you I've walked behind a man's back and nearly screamed because of the desire to put my nails into the veins of his neck. It was a fascination. And it's worse with Sylvia. It's a natural antipathy.[32]

The irony is that to a corrupt world it is the honest man who is indecent and immoral. This is what causes Sylvia's antipathy. She says:

> "You want to know why I hate my husband. I'll tell you; it's because of his simple, sheer immorality. I don't mean his actions; his views! Every speech he utters about everything makes me--I swear it makes me--in spite of myself, want to stick a knife into him, and I can't prove he's wrong, not ever, about the simplest thing. But I can pain him. And I will. . . . He sits about in chairs that fit his back, clumsy, like a rock, not moving for hours. . . . And I can make him wince. Oh, without showing it. . . . He's what you call . . . oh, loyal. There's an absurd little chit of a fellow . . . oh, Macmaster . . . and his mother whom he persists in a silly, mystical way in calling a saint . . . a Protestant saint! And his old nurse, who looks after the child . . . and the child itself. . . . I tell you I've only got to raise an eyelid . . . yes, cock an eyelid up a little when any one of them is mentioned, and it hurts him dreadfully. His eyes roll in a sort of mute anguish. . . . Of course he doesn't say anything. He's an English country gentleman."[33]

The priest prophetically adds to her mother, "' . . . her hell on earth will come when her husband goes

[32]Ibid., p. 27.

[33]Ibid., p. 39.

running, blind, head down, mad after another woman. . . . Then she'll tear the house down. The world will echo with her wrongs.'"[34]

The inevitable other woman is Valentine Wannop whom Tietjens meets while his wife is still in France. It is she to whom he returns after the war, broken and almost insane. And it is she who nurses him and goes to live with him in the country.

Valentine is not the only one who loves Tietjens, for there is his brother, Mark. As Macmaster is gradually dropped into the background, he is replaced by Mark. By the time the war is over Christopher is in open conflict with everyone around him except Valentine. Indeed, he has just left the conflict on a macrocosmic scale. He has learned to cultivate his own garden. Mark, on the other hand, is only just beginning to perceive that he and his family are anachronism. When he learns on Armistice Day that there will be no advance into Germany, no gesture for France, he has a stroke and never speaks again. There is the hint in The Last Post that the loss of speech is a mental withdrawal, a voluntary act, rather than a physical manifestation. Thus, the one foil, Macmaster, conforms to the changing world and becomes successful, the other withdraws and dies.

[34]Ibid., p. 42.

It will appear to the reader that a concise recording of the plot of Parade's End has been avoided and that I have concentrated on only two characters, Christopher and Sylvia Tietjens. I have avoided outlining the plot simply because there is, strictly speaking, little or no plot. There is what might be termed a theme, and I have tried to show what that theme is. Unlike Ford's earlier novels and unlike the novels of James and Conrad, Parade's End has no degredation or regeneration of the central character. Tietjens' progress is in a straight line. He is the same eighteenth century man, the anachronism, at the end that he was in the beginning. He has suffered the persecution of his wife on the human level and the persecution of war on the world level. He has seen his fellow humans go mad as their world crumbles about them. It should be noted that each happening on a world scale is mirrored in an individual on the human level in Parade's End. Since the book has little plot, it depends upon its characterization for its effects. And since the essential theme of the book is the conflict between the embodiment of the eighteenth century man and a world unable to understand him, the symbols of these two concepts, Christopher and Sylvia, are the only characters I have outlined in detail.

Tietjens' view of the war may be taken as one of the most valid in the long list of war novels. For it is the

completely impartial view of a man who is in it and yet aloof from it. One never sees more than Tietjens sees, but this is enough. For in his view of the war, he sees the collapse of his world.

> "At the beginning of the war," Tietjens said, "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!"[35]

It is interesting to compare the plots of Ford's two major works, The Good Soldier with its intricate and involved plot and Parade's End with its fairly simple plot of life in the pre-war world, the war world, and the post-war world. Because of its intricate plot, The Good Soldier did not require as much skill in characterization as did Parade's End, although Ford certainly managed to make his characters believable in the former. The two best-realized characters in The Good Soldier are Dowell

[35]Ibid., pp. 306-7.

and Edward Ashburnham. This is particularly interesting in the light of Violet Hunt's statement regarding Ford and The Good Soldier. "Edward Ashburnham and Mr. Dowell in The Good Soldier are Joseph Leopold's [Ford's] Jekyll and Hyde--or say two Mr. Jekylls for neither is really wicked and Joseph Leopold holds no brief for either. He simply doesn't know."[36] If Ford really did see himself in these two characters, it is not surprising that they are better drawn than the other characters in the book.

In many respects Edward Ashburnham foreshadows Christopher Tietjens of Parade's End. Ashburnham is a symbol of the landed gentry of pre-war England, solid but dashing, owner of a great estate, a gentleman always. Unlike Tietjens, Ashburnham's landed gentry qualities only serve to mask the corruption within him. And yet for all his evil, Ashburnham is pictured rather sympathetically by Dowell, of course, but also by Ford through Dowell. Perhaps the reason the reader catches the tone of sympathy for Ashburnham is that Ashburnham, rather than Dowell, is a pathetic and very understandable figure. His passion has carried him too far and now others are set in motion against him. Ashburnham could stand the havoc he created himself by recourse to sentimentalizing

[36]Violet Hunt, I Have This To Say: The Story of My Flurried Years (New York:Boni and Liveright, 1926) p. 202.

and posturing. He goes too far. He falls in love with his ward. He knows he has gone too far, and the code of the English gentleman comes through, "This just isn't done, old boy." It is too late, and Leonora, horrified by what seems to her an almost incestuous love affair, knowing the history of Ashburnham's past love affairs, moves quickly to end the affair. Edward, whose self-destructive bent has been obvious, commits the final act.

There is an air of horror and of impending destruction around Ashburnham which is brought to the reader's attention often throughout the book. Notice how skill in writing and the carefully built up blindness and fatuousness of Dowell combine to communicate horror at and yet sympathy for Edward Ashburnham:

> Yes, it was a great worry. And just as I had got things roughly settled I received the extraordinary cable from Ashburnham begging me to come back and have a talk with him. And immediately afterwards came one from Leonora saying, "Yes, please do come. You could be so helpful." It was as if he had sent the cable without consulting her and had afterwards told her. Indeed, that was pretty much what had happened, except that he had told the girl and the girl told the wife. I arrived, however, too late to be of any good if I could have been of any good. And then I had my first taste of English life. It was amazing. It was overwhelming. I never shall forget the polished cob that Edward, beside me, drove; the animal's action, its highstepping, its skin that was like satin. And the peace! And the red cheeks! And the beautiful, beautiful old house.

> Just near Branshaw Teleragh it was and we descended on it from the high, clear, windswept waste of the New Forest. I tell you it was amazing to arrive there from Waterbury. And it came into my head--for Teddy Ashburnham, you remember, had cabled to me to "come and have a talk" with him--that it was unbelievable that anything essentially calamitous could happen to that place and those people. I tell you it was the very spirit of peace. And Leonora, beautiful and smiling, with her coils of yellow hair, stood on the top doorstep, with a butler and a footman and a maid or so behind her. And she just said:--"So glad you've come," as if I'd run down to lunch from a town ten miles away, instead of having come half the world over at the call of two urgent telegrams.
>
> The girl was out with the hounds, I think.
>
> And that poor devil beside me was in an agony. Absolute, hopeless, dumb agony such as passes the mind of man to imagine.[37]

The supreme achievement of The Good Soldier is the character of Dowell. Never before had Ford's--or Conrad's--use of the first-person narrative created such a living character in the person of the narrator. This was a creation that was doubly hard to accomplish because Dowell is not perceptive and, further, is incapable of feeling or of a sense of attachment. When his wife dies, he is unmoved--"I have never given her another thought."[38] He can be a perfect fool babbling about the inconsequential and, in so doing, revealing his weaknesses:

[37]Ford, The Good Soldier, pp. 19-20.

[38]Ibid., p. 121.

> That question of first impressions has always bothered me a good deal--but quite academically. I mean that, from time to time I have wondered whether it were or were not best to trust to one's first impresions in dealing with people. But I never had anybody to deal with except waiters and chambermaids and the Ashburnhams, with whom I didn't know that I was having any dealings. And, as far as waiters and chambermaids were concerned I have generally found that my first impressions were correct enough.[39]

Yet Dowell is likeable in his confusion, his misunderstanding, his preening, his stupidity, and his lack of emotion. He is likeable because, paradoxically, he can give the reader what he cannot see or feel, what he is not even aware of. The irony of such a character as narrator becomes vivid when Dowell the narrator writes the truth and yet is completely unaware that it is the truth.

> Is there then 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, agonised, and unromantic lives, periods punctuated by screams, by imbecilities, by deaths, by agonies? Who the devil knows?[40]

Early in his story Dowell says, "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

[39] Ibid., p. 155.

[40] Ibid., pp. 240-41.

unthinkable event."[41] The theme of The Good Soldier becomes apparent--in viewing the decay of Ashburnham, Leonora, and Florence, the reader sees in minature the decay of a whole class. Thus Dowell with all his limitations is the only logical one to tell his tale, for he is not really a part of this class. He is the impartial observor because he is not a part of them, and because he has no feeling for any of them. Dowell was unable to write truthfully about himself, "I guess that I myself, in my fainter way, come into the category of the passionate, of the headstrong and the too truthful."[42] And yet simply because he did not know them but thought he did, Dowell reveals the truth about the others.

The Good Soldier depends on the character of Dowell for its effects. But it is possible that the book would have been just as powerful without Dowell because of its strong plot. Parade's End, however, depends completely on the realization of its character, because it has no plot.

The most interesting figure in Parade's End is Sylvia Tietjens. She is interesting because she is the symbol of an idea which is difficult to imagine in a single person. Sylvia represents everyone hating and despising the one who is out of step, the one who by his very presence in the

[41] Ibid., p. 5.

[42] Ibid., p. 257.

group is a threat to that group's way of thinking and way of life. She is all the violent forces of conformity unleashed on a single person, her husband. Although Tietjens is so moral that he is Christ-like, to Sylvia the reason for her hatred of him is "'because of his simple, sheer immorality.'"[43] It is immoral in Sylvia's eyes, in the world's eyes, for someone to be out of step with the rest no matter how honest, truthful, good, in short moral, this someone is. And yet throughout all her persecution of Tietjens the reader is aware that she is in love with him. "' If that man would throw his handkerchief to me, I would follow him round the world in my shift! Look here . . . see me shake when I think of it. . . .'"[44]

It is always dangerous to draw comparisons between fictional characters and actual people. However, in Parade's End I believe the comparisons do exist. Parade's End is part autobiographical and part wish-fulfillment. Sylvia Tietjens emerges as a believable character because she is patterned after a real person. There is no doubt that Violet Hunt persecuted Ford terribly during and immediately following the war. Ford's biographer records the situation in some detail.[45] There is a great deal of

[43]Ford, Parade's End, p. 39.

[44]Ibid., p. 386.

[45]Douglas Goldring, Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford (New York:E. P. Dutton, 1949) pp. 205-8.

Violet Hunt in Sylvia Tietjens. So much so that Violet Hunt found it necessary to defend herself:

> I was asked several times last year how I liked being called Sylvia--and certainly I do recollect something about a pair of sheets commandeered for the use of the Regiment--my best sheets! (cf. Parade's End, p. 353.) 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 soupcon of the tilt of the nose of Dante.
>
> It is a pity, but the public must realise that authors, like beggars, cannot be choosers.[46]

Sylvia is interesting, however, not for her resemblance to Violet Hunt, but because she lives, because she is so terribly human. Christopher Tietjens lives too which is incredible because he is not terribly human. He lives because he was also drawn from life. It is well known that Christopher Tietjens was based on Ford's friend, Arthur Marwood. Marwood had helped finance the English Review, and he and Ford had become good friends. Marwood had been educated at Eton and Cambridge, and these were things that Ford strongly desired. When he wrote Parade's End, Ford decided to pattern Tietjens after Marwood, although Marwood had died of tuberculosis before World War I. Robie Macauley quotes Ford as saying: "'I seemed . . . to see him stand in some high place in France

[46]Hunt, I Have This To Say: The Story of My Flurried Years, p. 203.

during the period of hostilities taking in not only what was visible but all the causes and all the motive powers of infinitely distant places. And I seemed to hear his infinitely scornful comment on those places. It was as if he lived again.'"[47] The Henry James technique of viewing the action or filtering the action through the mind of one central character sometimes shifts to one of the other characters in Parade's End. Essentially, though, the reader obtains Christopher Tietjens' view. If Ford patterned Tietjens after Marwood, he must have had to stop often and ask himself, "How would Marwood have viewed this situation?" We know from Ford's biographer that Ford admired Marwood immensely, that he imitated him, and that he eventually even ascribed some of Marwood's background to his own. It is logical to assume, then, that Tietjens is not so much Marwood as he is the embodiment of what Ford would have liked to have been and, indeed, even became in his own mind. Physically, Tietjens resembles Ford more than he does Marwood; the events which happen to him happened, in large measure, to Ford; and, at the time of the writing of Parade's End, Ford felt that he had passed through a period of extreme persecution by Violet Hunt and others. Ford tried several times during

[47]Ford, Parade's End, p. vii.

his life to return to the soil, to become, as he termed it, a "small producer." Shocked by what he saw in England after World War I, Ford retired to a small farm with a young Australian girl. Tietjens finds the same escape. Parade's End becomes then a novel of wish-fulfillment through the Christ-like figure of Christopher Tietjens. As Remy de Gourmont said:

> Literature indeed is nothing but the artistic development of ideas, the symbolizing of ideas by means of imaginary heroes. Heroes or men (for every man is a hero in his sphere) are only outlined by life; it is art which completes them by giving them in exchange for their poor sick souls the treasure of an immortal idea . . .[48]

[48]Remy de Gourmont, Remy de Gourmont: Selections, chosen and translated by Richard Aldington (London:Chatto and Windus, 1932) pp. 36-37.

CHAPTER III

The Special Problem of Collaboration

The story is told that Joseph Conrad once said to W. E. Henley,

> Look here. I write with such difficulty: my intimate, automatic, less expressed thoughts are in Polish; when I express myself with care I do it in French. When I write I think in French and then translate the words of my thoughts into English. This is an impossible process for one desiring to make a living by writing in the English language. . . .

Henley is supposed to have replied, "'Why don't you ask H. [Hueffer] to collaborate with you. He is the finest stylist in the English language of to-day. . . .'"[1] Ford Madox Ford, to whom Conrad related this incident, candidly remarks, "Henley obviously had said nothing of the sort."[2]

Regardless of how it happened, in the autumn of 1898, when Ford was twenty-four years old, Joseph Conrad approached Ford with the idea of collaboration. Conrad had written three novels, Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, and The Nigger of the Narcissus, and a collection of short stories, Tales of Unrest. Ford had written two novels, a book of poems, two children's stories, and a biography of his famous grandfather, Ford

[1]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (Boston:Little, Brown and Co., 1924) p. 32.

[2]Ibid.,

Madox Brown. Although Conrad was considerably older than Ford, they found each other mutually congenial.

> Their views regarding the art they practised were almost identical and their knowledge and appreciation of the masters of contemporary French literature equally profound. To Conrad, who was very much a stranger in a strange island, Ford's German origin must have seemed comfortingly continental. At the same time, as an Englishman born and bred, Ford's idiomatic knowledge of his native language, combined with his already admired prose style, supplied just the element which Conrad lacked.[3]

Both men were steeped in French literature, particularly Flaubert and Maupassant. Much of the mature style of Ford, as discussed in Chapter II, indicates the passion with which he and Conrad studied the two great French masters. The training which developed this style was marked by the harsh disciplines of writing in Flaubert's and Maupassant's native French and then translating what had been written into English.

> We remembered long passages of Flaubert; elaborated long passages in his spirit and with his cadences and then translated them into passages of English as simple as the subject under treatment would bear. We remembered short, staccato passages of Maupassant; invented short, staccato passages in his spirit and then translated them into English as simple as the subject would bear.[4]

[3]Douglas Goldring, Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford (New York:E. P. Dutton, 1949) p. 66.

[4]Ford, Joseph Conrad; A Personal Remembrance, p. 208.

The two collaborators acknowledged few English masters. They admired H. G. Wells's The Invisible Man, the stories of Cunninghame Graham and W. H. Hudson. Henry James, who had practiced many of the French novel writing techniques, was also admired.[5] These English influences, but most of all the weight of the French masters, were to be felt throughout the years of collaboration.

When Conrad first approached Ford in 1898, Ford had just completed the manuscript for a new novel to be entitled Seraphina. It was a historical romance concerning the adventures of the last man to ever be tried as a pirate in England. In answer to a polite query as to what he was writing at the moment, Ford read the manuscript of Seraphina to Conrad. Although Conrad was not particularly impressed with what Ford had written, he was intrigued by the possibility of the subject matter. Therefore the two writers decided to make Ford's original manuscript the basis for their first collaboration. It was to take them almost six years to turn Seraphina into the best work of their collaboration, Romance. Not all of the six years were consumed in artistic struggle over Romance. Each writer did a considerable amount of work on his own. Indeed, Conrad was to do his best work, including Heart of Darkness and Nostromo, during those six years.

[5]Ibid., p. 39.

The actual struggles put into the creation of Romance were long and frustrating, and it was during this time that the collaborators decided to turn to another unpublished manuscript of Ford's called The Inheritors. Ford describes the manuscript as

> . . . a political work, rather allegorically backing Mr. Balfour in the then Government; the villain was to be Joseph Chamberlain who had made the war [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 martyred negroes and to degrade them with fretted ivory cut from stolen tusks in the deep forests. . . . it had appeared to be an allegorico--realist romance; it showed the superseding of previous generations and codes by the merciless young who are always alien and without remorse. . . .[6]

It was a subject that appealed to Conrad's political bent, and Romance was dropped for awhile in favor of this new work.

The Inheritors was written in the first-person, a technique that Ford and Conrad were not only to use in all of their collaborated works but in much of their individual work as well. Unlike Conrad's Marlow, however, the narrator of The Inheritors is closely akin to Ford's Dowell in that he is the protagonist of his tale. The narrator, a struggling young writer, falls in love

[6]Ibid., p. 141.

with a girl who claims to be of the fourth-dimension. The inhabitants of the fourth-dimension are in the process of subverting and overthrowing the existing government in England to make room for themselves. By the clever use of her charms as bait, the girl manages to enlist the narrator's aid in the plot of the fourth-dimensionists. With the help of the narrator's pen, all England becomes enthused over a scheme to colonize Greenland. People, possessing unlimited faith in the existing order, invest their life savings in the project. As a final act of fidelity to the fourth-dimensionist girl, the narrator cajoles the Prime-Minister into supporting the Greenland project. At the height of popular enthusiasm, the fourth-dimensionists prick the balloon by exposing as frauds the backers of the Greenland project. The Government falls, and in the ensuing chaos the fourth-dimensionists sieze control of England. Since he can no longer be useful to them and since he has never been one of them, the narrator is cast aside by the fourth-dimensionists. The Inheritors closes with the narrator possessing neither country nor girl.

At the time of the collaboration on The Inheritors, it appears that Conrad had little admiration for the book but that Ford was quite serious about it.

> In a letter to [Edward] Garnett, after saying that he [Conrad] considered the acceptance of the book by Heinemann a distinct bit of luck, "Jove, what a lark!", he remarks that he set himself to look upon the thing as a sort of skit on the sort of political novel, written by a certain sort of fools. "This in my heart of hearts. And poor H [Hueffer] 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."[7]

However, many years later when the two collaborators were discussing the republishing of The Inheritors Conrad explained:

> "Why not? Why not republish it? It's a good book isn't it? It's a damn good book!" And the writer [Ford] let the matter go at that--rather than imply that Conrad would have set his name to a book that he did not consider good, or even damn good.[8]

There is little doubt, whether Conrad cared for the book or not, that the plot of The Inheritors was conceived by Ford. It is significant that in the plot of The Inheritors appears for the first time the central theme which was to dominate all of Ford's best writing--the destruction and decay of the old society and the coming of the new.

The idea for the plot may have come from H. G. Wells's The Time Machine, which was published in 1895, three years

[7]Goldring, Trained for Genius, p. 67.

[8]Ford, Joseph Conrad, p. 126.

before the collaboration began. In The Time Machine, time is called the fourth dimension. Ford and Conrad have peopled this fourth dimension with a race, representing youth, which wishes to overthrow the existing conditions.

The Inheritors not only is the beginning of Ford's use of the fall-of-the-existing-order theme, but it also marks the beginning of another aspect of Ford's technique, his characterization. All of Ford's major novels hinge on a central figure in a crumbling society. In Parade's End the central figure, Christopher Tietjens, does not adapt to his new society and suffers inevitable persecution. In The Good Soldier Dowell is left alone with the realization that he has helped to destroy his world.

The narrator-protagonist of The Inheritors has by helping the fourth-dimensionists overthrown his world. But, on the day his world collapses, the horror of what he has helped to bring about slowly becomes clear.

> I was beginning to wonder how it was that I felt such an absolute conviction of being alone, and it was then, I believe, that in this solitude that had descended upon my soul I seemed to see the shape of an approaching Nemesis. It is permitted to no man to break with his past, with the past of his kind, and to throw away the treasure of his future. I began to suspect I had gained nothing; I

> began to understand that even such a catastrophe was possible.[9]

The narrator's tragedy is that by helping time, or the future, to overthrow the present, he has severed his ties with the present, but there is no place for him in the new order because he is essentially a product of the old. In the last chapter the girl from the fourth-dimension tells him.

> "Well, you have parted with your past . . . and there is no future for you. That is true too. But what is that to me? A set of facts--that you have parted with your past and have no future. You had to do the work; I had to make you do it. That is all . . . I knew you; knew your secret places, your weaknesses. That is my power. I stand for the Inevitable, for the future that goes on its way; you for the past that lies by the roadside. If for your sake I had swerved one jot from my allotted course, I should have been untrue . . ."[10]

The decay of an existing order is never easily accepted or properly evaluated by those who are present during the decay. Those who do recognize it are powerless to stop it. The novelist who embraces such a theme quickly encounters the problem of so many modern writers, the dichotomy between appearance and reality. A social order crumbles or a culture decays because beneath its surfaces it is rotten. Thus the writer, particularly the

[9]Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story (New York:Doubleday, Page and Co., 1914) p. 305.

[10]Ibid., pp. 319-20.

twentieth century writer, who discovers that the old order is dying just as quickly discovers that no one around him seems aware of it or will recognize it. This lack of awareness is partially due to the fact that men must live in the world of illusion to protect themselves from reality. Men must believe that what they do today will have significance tomorrow.

The fourth dimension of The Inheritors represents time and reality. The narrator moves in a world of illusion. He is blinded by the illusions covering reality. However, because he has witnessed the downfall of his society from the inside as it were, because he has inadvertently worked for the fourth-dimensionists, he recognizes far more clearly than his fellow men the horror of what has happened. As the props are pulled out from under his society, he says,

> . . . but more revolting to see without a mask was that falsehood which had been hiding under the words that for ages had spurred men to noble deeds, to self-sacrifice, to heroism. What was appalling was the sudden perception that all the traditional ideals of honour, glory, conscience, had been committed to the upholding of a gigantic and atrocious fraud. The falsehood had spread stealthily, had eaten into the very heart of creeds and convictions that we lean upon on our passage between the past and the future. The old order of things had to live or perish with a lie.[11]

[11] Ibid., p. 282.

It must be remembered that when Conrad saw the manuscript of The Inheritors it was in nearly complete form. Just what was Conrad's contribution to The Inheritors, then? With the aid of Ford's invaluable work, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance, which describes the years of collaboration, Conrad's contribution can be accurately analyzed. It was a stylistic contribution. By adding a word here, adding a phrase there, Conrad was able to tighten the construction of the whole and to clarify the parts. As Ford says, "Conrad's function in 'The Inheritors' as it to-day stands was to give to each scene a final tap; these, in a great many cases, brought the whole meaning of the scene to the reader's mind."[12] Ford has left several examples of Conrad's work in The Inheritors. The following is an example of how Conrad's additions helped to more sharply define the first impression the narrator has on meeting the girl from the fourth-dimension. The italics are Conrad's additions.

> I had looked at her before; now I cast a sideways, critical glance at her. I came out of my moodiness to wonder what type this was. *She had good hair, good eyes, and some charm. Yes.* And something besides--a something--*that was not an attribute of her beauty.* The modelling of her face was so perfect as to produce an effect of transparency, *yet there*

[12]Ford, Joseph Conrad, p. 144.

> was no suggestion of frailness; her glance had an extraordinary strength of life. Her hair was fair and gleaming, her cheeks coloured as if a warm light had fallen on them from somewhere. She was familiar till it occurred to you that she was strange.[13]

Conrad had a passion for defining things exactly which nicely balanced Ford's easy-going vagueness. An amusing sidelight to the above quotation is Ford's recollection of Conrad's attitude toward the addition of "she had good hair, good eyes, and some charm" to the above quotation.

> It was only with difficulty that he was restrained from adding good teeth to the catalogue. He said with perfect seriousness, "Why not good teeth? Good teeth in a woman are part of her charm. Think of when she laughs. You would not have her not have good teeth. They are a sign of health. Your damn woman has to be healthy, doesn't she?" The writer, however, stopped that. . . . To-day he would not.[14]

It was Conrad's passion for accuracy and definition that controlled Ford's use of half-sentences already discussed in Chapter II. In Ford's original manuscript a scene was presented as follows:

> "You don't understand. . . . She. . . . She will. . . ."
>
> He said: "Ah! Ah!" in an intolerable tone of royal badinage.

[13] Ibid., p. 142.

[14] Ibid., p. 152.

> I said again: "You don't understand. . . . Even for your own sake. . . ."
>
> He swayed a little on his feet and said: "Bravo. . . . Bravissimo. . . . You propose to frighten. . . ."
>
> I looked at his great bulk of a body. . . . People began to pass, muffled up, on their way out of the place.[15]

Together the two collaborators reworked the scene. Conrad's additions are italicized.

> "If you do not" (cease persecuting her had been implied several speeches before), I said, "I shall forbid you to see her. And I shall. . . ."
>
> "Oh, oh!" he interjected with the intonation of a reveller at a farce. "We are at that--we are the excellent brother--" He paused and then added: "Well, go to the devil, you and your forbidding." He spoke with the greatest good humour.
>
> "I am in earnest," I said, "very much in earnest. The thing has gone too far. And even for your own sake you had better . . . ."
>
> He said: "Ah, ah!" in the tone of his "Oh, oh!"
>
> "She is no friend to you," I struggled on, "she is playing with you for her own purposes; you will. . . ."
>
> He swayed a little on his feet and said: "Bravo . . . bravissimo. If we can't forbid him we will frighten him. Go on, my good fellow. . . ." and then, "Come, go on."

[15]Ibid., pp. 144-45.

> I looked at his great bulk of a body. . . .
>
> "You absolutely refuse to pay any attention?" I said.
>
> "Oh, absolutely," he answered.[16]

Although the above might appear to be a laborious type of collaboration, the patchwork effect is undoubtedly due to Ford's having already written a complete first draft. The Inheritors was published in 1901 and received, if not enthusiastic, at least favorable reviews.

The two collaborators returned to the writing of Romance which was eventually published in 1903.

Romance is the first-person narrative of one John Kemp. As a young man, Kemp becomes involved with smugglers and is forced to leave England for the West Indies. An unfortunate fight in Jamaica forces him to move again. A beautiful girl, Seraphina, whom he has met in Jamaica, offers him sanctuary in Cuba. The sanctuary, on the death of Seraphina's father, becomes a prison guarded by pirates. Kemp manages to flee with Seraphina, however, and returns to England where he finds himself accused of piracy and threatened with hanging.

The plot of Romance is a Stevensonian adventure on the order of Treasure Island. Such a romantic plot is quite different from the other plots conceived by Ford

[16]Ibid., pp. 145-46.

which we have studied. However, on several occasions throughout his life, Ford used romantic, historical plots successfully. Romance, however, is the only novel worth studying in this tradition.

The genesis of Romance had begun:

> Years before . . ., looking through the pages of Dickens's "All the Year Round" for woodcuts contributed by Ford Madox Brown, upon whose biography he had been engaged, the writer had come upon a short rendering of the official account of the trial of Aaron Smith. This had been the last trial for piracy that had ever been held at the Old Bailey and the prisoner was acquitted. The story told by him in the dock was sufficiently that of "Romance," as it now stands.[17]

The name, John Kemp, and the date, 1822, had been scratched into one of the windows at Pent Farm, which was first Ford's home and later Conrad's.

Although Romance was a long time in being written,

> It is not to be imagined that we spent the whole of our times upon this enterprise; we each at intervals carried on work of our own. Then we would drop it, have another month's try at "Romance." Then drop that again. . . . Or sometimes one of us would write his own work in the morning; the other would write away at "Romance"; in the evenings and till far into the night we would join up. We pursued this monstrous undertaking all over the shores and near-shores of the British Channel; at the Pent, near Hythe in Kent; at Aldington; at Winchelsea in Sussex, in Bruges. . . . The most terrible struggles of all took place in a windy hotel at Knocke on the Belgian coast, with a contralto from

[17]Ibid., p. 5.

> Bayreuth practising in the basement. . . . Conrad was then beginning "Nostromo" in the mornings: . . .[18]

The plot of Romance was not typically Conradian or Fordian, but it captured their imaginations. Romance is a beautifully constructed novel with excellent technique and a flawless handling of progression d'effet. The atmosphere and the suspense of its plot superbly handled make it the epitome of "romance." It is as good as Stevenson and better written and constructed than Scott or Dumas. The individual temperaments of the two writers clashed again and again during the writing of Romance, but this clashing helped to make it the tightly constructed book that it is. Ford recalled many years later,

> John Kemp merely kidnapped by pirates and misjudged by the judicial bench of our country was not so vastly attractive, but a John Kemp who was in addition a political refugee, suspect of High Treason and victim of West India merchants. . . . That was squeezing the last drop of blood out of the subject. . . .
>
> The differences in our temperaments were sufficiently well marked. Conrad was brave: he was for inclusion and hang the consequences. The writer, more circumspect, was for ever on the watch to suppress the melodramatic incident and the sounding phrase. So, till that psychological moment, the writer doing most of the first drafting, Conrad had been perpetually crying, "Give! Give!" The writer was to give one more, and one more, and again one more turn to the screw that sent the rather listless John Kemp towards an inevitable gallows. The actual

[18] Ibid., pp. 123-24.

> provision of intrigue in 1820 between England and Jamaica was the writer's business. Conrad contented himself with saying, "You must invent. You have got to make that fellow live perpetually under the shadow of the gallows." . . . It was therefore necessary to give the screw one turn more: Kemp had to be made a misjudged man, betrayed by the stupid cruelty of merchants and the administration. He thus became exactly a figure for Conrad to handle. For, if Conrad were the eternal Loyalist, nevertheless the unimaginative and cruel stupidity of Crown and Government officials was an essential part of his creed . . . So, by that moment, we had worked John Kemp into a position that can have been occupied by very few unjustly accused heroes of romance. When he stood in the Old Bailey Dock he had the whole legal, the whole political, the whole naval forces of the Crown, the whole influence at once of the City of London and of the Kingdom of Spain determined to hang him. . . ."[19]

The skillful use of progression d'effet, the giving of "the screw one turn more," helps to create the real value of Romance, its atmosphere which, in turn, is further enhanced by the sensibility and the sensuous perceptiveness of the descriptions of situations and feelings. As an example, notice in the following chapter the mood created by a man lying in a darkened room and how the description of situation and feeling pile on top of each other until the moment of surprise is reached in the last line:

> I turned my head to a click, I saw a door open a little way, and the small blue

[19]Ibid., pp. 42-45.

> flame of a taper floated into the room. Then the door closed with a definite sound of shutting in. The light shown redly through protecting fingers, and upwards onto a small face. It came to a halt, and I made out the figure of a girl leaning across a table and looking upwards. There was a click of glass, and then a great blaze of light created a host of shining things; a glitter of gilded carvings, red velvet couches, a shining table, a low ceiling, painted white, on carved rafters. A large silver lamp she had lighted kept on swinging to the gentle motion of the ship.
>
> She stood just in front of me; the girl that I had seen through the door; the girl I had seen play with the melon seeds. She was breathing fast--it agitated me to be alone with her--and she had a little shining dagger in her hand.[20]

It has been mentioned that The Inheritors is interesting because it marks the beginning of themes which were to become more important in later and more mature works. Romance is not entirely devoid of these themes, however. If Graham Greene were right when he said that Ford "had never really believed in human happiness, . . ."[21] and if in Conrad's work Marlowe with his shrinking from the darkness and Heyst's final "victory" speak for Conrad, then one can catch a glimpse of the future themes of each man's work in Ford's statement:

[20]Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), Romance, Concord Edition (Garden City:Doubleday, Page & Co., 1923) p. 97.

[21]Graham Greene, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays (New York:Viking Press, 1952) p. 91.

> It is characteristic of Conrad--it is most characteristic of Conrad--that when, after five years, he and the writer got to the last paragraphs of "Romance" and when the writer had written, "For suffering is the lot of man," Conrad should have added, "but not inevitable failure or worthless despair which is without end: suffering, the mark of manhood, which bears within its pain the hope of felicity, like a jewel set in iron."[22]

The final work of collaboration was published in book form in 1924. It was entitled The Nature of a Crime. The actual date of composition is almost impossible to discover. Edward Naumberg, Jr. in his "A Catalogue of a Ford Madox Ford Collection" says that The Nature of a Crime first appeared in the April and May issues of The English Review for 1919 under the pseudonym "Baron Von Aschendorf."[23] However, Conrad, in his preface to The Nature of a Crime, speaks of the tale's origin as being near the time the English Review was founded. Stylistic evidence would also indicate an earlier date than 1919. The English Review was founded in 1908, and, since Conrad places the writing of the story near the founding, we may assume it was composed within a year or two of that date. (Possibly 1919 is a typographical error and should have read 1909.) The date is important because

[22]Ford, Joseph Conrad, p. 14.

[23]Edward Naumberg, Jr., "A Catalogue of a Ford Madox Ford Collection." The Princeton University Library Chronicle, IX, p. 153.

The Nature of a Crime is a better stepping-stone to The Good Soldier, published in 1915, than the novels written in the intervening years, 1909-1915, when Ford was writing alone. The Nature of a Crime points directly toward The Good Soldier stylistically, so does it thematically.

The plot of The Nature of a Crime unfolds through a series of letters the narrator writes to his mistress. The narrator is a wealthy and influential man, largely through the money he has embezzled from a fund left in his trust. The person whose money he has been holding has come of age and is about to be married. Thus the narrator faces exposure when the young man asks for his money. The narrator has enjoyed his life of deceit, and it has been doubly enjoyable because he has appeared so respectable. Now that exposure is near he contemplates suicide, However, his client, the young man, decides not to audit his books for fear of offending him, and thus the narrator is reprieved. Here again is an example of illusion serving as a shield for reality, protecting, in this case, reality from being discovered. The narrator's apparent respectability has served as protection against the reality of his crime.

The narrator, of course, knows that it has been his respectability which has saved him from discovery. He

has three choices: he can write his client, telling him what he has done and carry out his suicide plan, thus exposing his client to reality; he can quietly get his client's books in order to put him off indefinitely, thus protecting his client from reality; or he can continue to gamble his client's money, facing eventual discovery and ruin, thus prolonging his client's discovery of reality. It is significant that he narrows his choice to the latter two. Just as the narrator in The Inheritors discovers that men are spurred on to courageous deeds by words that hide falsehoods, so the narrator of The Nature of a Crime commits himself to knowingly upholding the lie to protect man from discovering the horror of reality.

The eventual break between Conrad and Ford was inevitable, and it was brought about by a combination of several things. One of the aspects of writing which constantly harassed Conrad was his difficulty with the English language. Although he was far enough removed from the influence of the Polish language when he began his career as a writer, Conrad was not far enough removed from the French language. Essentially he thought in French so that for him writing became a problem of translation. The influence of Flaubert was too great, because it was this influence which constantly led him in search of le mot juste.

Finding the exact English equivalents for the phrases and words which sprang to his mind in French was terrifying and nerve wracking work.[24] As he grew older the strain became greater, until Conrad formed an intense dislike for the English language. To Ford Conrad's hatred of the English language was like biting the hand that fed him, although he understood and sympathized with Conrad's problem:

> Conrad's indictment of the English language was this, that no English word is a word; that all English words are instruments for exciting blurred emotions. "Oaken" in French means "made of oak wood"--nothing more. "Oaken" in English connotes innumerable moral attributes: it will connote stolidity, resolution, honesty, blond features, relative unbreakables, absolute unbendableness--also, made of oak. . . . The consequence is that no English word has clean edges: a reader is always, for a fraction of a second, uncertain as to which meaning of the word the writer intends. Thus, all English prose is blurred.[25]

As Conrad's fury mounted over his frustrations, which were not all stylistic but monetary as well, he would turn and lash out at his friend and collaborator. Unfortunately Ford was going through a period of personal stress as well. He was in debt, his wife was seriously ill, and he was beginning to have doubts as to his capacity

[24]For a specific example of this particular problem in Conrad's writing see Ford, Joseph Conrad, pp. 168-74.

[25]Ford, Joseph Conrad, p. 229.

as a writer. He cracked and in 1904 he suffered a nervous breakdown. It would be impossible to determine how much of Ford's illness was due to Conrad's carping, but there is little doubt that Conrad contributed heavily toward its inception. Douglas Goldring, Ford's biographer, says, "The long and nerve-wracking collaboration with the always wailing and bemoaning Conrad no doubt had pernicious after-effects. It could hardly be otherwise in view of Ford's easily impressionable nature."[26]

After Ford's return from a long rest-cure in Europe, fresh differences arose between the two collaborators. Ford started the English Review which Conrad violently opposed on the grounds that it would destroy Ford's imaginative writing career.[27] And finally there was the scandal which surrounded Ford's association with Violet Hunt. Although it is entirely probable that most of the animosity toward Ford was felt by Mrs. Conrad, there was nevertheless a considerable cooling off between Ford and Conrad after Ford began living with Violet Hunt. The two writers continued to correspond, and in 1915 Conrad agreed to become Ford's literary executor in the event that Ford was killed during the war.

[26]Goldring, Trained for Genius, p. 114.

[27]Ford, Joseph Conrad, p. 131.

In any event the end of an unusual and interesting collaboration had come. It was a collaboration which had given much to both men, because both men had had something to give to the other.

> 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.[28]

Conrad wrote his best work during the period of collaboration and the years immediately following it, including Lord Jim (1900), Youth (1902), The Heart of Darkness (1902), Nostromo (1904), The Secret Agent (1907), Chance (1913), and Victory (1915). And much of this writing shows a sensitivity for words which was not apparent before Conrad and Ford wrestled over the words of Romance.

In H. G. Wells's opinion:

> ". . . 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, . . ."[29]

Ford's debt to Conrad is obvious, the style and structure of The Good Soldier being a tribute to Conrad's

[28]Ibid., p. 179.

[29]Goldring, Trained for Genius, p. 89.

teachings. However, the collaboration did Ford a lot of harm too. In later years, because he had collaborated with Conrad, Ford was accused of imitating him and even of paying for the privilege of writing with him.[30] Ford did give Conrad several sums of money during the years of their collaboration as loans which were always repaid. Ford also imitated Conrad in that he helped Conrad in the writing of several novels, including The Rescue and The End of the Tether. Neither The Good Soldier nor Parade's End, however, could in any sense be called Conradian. It is unfortunate that literary historians in lionizing one man had to belittle the other, because out of their association came three interesting books, one of them a masterpiece.

[30]See Ford, Joseph Conrad, pp. 187 and 159.

CHAPTER IV

A Summary

The preceding chapter has explored the period during which the careers of two writers traveled the same path. When their two careers touched, one of the writers, Ford Madox Ford, was far more experienced in the profession of writing. Today, the other writer, Joseph Conrad, is considered one of the great English novelists, and the name of Ford Madox Ford has been all but forgotten. Why did this happen?

The obvious answer is that Conrad had genius and Ford did not. Unfortunately, the obvious answer is not always true. This essay has shown that Ford possessed the ingredients necessary to make a writer of genius. Ford was aware of the deep moral and aesthetic responsibilities demanded by true artistic creation. He had also studied and learned the tools of his craft and within their disciplines had been something of an innovator. He had, furthermore, collaborated and been intimately associated with one of the great English novelists during a period when this great novelist had written much of his best work.

Although very few have been interested enough in Ford to bother criticizing his work, one interesting theory has developed concerning Ford's inability to qualify as a great

writer. The source of this theory is Granville Hicks who said:

> It is, perhaps, clearer to me than before that he [Ford] fell short of greatness, in even the loose sense of the term, through excess rather than deficiency of talent. He wrote too easily, and he wrote far too much.[1]

There is a certain amount of truth in this idea. A bookshelf containing the total of Ford's literary output would display almost 80 volumes. All but a very few would be considered worthless by most literary critics. These few would include The Good Soldier, the four novels comprising Parade's End, his biography of Conrad, one or two of his numerous autobiographies, and probably some of his poetry. The reason why Ford wrote so many worthless books is perhaps threefold. He was constantly in debt, and his financial worries drove him often to the necessity of writing potboilers. Connected with this was his great facility for writing. The ease with which a novel could be dashed off for a little money to buy necessities kept him from devoting the time and effort necessary to the writing of a great novel. The third reason can be found, paradoxically, in his devotion to good writing. This devotion led him to consider everything he wrote before the age of forty as in the nature

[1]Granville Hicks, "Ford Madox Ford," New Directions: Number Seven (Norfolk, Connecticut:New Directions, 1942) p. 443.

of practice and experimentation. In 1924 he wrote:

> For it was quite definitely the writer'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. One must roll one's hump around the world first. . . .[2]

Ford had "rolled his hump" quite far when he wrote The Good Soldier at the age of forty--he had published forty-two books by that time.

However, the practice and experimentation resulted in an excellent novel, and, in the years following World War I, the four superior novels which comprise the Tietjens tetralogy appeared. So that before he died, Ford had produced five very good novels. Surely this would be enough to base a distinguished reputation on. Five great novels out of a lifetime of writing is a distinguished record, and yet Ford is virtually forgotten today. The defect must lie in the five novels themselves.

On the surface the central theme of the five novels--the crumbling of the old order and the coming of the new--is acceptable enough. The theme is common to mankind, it

[2]Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (Boston:Little, Brown and Co., 1924) p. 186.

is true to life. Other writers have explored and used the same theme successfully, including Conrad, James and Proust.[3] However, the theme was one which demanded more than Ford was willing to bring to it. For The Good Soldier and Parade's End are essentially pessimistic books.

In The Good Soldier the reader is left gazing at a scene of incredible destruction in the midst of which stands Dowell fatuous and foolish, mouthing absurdities about his resemblance to Ashburnham. Because Dowell has learned nothing from his experience, the reader learns nothing. The reader has been shown that in a situation which is decayed, relationships will fall apart, that decay is not always easy to see, and that people need the mask of social convention to hide from themselves the horror of reality. Beyond this Ford does not go. He does not offer any solution nor make any comment, he merely presents the affair. The only conclusion the reader can safely draw, therefore, is that The Good Soldier intentionally presents a completely nihilistic view toward life.

At first glance Parade's End would seem to supply what had been omitted in The Good Soldier. Essentially the same theme has been repeated not once but twice--the

[3]William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature: 1885-1956 (New York:Vintage Books, 1956) p. 192 and p. 205.

decay and corruption of the values of 19th century England as signaled by the war on a macrocosmic scale, and the same decay and corruption mirrored in the lives of those surrounding Christopher Tietjens on a microcosmic scale. And unlike Dowell, Tietjens is a character who understands and battles the forces of corruption which surround him. Furthermore, Ford has made Tietjens of heroic proportions, and not only in name, but in the horror and tragedy of the endless persecution he is made to suffer, Christopher Tietjens becomes, intentionally, a Christ-like figure. Parade's End fails, however, for almost the same reason that The Good Soldier fails. The central character will not bear the load he is forced to carry. Tietjens' solution to the chaos around him is not only intensely personal, it is anachronistic. His solution is not applicable to anyone else. So that the reader of Parade's End is again left with a well-defined picture of the chaos created by the crumbling of an old order but without a guide out of the chaos. Tietjens' advocacy of a return to an older set of values has little meaning to today's reader who looks upon Tietjens as a crank, a prig, and a boor. And I am not sure that Tietjens' values had any more validity in 1924 when the first book of the tetralogy was published, for the world had passed through World War I and was seeking to form a new set of values applicable

to the 20th century and not a reversion to older values inexplicable to most people. Further, in spite of the fact that Tietjens' values are labeled as 17th and 18th century, they are actually Victorian. The following is an example of Tietjens, not as a political Tory but a Victorian gentleman Tory:

> He disliked letting that "man" touch his things; he had disliked letting his wife's maid pack for him. He even disliked letting porters carry his kit-bag. He was a Tory-- . . .[4]

This description would undoubtedly be as unintelligible to a 17th or 18th century man as it is meaningless to the 20th century reader. Ford has, therefore, in his characterization of Tietjens fallen into the same trap that his pre-Raphaelite forefathers fell into. He has cast an essentially historical figure, who could never exist except as an anachronism, into a contemporary setting. As an anachronism, Tietjens can have little effect on the world about him. Thus William Gaunt's remark on William Morris and the pre-Raphaelite movement has equal validity when applied to Christopher Tietjens and Parade's End: ". . . the dream had charged full tilt into reality and nothing had happened at all."[5]

Another factor which conspired to obscure Ford's fame after his death was his style and technique. As

[4]Ford Madox Ford, Parade's End (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 1950) p. 4.

[5]William Gaunt, The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948) p. 207.

was pointed out in Chapter II, Ford was a mature craftsman when it came to using the tools of his trade. However, Ford's greatest novels are, in a sense, experimentation and innovation. The Good Soldier needs to be read more than once in order to grasp its meaning. Probably several readings would be necessary in order to understand all of its subtleties and complexities. As I mentioned in Chapter II, the style in The Good Soldier is analogous to a detective story in which the facts gained on one page serve to illuminate a clue subtly stated several pages before. It is not until the whole book is read and a re-reading begun that certain passages become clear. So that, although one can state that The Good Soldier is a beautifully constructed and carefully written novel, it is, because of its complexities, the sort of book which will never become popular.

Complexity, however, has never deterred the literary critic from examining a work that is profound and a contribution to literature. However, as I have pointed out earlier, the critic, on reading The Good Soldier, is not only faced with complexity of style but with a somewhat dubious philosophy. The critic is, therefore, forced to the same conclusion that H. G. Wells came to when he compared much of Henry James's work to a cathedral:

> "Without congregation to distract you, with every light and line focused on the high altar. And on the altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, is a dead kitten, an egg-shell, a bit of string. . . ."[6]

For different reasons, the style and technique of Parade's End are similarly complex and difficult. While Ford tried to combine everything he knew about writing into The Good Soldier, in Parade's End he explored his new techniques of the time-shift and the shifting of viewpoint from one character to another. Coupled with this complex style is Parade's End's vast bulk. Although the four novels comprising the Tietjens tetralogy are meant to be read as one book, they were published separately with several years between each volume, necessitating a recapitulation of the preceding events each time a new book is begun. Therefore, in some respects, Parade's End is a clumsy novel, not nearly as compact and concise as The Good Soldier and containing all of the latter's complexities of style. From my above discussion of the central character of Parade's End, it may well be concluded that Wells's comment would be applicable here.

Ford's personal life did much to damage his reputation during his lifetime. His unfortunate troubles with his legal wife and the subsequent scandal created when

[6]Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, p. 198.

he made Violet Hunt his mistress turned many otherwise sensible critics against him. Inasmuch as the publicity attending Ford's embroilment with Violet Hunt preceded the publication of The Good Soldier by only two or three short years, the novel was greeted with either silence or highly critical reviews. Some idea of the violence with which The Good Soldier was greeted by some critics may be gained from the following letter written in reply to a review of the novel in The New Witness, a reply written by one of Ford's few remaining friends, H. G. Wells:

> "This business of the Hueffer book in the New Witness makes me sick. Some disgusting little greaser named _____ has been allowed to insult old F.M.H. in a series of letters which makes me ashamed of my species. Hueffer has many faults no doubt, but first he's poor, secondly he's notoriously unhappy and in a most miserable position, thirdly he's a better writer than any of your little crowd and fourthly, instead of pleading his age and his fat and taking refuge from service in a greasy obesity as your brother has done, he is serving his country. His book is a great book and _____ just lies about it--I guess he's a dirty-minded priest or some such unclean thing--when he says it is a story of a stallion and so forth. The whole outbreak is so envious, so base, so cat-in-the gutter-spitting-at-the-passerby, that I will never let the New Witness into the house again.
>
> Regretfully yours,
> H. G. Wells"[7]

[7]Douglas Goldring, Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford (New York:E.P. Dutton, 1949) pp. 180-181.

Following the war, Ford found a new mistress and succeeded in making a powerful enemy of Violet Hunt. The four novels composing the Tietjens' saga received very few reviews in England as a result.

Furthermore, Ford succeeded in making many enemies by his egocentricity and inability to tell the truth about himself. When he published his biography of Conrad, he revealed something which most people had forgotten, he had at one time collaborated with Conrad. Unfortunately, many critics found the idea of Ford collaborating with the great Conrad unsettling and promptly branded Ford's biography as braggadocio. Credence was lent to this opinion by Mrs. Conrad who had never liked Ford and who promptly wrote a biography of her husband which played down Ford's association with Conrad. The popular opinion concerning Ford eventually came to be summed up in H. L. Mencken's famous attack:

> "This Ford, or Hueffer, has been a promising young man in England for thirty years. He got launched early through the fact that his grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, was much talked of in the 'nineties; he has made gallant efforts, since then, to realise the high hopes of his sponsors and rooters, of which last group he has always been an ardent member himself . . . another time he took to writing history and biography. Yet another time he consecrated himself to novels. Lately, apparently despairing of making a go of it in London, he moved to Paris and started a <u>tendenz</u> magazine called the <u>transatlantic review</u> . . . Half German and half English, he is a sort of walking civil war--too much engrossed by

> the bombs going off in his own ego to make much of an impression upon the rest of the human race. The high, purple spot of his life came when he collaborated with Conrad, and upon the fact, I daresay, his footnote in the Literature books will depend."[8]

Anger at Ford's pretensions has now, with the passage of years, subsided into indifference. Perhaps it is unfortunate that appreciation and knowledge of his work has suffered the same fate, for if what Ford said in his novels lacks validity today, the way in which he said it certainly deserves the conscientious study of those interested in good writing. Ford was a craftsman, and he brought the craftsman's feeling for competent and artistic work to his writing. And what he did say in his five great novels was said beautifully. Granville Hicks probably stated the position of Ford and Ford's works most succinctly when he stated:

> "Ford's work not only shows that formal excellence may be combined with vitality and vigor; it reminds us that the sole justification of formal excellence is its effect in enhancing the vitality of the work in question."[9]

[8] Ibid., pp. 242-43.

[9] Granville Hicks, "Ford Madox Ford," p. 455.

NOTE ON SOURCES

I have tried wherever possible to draw from Ford's own works. The only biography of Ford is Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford by Douglas Goldring. As a young man, Goldring was Ford's assistant on the English Review, and, since he knew Ford most of his life, his biography may be taken as fairly authoritative. However, the reader should note that Ezra Pound in a personal interview said: "You mustn't believe Goldring in his accounts of the war years. He was what we called a 'fly boy.' He fled to Ireland to avoid conscription, and he is constantly trying to keep this from coming out."

Violet Hunt's I Have This To Say covers the 1908-1915 period of Ford's life. It is, as one would expect, prejudiced and not altogether accurate.

A complete bibliography of all of Ford's works published in England and the United States can be found in Trained for Genius, pp. 278-84.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blackman, R. P., "The King Over the Water: Notes on the Novels of F. M. Hueffer." Princeton Library Chronicle, IX, pp. 123-27.

Conrad, Joseph and Hueffer, Ford Madox, The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story (New York:Doubleday, Page & Co., 1914).

-----, The Nature of a Crime (London:Duckworth, 1924).

-----, Romance (New York:Doubleday, Page & Co., 1923).

Flaubert, Gustave, Madame Bovary, introduction by Charles I. Weir, Jr. (New York:Rinehart & Co., 1948).

(Ford) Hueffer, Ford Madox, The Critical Attitude (London: Duckworth, 1911).

-----, The English Novel (Philadelphia:Lippencott, 1929).

-----, The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1927).

-----, Henry James (London:Secker, 1913).

-----, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1924).

-----, Memories and Impressions: A Study in Atmosphere (New York:Harper and Brothers, 1911).

-----, Parade's End (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 1950).

-----, Portraits From Life (New York:Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1937).

-----, The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Critical Monograph (London:Duckworth & Co., 1906).

-----, Return To Yesterday (New York:Liveright, 1932).

Gaunt, William, The Aesthetic Adventure (New York:Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1945).

-----, The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy (New York:Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942).

Goldring, Douglas, South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and The English Review Circle (London:Constable & Co., Ltd., 1943).

Goldring, Douglas, Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford (New York:E. P. Dutton, 1949).

Gorman, Herbert, "Ford Madox Ford: The Personal Side," Princeton University Library Chronicle, IX, pp. 119-22.

de Gourmont, Remy, Remy de Gourmont: Selections, chosen and translated by Richard Aldington (London:Chatto and Windus, 1932).

Greene, Graham, The Lost Childhood and Other Essays (New York:Viking, 1952).

Hunt, Violet, I Have This To Say: The Story of My Flurried Years (New York:Boni & Liveright, 1926).

Naumberg, Edward Jr., "A Catalogue of a Ford Madox Ford Collection," Princeton University Library Chronicle, IX, pp. 134-65.

New Directions: Number Seven (Norfolk, Connecticut:New Directions, 1942).

Pater, Walter, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London:Macmillan and Co., 1935).

Pound, Ezra, Polite Essays (London:Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937).

Read, Herbert, English Prose Style (Boston:Beacon Press, 1952).

Schorer, Mark, "The Good Novelist in The Good Soldier," Princeton University Library Chronicle, IX, pp. 128-33.

Spiller, Robert E., The Cycle of American Literature (New York:Mentor Books, 1957).

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