

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELS OF  
FORD MADOX FORD

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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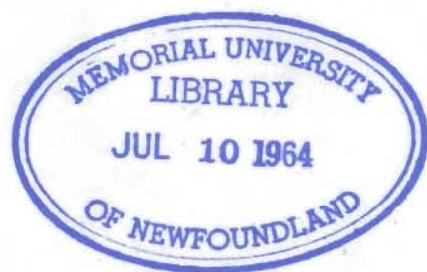
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FORD MADDOX FORD

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**This thesis has been examined and approved by:**

## ABSTRACT

In the development of the English Novel, one of the recognizable trends is the gradually emerging conception of the novel as Art. From Richardson, Austen, Eliot, Meredith, to James and Conrad, the critic can trace the increasing involvement of the novelist in the discovery and perfection of techniques which would make it possible to represent in the novel life as it appears to the intelligent observer. Ford Madox Ford followed this trend in the novel and carried the form to new heights through the methods he evolved.

Surrounded by artists and writers from birth, Ford naturally took up a career in writing. Strongly encouraged by his maternal grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, he found early success in the publication of a fairy-tale, The Brown Owl (1892). A second fairy-tale, The Feather, and his first novel, The Shifting of the Fire, were produced within the same year. During the following eight years, Ford published two volumes of poems, a third fairy-story, a biography of Ford Madox Brown, and The Cinque Ports, the first of a series of studies on significant areas of England.

By 1900, Ford was established as a stylist of note. In that year he met Joseph Conrad and by the next year was involved in writing The Inheritors, the first of their three collaborations. This proved to be a turning point in Ford's career, for Conrad's absorption in his creative writings drew Ford away from the indolent, desultory approach he had had and forced him to formulate his theory of fiction. After working with Conrad, Ford knew much

about the techniques he believed should be implemented in his craft, but he had not crystallized what he wanted to say.

During the following decade he produced fifteen novels. Notable among them is his historical trilogy of Henry VIII's fifth queen, published under the titles The Fifth Queen (1906), Privy Seal (1907), and The Fifth Queen Crowned (1908). It was justifiably hailed by the critics of his day, for Ford's insight into the historical personages, his remarkable recreation of the sixteenth-century milieu, and the obvious command he wielded over the tools of his craft, raised the genre of historical fiction to new heights. The medieval period fascinated Ford so much that he wrote four other novels devoted to the folklore and superstitions of that time. The "Half Moon" (1909), presents the power of witch-craft in the period; Ladies Whose Bright Eyes (1911, and revised in 1935), gives a fascinating account of a twentieth-century man transferred back into the fourteenth century, who gains new understandings by which to measure his own way of life; and The Young Lovell (1913), is a pleasing study of knight-errantry. A fourth historical novel, The Portrait (1910), presents an unsuccessful account of the wits and fops of the reign of William and Mary.

But it was in his novels of 'small circles' that Ford really began to develop his particular view of life. In The Benefactor (1905), and, much more thoroughly, in A Call (1910), he explored the peculiar situation of individuals caught at cross purposes in the conflict between the dictates of passion, an apparently outmoded code of behaviour, and the necessity to preserve some surface

acceptable to the society within which they move. He attempted to broaden the field of his explorations through social satires including large groups of people in Mr. Apollo (1908), The Simple Life Limited (1911), The New Humpty-Dumpty (1912), and Mr. Fleight (1913). Only the first of these is in any way appealing, having sympathetically drawn characters revealed with depth, and an attractive philosophy of faith persuasively presented; whereas the remaining three novels give characters much more superficially drawn, with a philosophy of expediency chiefly distinguished by its coldness and harshness. Stimulated by the crucial events of 1914, Ford formulated what he wanted to say. After the many experiments of the preceeding novels, he had perfected the technique of point of view, time-shift, selection, justification, le mot juste and progression d'effet, which enabled him in The Good Soldier (1915), to state, with overwhelming power and truth, the plight of twentieth-century man, terrifyingly alone in an incomprehensible situation, with all systems of communication broken down. In making explicit 'the saddest story', joining psychological insight with consummate artistry, Ford achieves the stature of a great novelist.

Eight years later, he published The Marsden Case, a disappointing novel when compared to The Good Soldier, but interesting for the study it provides of Ford's attempt to broaden the scope of the material he used in The Good Soldier, to widen the 'small circle' to include a larger segment of society. The novel fails chiefly because of the inadequacy of the single point of view



through which all events must be seen. However, the experiment proved fruitful, for in the next year, 1924, Ford published Some Do Not, the first of the Tietjens tetralogy. In 1925 No More Parades was published, followed by A Man Could Stand Up (1926), and The Last Post (1928). In the tetralogy, Ford gives fullest expression to his view of twentieth-century man alienated from all that gave stability, coherence, and contentment to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, unable to find within his society any foundations on which to build a new way of life, caught in a personal struggle that mirrors, and is mirrored in, the public struggle of World War I. The breadth and depth of psychological study, the emotional power and artistry with which Ford makes his statement, emphasizes the fact that The Good Soldier was no flash-in-the-pan, that Ford was indeed capable of producing more than one masterpiece. The Tietjens series proves this as it brings the twentieth-century world into focus, allowing the reader to see much about his society that perhaps he had only dimly perceived before, or of which he had been totally unaware.

After The Last Post, Ford wrote six novels. None of them measures up to the standard of his two masterpieces. Most of them show flashes of the creative genius that is so apparent in his greatest works, but all of them give evidence of haste and lack of involvement of the author. In the last period of his life, Ford was mainly concerned with critical works and memoirs, dashing off novels in between them that must be dismissed, then, as pot-boilers.

However, it is enough that Ford has given the world, not one, but two great works. In The Good Soldier, he presents a novel perfect in every aspect of its form; in the Tietjens tetralogy, he gives, if not an entirely flawless performance, a work of compelling power. Both rank with the best that has been produced in this century.

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## PREFACE

Ford Madox Ford, born within the circle of the Victorian Literary Great, child of the Pre-Raphaelites, disciple of Flaubert, de Maupassant, and James, emerges in the early decades of the twentieth century under the banner of 'Impressionism'. With James he could say: 'Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet'. In making the attempt, Ford formulated tenets which, after his collaboration with Conrad, enabled him to pursue his high aim for the novel and achieve his goal in two literary masterpieces.

The purpose of this study, then, is to trace the emergence of a master craftsman, a magnificently able novelist, who did catch the 'note and trick' of 'the strange irregular rhythm of life'. Accordingly, Ford's literary heritage is examined, his theory of fiction presented. The course of his career as a novelist is followed through his apprenticeship, to his mastery, and to his decline. This study vindicates the claim that, as a novelist, Ford is worthy of renown.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. E.R. Seary, Head of the English Department of The Memorial University of Newfoundland, for his patient encouragement throughout the period of my research. I want to thank particularly Dr. C.J. Francis, also of the English Department, whose critical and stylistic comments were invaluable. Finally I want to thank my friends, Miss Clare Woods and Miss Mary

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O.R.R.B.  
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## Chapter I

### IMPRESSIONISM

#### Ford's Literary Heritage

Sensitivity to "impressions" distinguished Ford Madox Ford as a writer. The rendering of impressions became the aim of all his labours; the crown of his achievement. Of his struggles with Conrad to find a new form for the novel he says, "It became very early evident to us that what was the matter with the Novel, and the British novel in particular, was that it went straight forward, whereas in your gradual making acquaintanceship with your fellows you never do go straight forward..."<sup>1</sup>. "We agreed that the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind..."<sup>2</sup>. "We saw that life did not narrate but made impressions on our brains."<sup>3</sup>

These statements were made in 1924. Yet in 1759 Sterne wrote Tristram Shandy, a work that has been compared to the writings of Virginia Woolf by the perceptive critic E.M. Forster.<sup>4</sup> Sterne gives definite indications that he recognized the essential nature of the impressions that life makes on our minds, and deliberately attempted, in Tristram Shandy, through what he called a 'master-stroke of digressive skill', to present the very effect of life. He shrewdly assessed the method of character development as the subtle insinuation of detail throughout digressions that gives the cumulative effect of the 'gradual making acquaintanceship'

of everyday experience. We find Sterne commenting that

Notwithstanding all this [digression] you perceive that the drawing of my uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time; - not the great contours of it, - that was impossible, - but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it, were here and there touch'd in, as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my uncle Toby now than you was before.

By this contrivance the machinery of my work is of a species by itself; two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be at variance with each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too, - and at the same time.<sup>5</sup>

Sterne claims that

writing when properly managed,... is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all; - so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.<sup>6</sup>

He addresses us, then, as a graceful conversationalist having an intimate tête-a-tête; his fluent sentences give the inflections, the cadence, the very rhythm of the voice. No better description of his style can be given than his own exclamation:

Just heaven! how does the Poco piu and the Poco meno of the Italian artists; ----- the insensible MORE or LESS, determine the precise line of beauty in the sentence, as well as in the statue! How do the slight touches of the chisel, the pencil, the pen, the fiddle-stick, et caetera, ----- give the true swell, which gives the true pleasure! O my countrymen! ----- be nice; ----- be cautious in your language; ----- and never, O! never let it be forgotten upon what small particles your eloquence and fame depend.<sup>7</sup>

Some chapters later we find Sterne abjuring the 'hypercritik' with the significant reminder "...that the idea of duration and of its

simple modes is got merely from the train and succession of our ideas..."<sup>8</sup>

The reader approaching for the first time a work developed according to the tenets implied in the quotations given above, may find himself delighted but bewildered by the inspired chaos. The apparent disorder is actually under Sterne's complete control. While delighting in leading the reader down many byways, and perpetrating many practical jokes on him, Sterne proceeds according to a plan that incorporates these digressions in the building up and peopling of a rich world through which his hero moves. Yet the plan allows for the pursuit of an associated idea as an end in itself. The result is the creation of an atmosphere so humanly satisfying that the reader is utterly charmed. The calculated accumulation of detail in developing character; the use of Locke's theory of association of ideas in evoking the atmosphere of two or three people pursuing their own thoughts while tenuously maintaining conversation together; the disruption of time sequence; these were to become technical tools of incalculable value when adapted by the skilled hands of Henry James, Conrad, Ford and a host of younger writers of early twentieth century fame. Yet because Ford disliked an author's intrusion in his novels, we do not find much mention of Sterne in Ford's critical works. Instead he lauded Samuel Richardson and Jane Austen as the two writers who until almost the end of the nineteenth century alone "relieve the British novel of the stigma cast on it when E.M. Forster declared that there never had been a first class novel written in English."<sup>9</sup>

Sterne died in 1768, the last of four early literary giants.<sup>10</sup> There followed a relatively barren period of twenty years for the novel form; but the span must be extended a hundred years before a writer can be found in England who attempts to do more than present reproductions of surfaces; who attempts in fact, a "realization" of inner meanings or essences. In Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, we recognize that there is more than a control exerted over the materials of the craft; there is a conscious manipulation of tools to produce a design which, through its formal organization, constitutes the novelist's criticism of life. There is in Jane Austen's work sure delineation of character. This is made possible by an economy of writing, by a clever use of dialogue, by an admirable display of the power of creating situations in which her characters expose themselves and stand condemned by their own words. One can find even in her earliest work striking examples. Consider how Miss Austen's lambent humour illuminates Mr. and Mrs. John Dashwood as they discuss, in chapter two of Sense and Sensibility, how they may fulfil an obligation to Mr. Dashwood's late father to provide for his mother and sisters. Her relentless yet objective scrutiny of behaviour in the small but complete world she created produced judgements of worldwide applicability.

To move from relentless scrutiny to careful analysis of character is to move from Jane Austen to George Eliot. In The English Novel,<sup>11</sup> Walter Allen points out that the year 1859 saw the publication of two first novels, Adam Bede and The Ordeal of

Richard Feverel, which, when contrasted with A Tale of Two Cities, The Virginians, The Bertrams, published in the same year by established authors, 'appear as new points of growth in our literature'. Characters achieve a position of new importance in the novels of George Eliot. This is indicated by her relentless and scrupulous analysis of them; 'the very thoroughness and intensity of her analysis creates them', Allen claims. We will find this new growth bearing potent fruit when cultivated by later novelists such as Gissing, Henry James, Conrad, Ford, and Lawrence. Although Ford disliked the priestly overtones in George Eliot's work, there is no doubt that she has a place in the literary milieu out of which Ford wrote.

From Meredith the novel form gained a quality of poetry. In fact, Walter Allen postulates that 'his novels were merely one form his poetry took'. Sometimes the novelist's visionary intensity will infuse poetry into a novel, as in Dickens's famous opening chapter of Great Expectations, or Hardy's memorable representation of Egdon Heath which introduces The Return of the Native. Sometimes, through his use of language, a novelist will break through the barrier of conventional prose to express moments of consciousness in his characters in a way hitherto confined to poetry. Meredith supplies examples of both.

In The Egoist, Meredith's finest work, he has achieved a perfect balance between what he wants to say and the style in which it is said. Instead of plot there is design. And from the pattern emerges the figure of Sir Willoughby, so vividly seen by



Meredith, so realized through the simple symmetrical design of the novel, that he takes on the appearance of a universal type. Meredith's careful analysis of character does not create Sir Willoughby, as Walter Allen points out, it serves to reveal him completely as the quintessence of self-approval. The method of creating a character as a universal figure, of concentrating on a single aspect of humanity, serves to differentiate Meredith's work from George Eliot. Her characters are embroiled in situations peculiar to themselves and generally concerned with some moral problem. However, when one considers the creation of Clara Middleton, one does find the specific analysis of one individual in a particular situation. Where Meredith goes far beyond George Eliot is in not being satisfied with analysis alone. He carries us into Clara's mind, dramatizing her perceptions in passages that can only be described as poetry. Hitherto the shifting nebulous working of the mind had been shown directly only in formal poetry. In giving the novel form access to this new avenue of approach Meredith stands as a precursor to Henry James, Ford Madox Ford, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and later novelists like Elizabeth Bowen.

The desire to seek, to find, and to render the 'essentials of life' rather than to present mere descriptions of surfaces led Meredith to say in his Prelude to The Egoist:

the inward mirror, the embracing and condensing spirit, is required to give us those interminable milepost piles of matter... in essence, in chosen samples digestibly. I conceive... that the realistic method of a conscientious transcription of all the visible and a repetition of all the audible, is mainly accountable for our present branfulness, and for that pro-

longation of the vasty and the noisy, out of which,  
as from an undrained fen, steams the malady of sameness,  
our modern malady.

Meredith's dissatisfaction with orthodox methods of presenting, in the novel form, what were thought to be the realities of life is an indication of a trend that gained momentum on the continent around the mid-century. A natural reaction to the verisimilitude that in painting led to the mechanical sterility of the academicians, and in fiction led to the fact-mongering of the naturalists, produced a movement vital to both arts. Among the French painters, Monet, Manet, Renoir, Fissarro, and Degas, there laboured into being the method called Impressionism.

The early impressionists, like Monet, attempted to put aside all intellectual preconceptions in order to paint what the eye really sees. They invented a technique called pointillism by which tiny points of pure colour were applied systematically to a white canvas blending, when seen from a distance, into an effect luminous and vibrant in its realism. Later impressionists such as Cézanne attempted far more than a sensitive reproduction of surfaces. Cézanne tried to catch on canvas essences; his chosen image became a means to an end; more than a mirror; a metaphor. Distorting appearances, blurring and breaking up contours gave him scope to clarify or emphasize the underlying realities.

Akin to the movement in painting was the literary movement led by Flaubert, the Goncourts, Zola, and a circle in Paris which included Turgenev and Daudet. The publication of Madame Bovary in 1856 marked the beginning of new growth in the novel; the

scrupulously truthful portraiture of life. This new approach preceded by three years the faint stirrings in England marked by the literary debuts of George Eliot and George Meredith. Here we find a style remarkable for its high finish; a method of narration carefully sculptured in its objectivity. The total effect achieved is that of the textured exactitude of classical poetry. Flaubert's concern with words, his ambition 'to give verse-rhythm to prose', was to become the preoccupation of his followers and of special concern to Conrad and Ford. Ford assesses the change thus, "There was writing before Flaubert; but Flaubert and his coterie opened, as it were, a window through which one saw the literary scene from an entirely new angle. Perhaps more than anything it was a matter of giving visibility to your pages: perhaps better than elsewhere, Conrad with his 'It is above all to make you see!' expressed the aims of the New World."<sup>12</sup>

Before considering those contemporaries of Ford who strongly influenced the development of his theory of the art of fiction we must take cognizance of one other Continental writer - Guy de Maupassant. For Ford claimed that initially, he and Conrad were drawn together by their devotion to Flaubert and Maupassant.<sup>13</sup> They could quote verbatim page after page from this writer's works.

In a brief ten year period of feverish activity, Maupassant had been entirely occupied in 'catching humanity in the act'. To discover the hidden aspect of things, to transcribe his discoveries exactly, became the aim of all his endeavours. As the

selectiveness of his observation grew more deliberate, his focus sharpened and he projected with intensity transcripts of experience that became in themselves unforgettable experiences. The simplicity and fidelity with which Maupassant set down his stories make them visual in a way that makes apparent why he appealed strongly to Ford and Conrad whose longings as novelists can be expressed in the words "to make you see!" They scrutinized Maupassant's method which he outlined thus: "The novelist who professes to give us an exact representation of life ought to avoid with care any linking together of events which might appear exceptional.... The artfulness of his plan is not to be found, then, in emotional effects or charm of writing, in an attractive beginning or a moving catastrophe, but in the skilful massing of little insistent details which will serve to bring out the essential meaning of his work."<sup>14</sup> This rule was to entail many hours of agonized effort for the two disciples.

That the young Henry James had been closely associated with the circle revolving around Flaubert automatically insured Ford's interest in James's work. Of the meetings of Flaubert, the Goncourts, Turgenev, Gautier, Maupassant, Zola, young James, Ford claims "... in those coenaculae the modern novel - the immensely powerful engine of our civilization - was born."<sup>15</sup> All those who participated in this historic delivery naturally received Ford's careful scrutiny as he proceeded to conceive his own literary esthetic. That Ford had many a personal encounter with

Henry James, when, in the company of Conrad, they argued far into the night the aims and techniques of the novel, emphasizes the effect James was bound to have on Ford's theory. In fact, James's The Art of Fiction together with Conrad's preface to The Nigger of the "Narcissus" might be taken as the texts from which Ford drew the outlines of his fictional theory.

Ford paid a high tribute to James and at the same time stressed an important principle that formed part of the foundation of his theory when he said, "I desired to say that the supreme discovery in the literary art of our day is that of Impressionism, that the supreme function of Impressionism is selection, and that Mr. James has carried the power of selection so far that he can create an impression with nothing at all." ... "His characters will talk about rain, about the opera... and those conversations will convey to your mind that the quiet talkers are living in an atmosphere of horror, of bankruptcy, of passion hopeless as the Dies Irae! That is the supreme trick of art today, since that is how we really talk about the musical glasses whilst our lives crumble to pieces about us."<sup>16</sup> The effect produced was described by Ford as 'vibrating reality'; the sensation he attributes to the fact "that the mind passes, as it does in real life, perpetually backwards and forwards between the apparent aspect of things and the essentials of life."<sup>17</sup> Stated in another way that sheds more light upon the principle of selection, Ford says of James's exclusive observation of "up-town" situations, "... a scientist has a perfect right - nay more, it is the absolute duty



of the scientist - to limit his observations."<sup>18</sup> Ford suggests that "if Henry James has drawn a very perfect picture of one phase of occidental life, [he] has done the greatest service that it is possible to do to the humanity of his day,... he has, in fact, shown us to what tend all the strivings of the men digging drains in the roads..."<sup>19</sup>

Detached observation, careful selection, calculated arrangement are only a few of the tenets of the Impressionistic technique Ford discovered in James's work. In elucidating Ford's own literary esthetic later, the relevance of James's principles will be given thorough consideration. Similarly a treatment of the influence of Conrad's theories can only be given when presenting Ford's theories since the one stimulated the other into production.

In retrospect, Ford's literary heritage must be said to include many other writers beside those mentioned above. There are George Gissing and George Moore, for example. The former received scant attention in any of Ford's critical writings. Nevertheless he sees Gissing as holding a place among the torchbearers who held the novel form aloft from Jane Austen and Trollope to D.H. Lawrence and Theodore Dreiser.<sup>20</sup> Although he did not like George Moore or his books, he pays Moore the tribute of being "father of Anglo-Saxon impressionism."<sup>21</sup> In any thorough treatment of Ford's heritage these writers would require examination. However, in this brief treatment the mere suggestion of their place in Ford's background must suffice.

Up to this point only that area of Ford's background which

directly leads to his theory of impressionism has been shaded in. Another large area to be treated only summarily here, but one which indirectly influenced the nature of Ford's impressionism, is the Pre-Raphaelitism that tormented his boyhood and over-shadowed the first stage of his literary career. Ford says of Ruskin, Carlyle, Wilberforce, Holman Hunt, Wagner, and the other members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, "they ringed in my young horizon, niching and mowing and telling each other disagreeable stories, each one about all the others who were out of earshot. Yes, that bitter, enormous greybeard assembly of the Great ringed in my child's horizon. And yet I don't know that it was merely a matter of childhood, it was perhaps an abiding claustrophobia so that, as my eyes take their last glance of the world, I may seem to see myself surrounded by barriers of the Victorian Academic Great."<sup>22</sup>

However, all the influence of this circle was not unfavourable. Douglas Goldring in Trained for Genius claims that "none left on Ford's character and outlook so lasting an influence as his maternal grandfather."<sup>23</sup> Goldring states that "Ford was at his most impressionable age when he came under the formative influence of his grandfather, and there is no doubt that this influence coloured his whole outlook on life and gave him his disinterested passion for the art he practised. Many of Ford's best qualities were, we may suppose, inherited from Madox Brown. At least, in his full-length portrait of his grandfather it is impossible not to trace some of the characteristics which made him so

sympathetic a figure to younger contemporaries."<sup>24</sup> Richard A. Cassell<sup>25</sup> asserts that Ford 'acquired an ardent devotion to the life of art and to his fellow artists' from his close association with the Pre-Raphaelite group; that he 'gained from them his emotionalism and his intensely personal evaluations of art and life'; that 'ultimately a good deal of his social idealism grew out of their medievalism.' We may conclude that Ford's opinions of the world and a number of his themes were shaped out of these influences.

But more than that, in attempting to give critical appreciations of some of the Pre-Raphaelite Great, he developed criteria that were to become the foundations for his own critical theory and practice. In Ford's book on Ford Madox Brown written in 1896, Richard Cassell sees reflections of the tenets that later formed important parts of Ford's theory of fiction. Cassell cites many passages from this book which show that Ford is already concerned with technique and with 'the shaping influence of temperament upon the artist's work.' As Cassell says, "Here is established his preoccupation with the 'harmoniousness' of combined details and with the dramatic quality of a work of art, by which he apparently means not merely the telling or suggesting of a story or action. As the remarks on *Destiny* imply the total impression of a given work moves the spectator into a particular mood of self-forgetfulness and into a special train of thought. These views, so typically Pre-Raphaelite, prepare for the impressionistic

theory and practice Ford later developed with Conrad."<sup>26</sup>

There is nowhere in Ford's critical writings a complete statement of his theory of the novel. Nevertheless, by gathering together statements he has made in various commentaries through the years, a coherent doctrine can be drawn up. Out of the richness of his artistic heritage, out of the breadth and depth of his own reading, out of the stimulation of his associates, Ford formulated principles of technique the mastery of which liberated him for the fullest expression of his personality and creative genius in at least two masterpieces.

#### Ford's Fictional Theory

Ford believed, with Henry James, that the proper destiny of the novel was to become a form of art beautiful as a whole and in all its parts. With Conrad he agreed "that the writing of novels was the one thing of importance that remained to the world and that what the novel needed was the New Form."<sup>27</sup> Through the period of his collaboration with Conrad he worked out the principles and techniques by which this goal could be achieved.

But in presenting Ford's theory of the novel one must recognize that Ford's theory is not a static formulation of dogma; rather it is a collection of tenets which through the years passed through subtle changes. One has to balance an examination of this theory with an examination of his practice. It can readily be seen that Ford's practice reveals a great cleavage between what he produced before 1914 and the work which followed the Great War.

This will be shown later in chapters where the novels of the two periods are discussed. During the first period Ford lived in and around London, was a welcomed member of the literary circles of the time, wrote about forty books, much literary journalism, and edited The English Review. It was during this period, also, that his ten-year association with Conrad occurred. After the war Ford exiled himself to France and the United States to find a sympathetic audience among strangers. Of his first period Ford said, "I had written 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."<sup>28</sup> In contrast, one must note that the novel which marks the beginning of his second period, The Good Soldier, in which, for the first time, Ford poured all that he knew of the art of the novel, was valued by him as his greatest achievement and is without doubt a work of genius.

The fullest account of Ford's theory of the novel is to be found in the often-quoted third section of Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance (1924). He claims that what is set down there is 'the formulae for the writing of the novel at which Conrad and the writer had arrived, say in 1902 or so.' Since the tenets given in this book were formed from the memories of twenty-two years, and since the book is limited to those principles developed by Ford as a collaborator of Conrad, it is obvious that the account cannot be taken as complete or entirely reliable. However, using its 'formulae' supplemented by principles gathered from other writings

of his, it is possible to present a fairly coherent doctrine.

A novel must produce an effect of life, Ford claims. To create this effect the novelist must not narrate but render impressions. Richard A. Cassell says that "by 'rendering' Ford means generally what James meant. Rendering is the dramatic presentation of a scene to give an impression of immediacy."<sup>29</sup> And one does find James stating that "the essence of any representational work is of course to bristle with immediate images."<sup>30</sup>

If he wished to create the illusion of life, to lead the reader to be oblivious to the fact that he is reading a book, and to involve him in the rendered experiences, Ford realized that any form of intrusion by the author could not be countenanced. As James reflected, "Anything...must always have seemed to me better -- better for the process and effect of representation, my irrepressible ideal -- than the mere muffled majesty of irresponsible 'authorship'."<sup>31</sup> James's solution was to give the novel focus by presenting the account through a recording consciousness. For Ford, then, the 'point of view' taken by a recording consciousness gave a double benefit -- he avoided the jarring appearances of the author in his work and he acquired that which would give the outer form of the novel: the limits set by the conscious register for recording consistency.

A number of problems immediately present themselves to the novelist using the technique of the point of view. The difficulties of sketching in characters, of handling background information, of developing conversations become enormous. Obviously,

for psychological verisimilitude the traditional methods could not be used. As James exhorts, "...wave away with energy the custom of the seated mass of explanation after the fact, the inserted bloc of referential narrative which flourishes so, to the shame of the modern impatience, on the serried page of Balzac...."<sup>32</sup> A novelist could not demand more of his recording consciousness than it could reasonably be expected to have perceived.

Ford, together with Conrad, devised a set of techniques to overcome these difficulties. Instead of descriptive passages elaborating the biographies of the characters, Ford prefers to strike the keynote of his characters through their first speeches which would be generalizations, for generalizations typify character. A brief vivid description can precede the first speech of a character, however. Ford quotes a favourite example taken from Maupassant's short story Reine Hortense - "C'était un monsieur a favoris rouges qui entraait toujours le premier...."<sup>33</sup> Says Ford, "That gentleman is so sufficiently got in that you need know no more of him to understand how he will act."<sup>34</sup> To illustrate the characteristic generalization which would objectify the speaker for the reader, Ford presents a lively example in The Southern Review, July 1935. He says of himself and Conrad, "We knew that if we said: 'Mr. X was a foul-mouthed reactionary,' you would know very little about him. But if his first words...were 'God damn it, put all filthy Liberals up against a wall, say I, and shoot out their beastly livers....' that gentleman will make on you an impression that many following pages shall scarcely efface."<sup>35</sup>

Having got the character in, the novelist must bring in the biography of that character afterward.<sup>36</sup> And finally, reminiscent of Sterne, "The novel more or less gradually, more or less deviously lets you into the secrets of the characters of the men with whom it deals."<sup>37</sup>

Employing the technique of the point of view made necessary a different approach to the handling of conversations from that which had been traditionally used. Ford says, "The rendering in fact of speeches gave Conrad and the writer more trouble than any other department of the novel whatever.... To pretend that any character or any author writing directly can remember whole speeches with all their words for a matter of twenty-four hours, let alone twenty-four years, is absurd. The most that the normal person carries away of a conversation after even a couple of hours is just a salient or characteristic phrase or two, and a mannerism of the speaker."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, Ford suggests "the use of indirect locutions together with the rendering of the effects of other portions of speech,"<sup>39</sup> gaining the advantage of getting more into a given space than direct speech allows. Here he and Conrad had a difference of opinion; Conrad believed that since the novel, in any final analysis, is a matter of convention, one could postulate that the author or reader could indeed remember vast passages of the spoken word, while Ford felt he could not compromise the indirect approach. It must be noted here that Ford's handling of conversations before 1914 did not differ widely from the methods of Conrad nor for that matter from the traditional methods. It



is not until The Good Soldier that we find him using almost entirely the indirect approach.

A final 'unalterable' rule of both men stated "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."<sup>40</sup> Therefore a passage of dialogue would have the various portions broken up, the trains of thought shredded and placed in such a way that each part would present contrasts, would counterpoint the other part producing that quality of surprise which gives interest to Art. And, at the same time, the result would be coloured, animated, life-like beyond anything that the traditional methods of presenting conversation could produce for "the indirect, interrupted method of handling interviews is invaluable for giving a sense of the complexity, the tantalization, the shimmering, the haze, that life is."<sup>41</sup> Ford says, "Into that live scene you could then drop the piece of news that you wanted to convey and so you would carry the chapter a good many stages forward."<sup>42</sup>

But the convention of a recording consciousness, vividly introduced through his first speech and made known gradually through succeeding speeches of the type discussed above, would not be sufficient to present all the matter a novelist might wish to include in a manner in keeping with the ideal of the carefully organized Art form. Two other important elements of technique were developed by Ford and Conrad to effect the achievement of that beauty

of the whole and all its parts that would raise the novel to Art.

Ford named these elements 'justification' and progression d'effet.

He categorically states,

Before everything a story must convey a sense of inevitability: that which happens in it must seem to be the only thing that could have happened. Of course a character may cry: "If I had then acted differently how different everything would now be." The problem of the author is to make his then action the only action that character could have taken. It must be inevitable, because of his character, because of his ancestry, because of past illness or on account of the gradual coming together of the thousand small circumstances by which Destiny, who is inscrutable and august, will push us into one certain predicament.<sup>43</sup>

But justifying action to this extent, particularly if the biographical details follow the introduction of a certain character, might well impede the action of an exciting part of the story, Ford warns. On the other hand, he suggests that the introduction of the biography of a character may give a contrast in tone to that of the rest of the book. He cites as an example<sup>44</sup> the discovery, in an account of an orderly middle-class home, that the neighbour has a secret dipsomaniacal wife confined in the country under the care of a rather criminal old couple. The biography of the old couple could give pleasant relief to an account that was becoming monotonous. Furthermore, Ford believed that the sense of reality was in this way procured. Nevertheless, where inclusion would hinder, "when the paraphernalia of indirect speech, interruptions and the rest retard your action too much...then they must go: the sense of reality must stand down before the necessity to get on!"<sup>45</sup>

The most important synthesizing element is the progression d'effet. In practice it demanded "that every word set on paper - every word set on paper - must carry the story forward and, that as the story progressed, the story must be carried forward faster and faster and with more and more intensity."<sup>46</sup> Richard Cassell paraphrases this saying, "All of the conflicts and forces released by the author must ultimately coalesce, not so much by resolutions of heretofore unrevealed actions at the climax as by the accumulation of our emotional responses and of our moral and intellectual evaluations. The focus is on the effect to be aroused cumulatively from combined effects throughout the novel."<sup>47</sup> Years earlier Sterne had insinuated 'faint designations' to create cumulatively whatever effect he desired. Much later Maupassant had been concerned with the skilful massing of 'little insistent details' to bring out the hidden aspect of things. And Henry James had stated, "What a man thinks and what he feels are the history and character of what he does; on all of which things the logic of intensity rests."<sup>48</sup> His rhetorical question evaluates the progression d'effet - "Without intensity where is vividness, and without vividness where is presentability?"<sup>49</sup>

Obviously, the success of this approach depends upon careful selection of all the parts that go to make up the complex whole of the novel. Henry James has called selection "the beautiful, terrible whole of art."<sup>50</sup> Life is all "inclusion and confusion," he says, while art is all "discrimination and selection" giving the artist "the very stuff for a clear affirmation, the

happiest chance for the indestructible."<sup>51</sup> In Joseph Conrad (1924), Ford echoes James's statement that the whole of Art consists in selection, and adds that it be based upon what could in the novelist's rendering carry the story forward or interest the reader.

Choice of words, the search for le mot juste, occupied Ford and Conrad endlessly. The importance of the single word, its possible value for an entire novel, was typified for Ford in the closing lines of James's The Turn of the Screw. Ford says, "'We were alone with the quiet day and his little heart had stopped,' would have been reporting of a high order. But: 'We were alone with the quiet day and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped,' is the supreme poetry of a great genius. And yet of an amazing economy."<sup>52</sup> The careful selection and placement of le mot juste "dispossessed" gives to the reader that illumination which casts a light back over the whole story, letting all its parts fall into place in the mind.

However, words must not be chosen for their startling quality. A good style would begin with a fresh, usual word and continue with fresh usual words to the end. To be interesting, though, it must consist of "a constant succession of tiny, unobservable surprises."<sup>53</sup> This tenet Ford illustrates thus:

If you write: 'His range of subject was very wide and his conversation very varied and unusual; he could rouse you with his perorations or lull you with his periods; therefore his conversation met with great appreciation and he made several fast friends' - you will not find the world very apt to be engrossed by what you have set down. The results will be

different if you put it: 'He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance; he could also fill the small souls of the pilgrims with bitter misgivings: he had one devoted friend at least, and he had conquered one soul in the world that was neither rudimentary nor tainted with self-seeking.'"54

With combinations of carefully chosen words, Ford turned his attention to cadence. This was a subject upon which he and Conrad never came to any agreement. He believed that every good writer has a natural cadence of his own from which he cannot escape; while Conrad felt that good cadence could be acquired by the study of models. Ford tried to evolve for himself "a vernacular of an extreme quietness that would suggest someone of refinement talking in a low voice near the ear of someone else he liked a good deal."<sup>55</sup> The easy rhythms of the tête-à-tête were his ideal; 'long sentences that had a gentle sonority and ended with a dying fall.' The reader must be led to feel that he is listening to a simple account told him by a not-too-brilliant narrator.

The attempt to achieve verisimilitude to the extent indicated above, led Ford to experiment with two other conventions of the novel, the time-shift, and treatment by "scene". Although Sterne used the time-shift in Tristram Shandy, it is celebrated as Conrad's contribution to the craft of the novel. Conrad first used the time-shift in Lord Jim which appeared in magazine form in 1898. However, Ford indicates in Joseph Conrad (1924) that he and Conrad had evolved the formula together around 1902. It is rather remarkable, then, that Ford rarely violated chronological

sequence in his work until his production of the The Good Soldier in 1915, for that novel proves his brilliant mastery of the technique. A significant change can be seen, then, when one examines a passage written in 1910 by Ford to illustrate a sense of time, and contrasts it with an illustration written by him in 1924.

In the earlier example he says:

Supposing that your name is John, and that you have a friend called James, and for private reasons of his own, James takes you into his billiard room and tries to shoot you with a rifle.

Now when that happens to you, nothing in the outside world says to you, in so many words, "That man is going to shoot me." What happens roughly is this. You are taken by your friend into a room. You perceive the greenish light thrown upwards from the billiard table. Your friend talks. You answer. You are thinking of what he says; of what you are to answer. You perceive other objects; you perceive that some of the cues are not in the rack, and that the last game marked ended at 100 to 64. James says something else. You notice that his voice is rather high. You answer. You notice that you are saying to yourself, "I must keep my temper!" You also notice that the clock has stopped at 3.17... So it goes on, the whole way through the incident - it is a mixture of things that appear insignificant and of real action... To say that James took John into the billiard room would be statement for such a writer; to present the train of action would be art.<sup>56</sup>

In the later example he says:

Life does not say to you: in 1914 my nextdoor neighbour Mr. Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted it with Cox's green aluminium paint.... If you think about the matter you will remember in various unordered pictures, how one day Mr. Slack appeared in his garden and contemplated the wall of his house. You will then try to remember the year of that occurrence and you will fix it as August, 1914, because having had the foresight to bear the municipal stock of the city of Lieze you were able to afford a first-class season ticket for the first time in your life. You will remember Mr. Slack - then much thinner because

it was before he found out where to buy that cheap Burgundy of which he has since drunk an inordinate quantity, though whisky you think would be much better for him! Mr. Slack again came into his garden, this time with a pale, weaselly-faced fellow, who touched his cap from time to time. Mr. Slack will point to his house wall several times at different points, the weaselly-faced fellow touching his cap at each pointing. Some days after, coming back from business, you will have observed against Mr. Slack's wall ... At this point you will remember that you were then the manager of the fresh-fish branch of Messrs. Catlin and Clovis in Fenchurch Street... What a change since then! Millicent had not yet put her hair up ... You will remember how Millicent's hair looked, rather pale and burnished in plaits. You will remember how it now looks, burnished; and you will see in one corner of your mind's eye a little picture of Mr. Mills the vicar talking ... oh very kindly ... to Millicent after she has come back from Brighton ... But perhaps you had better not risk that. You remember some of the things said by means of which Millicent has made you cringe ... her expression! ... Cox's Aluminium Paint! ... You remember the half-empty tin that Mr. Slack showed you ... he had a most undignified cold ... with the name in a horseshoe over a blue circle that contained a red lion asleep in front of a real-gold sun...<sup>57</sup>

The first example presents the action as proceeding forward in chronological sequence. The second gives the dartings of the mind, now forward, now backward, the arena broadened here, narrowed there, making vivid and vital the conflict of thought within the mind. The difference is the measure of Ford's progress as an Impressionist.

Treatment by 'scene' was discussed by James in The Art of the Novel when examining the procedure he used to create What Maisie Knew. The action of the story is simply the girl's "subjective" adventure embodied in

little exhibitions founded on the logic of the 'scene', the unit of the scene, the general scenic consistency,

and knowing little more than that. ...The treatment by 'scene' regularly, quite rhythmically recurs; the intervals between, the massing of the elements to a different effect and by a quite other law, remain in this fashion, all preparative, just as the scenic occasions in themselves become, at a given moment, illustrative, each of the agents, true to its function, taking up the theme from the other very much as the fiddles, in an orchestra, may take it up from the cornets and flutes, or the wind-instruments take it up from the violins.<sup>58</sup>

The technique of a rhythmic recurrence of scenes is an improvement upon the substitution of pattern for plot such as we find in Meredith's The Egoist. Symmetrical balance in a novel can lead to a rigidity that precludes presentation of the immense richness of material which life provides. Beauty can nevertheless be introduced into fiction through the use of rhythm. But, "done badly, rhythm is most boring," E.M. Forster warns. "It hardens into a symbol and instead of carrying us on it trips us up."<sup>59</sup>

Ford's method of handling scene was to plunge the reader into the middle of it, then, with mots justes, careful cadences, and proper selection of details, to project the atmosphere of the scene through the vivid awareness of one or several characters or of the author-narrator. Starting in the middle, he would advance the scene a bit, work back to the beginning, and then return where he left off. Progressions of such skilfully contrived scenes dramatizing contrasts in character and motivation, showing the effects of one character upon another, presenting shades and shadows altogether in a rich visual impression, make, for example, The Fifth Queen Crowned a sensational tapestry of the times and issues involved, yet the effect is surprisingly simple and clear.



Further discussion of the point will be given in the next chapter. This method of presenting scenes, a natural concomitant of the use of the time-shift, enabled Ford to employ the technique of "juxtaposed situations". This device, the discovery of Stendhal and Jane Austen, as Ford claims, provides that "the juxtaposition of the composed renderings of two or more unexaggerated actions or situations may be used to establish, like the juxtaposition of vital word to vital word, a sort of frictional current of electric life that will extraordinarily galvanize the work of art...."<sup>60</sup> That Ford carried the galvanizing action to new extremes and intensities by the contiguity of impressions, objects, images, and metaphors can readily be seen in The Good Soldier.

The tremendously difficult task of creating for the reader an experience of the complexity of life, while arranging that experience into coherent and esthetic forms, led Ford to formulate the various aims and techniques briefly considered above. Essentially, the task is a poetic one. Flaubert's concern 'to give verse rhythms to prose', James's 'infinite expansion of the moment', Conrad's brilliant attempt to rescue from 'the remorseless rush of time' a fragment of a passing phase of life in order to show its vibration, its colour, its form, that the substance of its truth might be revealed, that 'before all you may be made to see'; all emphasize the shift in the modern novel from transcription of narrative concerns to evocation of atmospheres in which the events are often mental. This change of emphasis is based upon "one of the capital truths of human existence - that our emotion is not

commensurate with the material circumstances which call it forth; it is not the circumstances but our own hearts that make life exciting and significant. The values of life are subjective, and the prime value is the simple sensation of living."<sup>61</sup> And Ford carried the novel still further, creating in The Good Soldier and The Tietjens Tetralogy a quality of poetry in which Life, that vast and elusive creature, is caught and held in a net of words.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, London: Duckworth & Co., 1924, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>Forster, E.M., Aspects of the Novel, London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1960, pp. 20-22. Forster points out that the mediums used by Sterne and Virginia Woolf are similar and the same odd effects are gained by them; namely, the sensation of the confused muddle that is life combined with a keen sense of its beauty.

<sup>5</sup>Sterne, Lawrence, "Tristram Shandy", Selected Works, ed. by Douglas Grant, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1950, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>9</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern Times, London: Allen and Unwin, 1947, p. 543.

<sup>10</sup>Richardson died in 1761, Fielding in 1754, Smollett in 1771.

<sup>11</sup>Allen, Walter, The English Novel, A Short Critical History, London: Phoenix House, 1960, pp. 208-232.

<sup>12</sup>Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern Times, pp. 731-732.

<sup>13</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by J.W. Beach. The Twentieth-Century Novel, Studies in Technique, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932, p. 123.

<sup>15</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, "Techniques", The Southern Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1935, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup>Hueffer, Ford Madox, Henry James - A Critical Study, London: Martin Secker, 1913, pp. 152-153.

- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 153.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 48.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 61.
- <sup>20</sup>Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern Times, p. 720.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 767.
- <sup>22</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Portraits from Life, Memories and Criticisms, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937, p. 204.
- <sup>23</sup>Goldring, Douglas, Trained for Genius, New York: Dutton, 1949, p. 45.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.
- <sup>25</sup>Cassell, Richard A., Ford Madox Ford, A Study of his Novels, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 11.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.
- <sup>27</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 179.
- <sup>28</sup>Ford, Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951, Dedicatory letter, p. XVIII.
- <sup>29</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford, A Study of his Novels, p. 52.
- <sup>30</sup>James, Henry, The Art of the Novel, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1962, p. 331.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 328.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 321.
- <sup>33</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 179.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-180.
- <sup>35</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, "Techniques", The Southern Review, July 1935, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 34.
- <sup>36</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 207.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 179.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 185-186.

- <sup>39</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 186.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 188.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 191.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 190.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 204-205.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-208.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 191.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 210.
- <sup>47</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford, A Study of his Novels, p. 175.
- <sup>48</sup>James, The Art of the Novel, p. 66.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 66.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 120.
- <sup>52</sup>Ford, "Techniques", The Southern Review, p. 31.
- <sup>53</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, p. 197.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 197-198.
- <sup>55</sup>Ford, Portraits from Life, Memories and Criticisms,  
p. 286.
- <sup>56</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, "Joseph Conrad", The English Review,  
X, (December, 1911), p. 76.
- <sup>57</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad, A Personal Remembrance, pp. 180-182.
- <sup>58</sup>James, The Art of Fiction, pp. 157-158.
- <sup>59</sup>Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 154.
- <sup>60</sup>Ford, The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern  
Times, p. 734.
- <sup>61</sup>Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, p. 240.

## Chapter II

### MIRROR AND PRISM - FORD'S EARLY PERIOD

From Ford's earliest writings to the publication of his most polished work, The Good Soldier (1915), there is an unmistakable trend in development away from surface reflections toward prismatic refractions; away from amorphous romance, toward tough, precise social comment. This chapter will trace the course of the change.

At the age of nineteen, Ford had his first book published. This book, The Erown Owl, is a delightful fairy-tale which has provided popular reading from the day of its publication in 1892. It was followed by another children's book, The Feather, and his first novel, The Shifting of the Fire. A volume of poetry published in 1893, and a third fairy story, The Queen Who Flew, made up the complement of his literary production, when Ford, in a romantic run-away marriage to seventeen-year-old Elsie Martindale, made a break in 1894 with life as he had known it in the intellectual circles of London, and began the first of his many sojourns in a rural retreat.

The Shifting of the Fire is the faltering first attempt of an author still in his teens. It has all the components of the Victorian sentimental melodrama - the young beautiful heroine deeply in love with the gallant young hero, but caught in the toils of the unscrupulous old villain. In the background lurks the dictatorial father and the ineffectual mother. But Ford gives a

satiric twist to his melodrama by having his heroine choose to marry the very old villain for his wealth, in the hope that his imminent death would free her to marry her impoverished love. One can also read the book as a social comedy of the trials of innocence in an unsympathetic society. The mixture of approaches makes the novel confused in form and tone. Frequently the omniscient author loftily interpolates such comments as:

She was very young remember and was not even mentally precocious enough to have reached that stage in the psychological career when one begins for a time to be pessimistic, doubting that one possesses a genius for one's art; and never having had any necessity to earn money, or, rather, to keep herself by the money she earned, she looked upon the earning of it as a very minor obstacular detail in the road to her becoming a millionairess, the admired of the World, and raising 'her Chin' to affluence.<sup>1</sup>

The condescending tone, the awkward structure, the coinages, manifest the inexperienced beginner. One does not find these amateur confusions in The Benefactor, published thirteen years after The Shifting of the Fire. During the interval Ford had collaborated with Conrad, learning in the process the discipline that is first shown in the remarkable restraint of his second novel, The Benefactor.

Ford collaborated with Conrad in the writing of three novels, The Inheritors (1901), Romance (1903), and The Nature of a Crime. The third novel was written between 1901 and 1903 but not published in book form until 1924. The book is of negligible merit. Conrad, in his Preface, calls the work "a fragment ... of a mere intention", having a central figure whose conception

is "too fantastic." Composed "in the nature of an analytical confession"<sup>2</sup> given by an unnamed, middle-aged man, in a series of letters to his married love, the narrative rarely comes to life. The narrator remains throughout an unembodied voice reflecting upon a determination to suicide because of the imminent disclosure of his embezzlement of funds from an estate he holds in trust for the young heir. He reflects at length upon the nature of his love for his lady, and upon the possibilities, the meanings of life in general. In the midst of these musings, only one scene (in Chapter IV) attracts the reader. The young heir feels obliged to relieve his conscience by confessing to the narrator that he has had a mistress for two years, but has now settled the matter amicably before his marriage takes place. The witty encounter between the two men strikes the book's only spark of interest. From there the narration falls away in judicial pronouncements to a contrived ending which provides the narrator with a reprieve. The affairs of the estate will not be audited in the immediate future as the young heir wishes to show his confidence in the narrator. However, the narrator's fate now rests in the hands of his love who has the evidence of his 'confessions'. Here the book ends.

Conrad praises the dispatch with which these people "were thrown overboard without more ado."<sup>3</sup> In growing panic he had realized, no doubt, that analysis of character was not his greatest strength. Ford's opinion of the work can be gathered indirectly from his comment that the re-publication of the book possessed



him as a "morbid craving".<sup>4</sup> One can only conclude that Ford would have done better had he left the barely covered bones of the story for some future philologist's research to disinter.

The Inheritors, a political allegory, examines the effects of the materialistic outlook of the new commercial age. The representative of the new efficient order is a female from the Fourth Dimension who visits earth for the purpose of manipulating events to bring about the downfall of the British Government and the establishment of a ruthless new order. The passive nature of the hero, Arthur Etchingham Granger, creates situations where slowly but surely the Dimensionists' purpose is achieved while concomitantly Granger's personal worth and moral standards disintegrate.

Conrad attributes practically all of their first collaboration to Ford, but Ford took no pride in the achievement. He called the book "a thin collaboration with no plot in particular",<sup>5</sup> "a queer, thin book which the writer has always regarded with dislike."<sup>6</sup> Examination reveals little action in the narrative, for it is characteristic of the chief figure to fail to act at critical moments. Certainly there is not the depth of psychological analysis of the sources of society's ills that distinguishes his later masterpieces. Beings from another dimension manipulate circumstances to capitalize upon human weaknesses, thus, necessarily, a superficiality is given to the events which occur subsequently. Furthermore, the reader can never grapple with the problems underlying the events because the narrator himself refuses to grapple with them. His lack of perception and rationalizations

blur the issues. Ford was moved to condemn the arrangement of the book as "a series of vague scenes".<sup>7</sup>

Sentimentality mars the work. When Granger first meets the female Dimensionist, they wander together in misty valleys which recall 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'. Whenever Granger sees her, she always appears 'luminous' to him. In spite of the utter ruthlessness of her aims and the callousness with which she relentlessly pursues them, she is forced to make an entirely uncharacteristic admission. Granger relates it.

"I believe", I said, very slowly, "I believe you do care..."

She said nothing.

"You care", I repeated.

She spoke then with an energy that had something of a threat in it. "Do you think I could?... or dare? Don't you understand?" She faltered -- "but then..." she added, and was silent for a long minute. I felt the throb of a thousand pulses in my head, on my temples. "Oh, yes, I care," she said slowly, "but that - that makes it all the worse. Why, yes, I care -- yes, yes. It hurts me to see you. I might.... It would draw me away. I have my allotted course. And you -- Don't you see, you would influence me, you would be -- you are -- a disease -- for me."<sup>8</sup>

Five chapters later she says:

"There is no hope. We have to go our ways; you yours, I mine. And then if you wil -- if you cannot forget -- you may remember that I cared; that, for a moment, in between two breaths, I thought of... of failing. That is all I can do... for your sake."<sup>9</sup>

Passages like these forced Ford to describe the prose of the book as "emasculated";<sup>10</sup> "a medley of prose conceived in the spirit of Christina Rossetti with imitations of the late Henry James; inspired by the sentimentality of a pre-Raphaelite actor in love scenes -- precisely by Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson dyspeptically

playing Romeo to Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Juliet; cadenced like Flaubert and full of little half-lines dragged in from the writer's own verses of that day."<sup>11</sup> He brands the work "a farrago of nonsense."<sup>12</sup>

Although Ford's evaluation is accurate, it must be remembered that the criticisms were made in 1924 when Ford had published Some Do Not. In comparison The Inheritors merits little attention. Nevertheless the work is interesting, in that it presents in its first-person narrator, Arthur Etchingham Granger, the cultivated hero who fails to act at crucial moments. This tendency is to become an important facet of the character of Ford's later heroes although the nature of the failure involved will be radically different. Here Granger does not act either because he does not recognize the elements involved in the situation or because he deludes himself over the values of the possible result. When Christopher Tietjens fails to act, it is not through lack of perception or self-delusory rationalization, but it is through seeing all the issues with a frightening clarity, which, when related to his code of living, precludes acting.

The most valuable of the three collaborations of Ford and Conrad is Romance (1903). In it Conrad took a much more active part. Its subject matter, encompassing exciting adventure and physical action to an extent not found in any of Ford's later historical writings, makes this apparent. The general treatment gives evidence of Conrad's inimitable touch and Ford gives undoubted proof that the book is Conrad's when he discusses the initiation

and development of the novel in his 'remembrance' of Conrad published in 1924. A brief examination of the inception and growth of the novel will illuminate Ford's methods, attitudes and temperament in this early period of his development.

Ford gives a highly amusing account of his first meeting with Conrad to discuss the possibilities of their revamping Seraphina, a story Ford developed from a magazine report of the last trial for piracy at the Old Bailey. The meeting, in fact, was charged with Conrad's dismay. After hearing Ford's first reading of Seraphina, Conrad could only ejaculate: O! O! ... O God, my dear Hueffer ... O God, my dear faller, how is it possible...."<sup>13</sup> He had expected a drama of Cuban pirates, immense and gloomy, "a robust book, with every drop of the subject squeezed out of it"<sup>14</sup> by 'the finest stylist in England', but he found the tale like "the whisper of a nonagenarian; ... every sentence had a dying fall and every paragraph faded out."<sup>15</sup> However, Conrad believed that the story had possibilities and, after many preliminary discussions, work began in 1900.

The following two and a half years were filled with labour complicated by the conflicts created in the association of two such dissimilar temperaments. Ford says, "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. --- "Give! Give!" Conrad would cry, forcing Ford "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."<sup>16</sup> Although Conrad enthusiastically hailed the work as the product of a 'third writer', between the sections attributed to each writer, unmistakable indications of their individual approaches appear. Consider the different treatments of the following two passages:

I seemed to have an exaggerated clearness of vision; I saw each brown dirty paw reach out to clutch some part of me. I was not angry any more; it wasn't any good being angry, but I made a fight for it. There were dozens of them; they clutched my wrists, my elbows, and in between my wrists and elbows, and my shoulders. One pair of arms was round my neck, another round my waist, and they kept on trying to catch my legs with ropes. We seemed to stagger all over the deck; I expect they got in each other's way; they would have made a better job of it if they hadn't been such a multitude. I must then have got a crack on the head, for everything grew dark; the night seemed to fall on us, as we fought.<sup>17</sup>

He grunted under the blow, reeled away a few steps, then charging back at once, gripped me round the body, and tried to lift me off my feet. We fell together into a warm puddle.

I had no idea spilt blood kept its warmth so much. And the quantity of it was appalling; the deck seemed to swim in gore, and we simply weltered in it. We rolled rapidly along the reeking scuppers, amongst the feet of a lot of men who were hopping about us in the greatest excitement, the hearty thuds of blows, aimed with all sorts of weapons, just missing my head. The pistol was kicked out of my hand.<sup>18</sup>

The first is taken from Part Second attributed to Ford; the second is from Part Fourth, attributed to Conrad. In both John Kemp is involved in a fight on shipboard. But in the first selection a sense of furious action is denied the reader by Ford's method of handling first-person narration. The repetition of weak verbs like 'seemed'; the interpolation of comments such as, 'I was not angry any more; it wasn't any good being angry'; all tend to weaken

and subdue the effect. In fact, the fight has been intellectualized to the point where it assumes the indistinctness of a fading memory. In the second selection Conrad uses such words as 'grunted', 'reeled', 'charging', 'gripped', 'weltered', 'rolled', 'gore', 'reeking scuppers', 'thuds', which, when accumulated in a short eleven-line passage certainly communicate a sense of animated activity almost palpable in its vividness. Also, dramatic force is generated through his style. Conrad creates patterns of excitement in this selection through the succession of short, staccato phrase groups that make up each sentence. Compared with these, the carefully arranged cadences of Ford's constructions are insipid. Presented through this limp prose John Kemp could only appear 'rather listless'; a vague, shadowy figure whose reminiscences lack definition. Ford fails to make the reader aware of Kemp, the person; he fails to communicate, comparatively. Yet, a re-examination of the passage cited above reveals that Kemp's memory of the fight is remarkably accurate in rendering sensations. Later, particularly in The Good Soldier, Ford perfects the instrument of his prose to communicate through his characters' states of mind a realization of living personalities in a complex society. Here, only the tendency is apparent; the hero is not sustained. However, in sections Three and Four, Kemp springs to life through Conrad's genius for depicting the visual, for giving Kemp a vital physical relation to the objects of his world.

Since Ford was mainly responsible for the first two parts of the novel, the book is seriously weakened from the beginning.

One can attribute many of the faults to Ford's youth and inexperience but more than that, with reference to his later works, one can only say that representation of high adventure in exotic places was not his forte. The subtle reaction of personality upon personality in 'small circles' was to provide Ford's subject matter, whereas Conrad revelled in the romance of far-away places where unusual characters lived lives of singular excitement. Looking back upon this time Ford exclaimed, "Why the writer should ever have thought of writing of pirates, heaven knows, or why, having determined to write of pirates, it should have been his ambition to treat them as if in terms of a very faded manuscript of a Greek play!"<sup>19</sup>

However, signs of promise are evident. Consider the closing paragraph of Chapter Three, Part First. Kemp has become involved with smugglers and must speedily leave England. Secret arrangements are made so that, in company with his Spanish cousin, the romantic Carlos Riego, and the sinister Tomas Castro, he is to be spirited out to a waiting ship heading for Cuba. The chapter ends:

We went into the yard, under the pillars of the town hall, across the silent street, through a narrow passage, and down to the sea. Old Rangsley reeled ahead of us swiftly, muttering, "Three men to be set aboard the Thames...quarter past eleven. Three men to be set aboard..." and in a few minutes we stood upon the shingle beside the idle sea, that was nearly at the full.<sup>20</sup>

Here we have the arrangement of rhythms ending with a 'dying fall' that accentuates the trepidation of young Kemp through the ominous

suggestions implicit in the scene, the portent inherent in the choice of the phrase 'beside the idle sea' followed by 'nearly at the full'. The diction and the style completely support the intention. The impression is one of suspense and foreboding.

Ford's treatment of Part Fifth shows increased competence. In it Kemp is moved to Newgate prison after being held a prisoner of the Havana authorities through the machinations of O'Brien, the intendente of Seraphina Riego's father. O'Brien wishes to win Seraphina's hand and all her wealth, and is secretly behind all the activities of the Spanish pirates operating out of Rio Media, the town literally owned by the Riegos. Agonizing suspense is sustained throughout the presentation of Kemp's incarceration and trial. Significantly little overt action occurs; rather, we are led through the various states of mind of the distraught Kemp who passes from fear of Seraphina's death, from defiance of the fates that conspired to bring him to such an abominable state, from dogged determination to fight for his life every inch of the way, from despair over not knowing what is going on outside the prison, to the numbness of physical and mental exhaustion during the latter part of the trial. Psychological study gave Ford the scope he required rather than the adventurous material which in Conrad's hands becomes the matchless Part Fourth.

The entire fourth section provides some of the most exciting sequences of adventure writing in Conrad's work. Passage after passage rises to poetry, as the following selections show:

A carolling falsetto seemed to hang muffled in upper space, above the fog that settled low on the water,



like a dense and milky sediment of the air. The moonlight fell into it strangely. We seemed to breathe at the bottom of a shallow sea, white as snow, shining like silver, and impenetrably opaque everywhere, except overhead, where the yellow disc of the moon glittered through a thin cloud of steam. The gay truculence of the hollow knocking, the metallic jingle, the shrill trolling, went on crescendo to a burst of babbling voices, a mad speed of tinkling, a thundering shout, "Altro, Amigos!" followed by a great clatter of oars flung in. The sudden silence pulsed with the ponderous strokes of my heart.<sup>21</sup>

The magnificent ritual of sunset went on palpitating with an incredible rhythm, with slow and unerring observance, went on to the end, leaving its funeral fires on the sky and a great shadow upon the sea.<sup>22</sup>

It was from extended discussions of the language and arrangement of passages such as these that Ford gained the knowledge of his craft which enabled him to avoid, in later works, the vague, bodiless description of the fight scene cited above.<sup>23</sup> From the second selection, we can see that Conrad benefited as well from the union of talents for here we can detect the rhythmical development so typical of Ford, and so effective for the representation of that particular sunset.

One must conclude that Romance cannot be considered an artistic whole. The aims, attitudes, and methods of the two writers were too diverse to be interwoven indiscernably. This criticism is valid for single passages such as the opening paragraph in which the differing styles blur the effect sought, as well as for whole sections which do not correspond because of differing intentions. Nevertheless, Ford emerged from the collaboration with a heightened competence made apparent in The Benefactor, published in 1905.


Before leaving Romance, one significant fact about the nature of John Kemp must be noted. On a number of occasions he is given the power of life or death over his sworn enemies, O'Brien and his henchman, Manuel-del-Populo, but he allows his code of honour to prevent their destruction, thus complicating and endangering his own life and that of his love, Seraphina. This trait becomes part of the developing character of Ford's later heroes. Everything Kemp does from the best of motives conspires against him. Similarly does Christopher suffer in the Tietjens series.

The Benefactor is a much more serious and complex handling of the sacrificial theme of The Shifting of the Fire, as Richard Cassell points out.<sup>24</sup> In it we are presented with the first extensive portrait of Ford's typical hero - the gentleman of honour refusing what is to his advantage because of a higher motive, and suffering the consequent unhappiness his refusal brings to those he loves, and to those who love him.

George Moffat is depicted in the first ten pages of the novel in words that outline Christopher Tietjens. He is described as being around forty-five with 'that softening of the outlines that middle age confers'. He has a 'large air of peaceable and majestic obstinacy'. It is said of him that he exerts an 'inevitable and tremendous spell'. It is generally felt that he has 'some standing of a desirable donnish kind'; that 'for "reception" purposes George's soft, indefinite, yet most undoubted eminence was well worth having'. He fosters protégés who are parasitic; his altruism is boundless; and it is her failure to

accept this that causes his wife to demand separate maintenance. George had married her when she was a 'brilliantly beautiful' girl 'in the young softness of her strong character'. But eventually "George's tolerance made her horribly unhappy ..." "... it seemed to her that with George it was give, give, give -- to the undeserving as to the meritorious ... and she could not believe that it did any good."<sup>25</sup> Moffat's appearance, personality, and attitude; the nature of the rift between him and his wife; are included in the larger canvas of Parade's End.

In The Benefactor, Ford's hero is a gifted writer of Fre-Raphaelite tendencies who has produced many minor works but created nothing of major worth. Born to wealth, but with no conscious aim in life, he has allowed the wealth to gradually peter away. Two thirds of his capital is given to his departing wife and much of the rest of his wealth has gone to those he wishes to help. However, through Clara Brede's belief that he can indeed create a masterpiece, Moffat is spurred to greater effort. Gradually he falls in love with Clara and she with him. Ford's heroine has been described as the typical "hemmed-in Jamesian puritan who wants to live."<sup>26</sup> The dramatic conflict develops out of Clara's strong desire and undaunted courage to live and love versus George's strong passion but stronger code of ethics which restrains him. He is already married; she is duty-bound to care for her father, the Reverend Mr. Brede, who is mentally ill. When, through the kind but misguided efforts of Moffat, Brede becomes completely insane and must be placed in an institution, when Clara is free and



willing to fly with George to Italy, he fails to act. Bitterly Clara asks as the novel closes, "self-sacrifice, ... Doesn't that ever end?"

In this novel also, Ford introduces the first pair of brothers in what was to become a recurring motif reaching final development in Parade's End. George Moffat's brother, Gregory, in many ways is the precursor of Mark Tietjens. Gregory is very fond of his brother, George, and believes he can accomplish great things, but finds it difficult to communicate to him what he feels. Mark Tietjens is similarly reticent and inarticulate with Christopher. Gregory husbands his wealth, fears for his impecunious brother, but can discover no gentlemanly way to share his wealth with him. Mark Tietjens finds himself in the same unpleasant position. Forward looking, too, is Ford's treatment of the Reverend Brede, whose mind is lacerated with a great sorrowful passion. Giving impressions of agonizing states of mind becomes more and more characteristic of Ford, particularly in his best works, The Good Soldier and Parade's End.

An examination of the organization and development of the novel reveals that Ford has made significant progress in his craft. The Benefactor is a well-integrated study of a 'small circle'. Its basic situation and its characters are quite credible. In fact, the hero and heroine are creations of worth, personalities rather than prototypes. Its scenes reveal Ford's growing proficiency in displaying simultaneous action which through the counterpoint of its separate lines creates a life-like illusion. The

best example is the final scene where George and Clara, freed from the Reverend Brede's presence, try to communicate with each other.<sup>27</sup> George's thoughts are counterpointed against Clara's, against significant external gestures, against spoken words, in a complex emotional statement that completely captivates the reader's interest. George has come to Clara planning to take her with him to Italy. Clara, in suppressed excitement, in stillness, waits for him to ask her. His vague remarks seem to her to be preparing ground for a clear definite statement; but his thoughts reveal that the memory of Mr. Brede is beginning to disturb him alarmingly. Following a major technique of Conrad to have failure to communicate through conversation, Ford presents George's growing doubt of the efficacy of taking Clara with him against Clara's calm conviction that he will take her. The critical moment looms before the reader who then must watch Clara's shocked disbelief when the realization floods her mind that George intends to leave her behind. The poignancy of her final question is, in this way, made much more effective, and constitutes a significant comment upon the central issue of the novel. There is no satisfaction for the reader in the lovers' situation; in their continuation of denial because of a higher motive. Ford finds a more satisfactory answer in Parade's End.

Further evidence of progress can be seen in Ford's more certain selection and arrangement of descriptive details which economically vivify the setting of a scene or the introduction of

a character. One can see Conrad's influence in the intensely dramatic presentation of the Reverend Brede's first appearance. The short phrase groups, the choice of the stark in colour and gesture make the presentation unforgettable. The effect of Conrad's theories is apparent also in Ford's use of the time shift in The Benefactor.<sup>28</sup>

But much that is amateur mars the total effect of the novel. John Albert Meixner<sup>29</sup> criticizes Ford's youthful dalliance with classical comparisons; his indulgence in sentimental passages such as the one which describes the awakening of love in two minor characters, Clara's younger sister and one of Moffat's protégés; his inclusion of trite expressions such as: 'it was because I cared for him too much. One kills ... those one likes too well'. Mr. Meixner concludes that much in the presentation of character and scene is merely external and hollow. He cites as theatrical Ford's attempt to highlight an entrance of the Reverend Brede by saying: 'In his grey study coat, he looked like an immense spider dropping out of a lurking place.' The fault lies in lack of depth through inadequate development of material. As Richard Cassell says, "There is not ... a very strong sense of life being lived. There are the surfaces of appearance and the analysis of the paradoxical realities beneath them, but there is no profundity, no great depth of inner spiritual and psychological suffering or commitment."<sup>30</sup> It is this deficiency which makes the culminating action of the book annoying. The irritating ineffectuality of the hero makes his own and Clara's plight an annoyance rather than

a tragedy to the reader. In later novels Ford achieves a depth in the presentation of his hero-who-fails-to-act which evokes the tragic implication that character is fate.

In 1906, a year after the appearance of The Benefactor, Ford published The Fifth Queen, the first of three works centered around the figure of Katharine Howard during the period of her courtship and brief marriage to Henry VIII. Privy Seal was printed in 1907, and The Fifth Queen Crowned followed in 1908. The trilogy represents a tremendous advance in Ford's career as a novelist. In it he sets forth the intricate and fascinating world of fifteenth century England, selecting his materials with authority, arranging them in progressions of scenes that demonstrate the skill of a master craftsman. These books brought Ford his first critical success and there can be no doubt that in the genre of historical fiction the trilogy is an achievement of distinction.

Perhaps the most immediately apparent improvement in Ford's technique is his sure evocation of fifteenth century life, through his selection of descriptive detail that flashes with the colour and richness of tapestry. Gone are the contrived similies of The Benefactor, the over-highlighted effects. Many passages illustrate the change. The most striking is the opening of chapter vi, Part Two of Privy Seal. Queen Anne of Cleves is brilliantly presented in two paragraphs which evoke the very aura of the period and, at the same time, prepare us for the revealing encounter between the Queen and Katharine Howard who seeks Anne's throne.

The Queen sat in her painted gallery at Richmond, and

all around her her maids sewed and span. The gallery was long; along the panels that faced the windows were angels painted in red and blue and gold, and in the three centre squares St. George, whose face was the face of the King's Highness, in one issued from a yellow city upon a green plain; in one with a cherry-coloured lance slew a green dragon from whose mouth issued orange-coloured flames, and in one carried away, that he might wed her in a rose-coloured tower on a hillside, a princess in a black gown with hair painted of real gold.

Whilst the maids sewed in silence the Queen sat still upon a stool. Light-skinned, not very stout, with a smooth oval face, she had laid her folded hands on the gold and pearl embroidery of her lap and gazed away into the distance, thinking. She sat so still that not even the lawn tips of her wide hood with its invisible, minute sewings of white, quivered. Her gown was of cloth of gold, but since her being in England she had learned to wear a train, and in its folds on the ground slept a small Italian greyhound. About her neck she had a partelet set with green jewels and with pearls. Her maids sewed; the spinning-wheels ate away the braided flax from the spindles, and the sunlight poured down through the high windows. She was a very fair woman then, and many that had seen her there sit had marvelled of the King's disfavour for her; but she was accounted wondrous still, sitting thus by the hour with the little hounds in the folds of her dress. Only her eyes with their half-closed lids gave to her lost gaze the appearance of a humour and irony that she never was heard to voice.<sup>31</sup>

There are fine descriptive passages which vividly render settings enhancing the authenticity of the fifteenth century world created in the trilogy. Consider the evocation of the milling masses at night along the Thames in the tension-wracked period preceding the King's alliance through marriage with the House of Cleves:

It was pitch black beyond the gate house; in the open fields before the wall torches here and there appeared to burn in mid-air, showing beneath them the heads and the hoods of their bearers hurrying home, and where they turned to the right along a narrow lane, a



torch showed far ahead above a crowd packed thick between dark house-fronts and gables. They glistened with wet and sent down from their gutters spouts of water that gleamed, catching the light of the torch, like threads of opal fire on the pallid dove colour of the towering house-fronts. The torch went round a corner, its light withdrew along the walls by long jumps as its bearer stepped into the distance ahead. Then it was all black.<sup>32</sup>

Obviously demonstrated here are the fruits of Ford's collaboration with Conrad. The vividness, the brilliant contrasts, the definite details, remind one of Conrad's impressionism in the fourth part of Romance and especially throughout Nostromo. Then, consider the description of the dismal quarters given to Archbishop Cranmer as the Roman Catholic star seemed to be again ascendant after Henry had married Katharine Howard:

This room was indeed below ground and very old, strong and damp. The Archbishop's own hangings covered the walls, but the windows shot upwards through the stones to the light; there was upon the ground of stone not a carpet but only rushes; being early in the year, no provision was made for firing, and the soot of the chimney back was damp, and sparkled with the track of a snail that had lived there undisturbed for many years, and neither increasing, because it had no mate, nor dying, because it was well fed by the ferns that, behind the present hangings, grew in the joints of the stones.<sup>33</sup>

That Ford had steeped himself in the period is obvious from the skill with which he weaves intimate details throughout his descriptive passages so that the solidity and vitality of the world is realized by the reader. From the selections quoted above Ford's careful observation can be demonstrated. Note, in the description of Anne's wearing apparel, the sentence: 'Her gown was of cloth of gold, but since her being in England she had

learned to wear a train, and in the folds on the ground slept a small Italian greyhound.' Note, in the account of Cranmer's housing, the description of the back of the fireplace, sooty and damp, which 'sparkled with the track of a snail that had lived there undisturbed for many years....' The accumulation of these minutiae gives a Chaucerian richness to the trilogy that is not found elsewhere in Ford's work.

The style Ford developed for the trilogy sustains and augments the authenticity of atmosphere. He chose to include words of the period which are now obsolete, scattering them judiciously throughout dialogue. Generally, Ford restricts them to dialogue but upon occasion we find them in passages of exposition. Together with Tudor vocabulary Ford frequently gives the syntax and language rhythms of the period producing a verisimilitude which gives the trilogy distinct appeal. The following passages are illustrative: Henry speaks to Katharine in Privy Seal:

'Why,' he said to her, 'what's the whimsey now?  
Shalt be the queen. 'Tis the sole way. 'Tis the  
way to the light.' He leant forward. 'Cleves has  
gone to the bastard called Charles to sue for mercy.  
Ye led me so well to set Francis against Charles that  
I may snap my fingers against both. None but thee  
could ha' forged that bolt. Child, I will make a  
league with the Pope against Charles or Francis, with  
Charles or Francis. Anne may go hang herself.'  
He rose to his feet and stretched out both his hands,  
his eyes glowing beneath his deep brows. 'Body o'  
God! thou art a very fair woman; and now I will be such  
a king as never was, and take France for mine own and  
set up Holy Church again, and say good prayers and  
sleep in a warm bed. Body o' God! Body o' God!<sup>34</sup>

Katharine, trying to clarify her position, replies a little later in the conversation:

'My Lord,' she said: 'if the world so is, kings and princes are here to be above the world. In your greatness ye shall change it; with your justice ye shall purify it; with your clemencies ye should it chasten and amerce. Ye ask me to be a queen. Shall I be a queen and not such a queen? No, I tell you; if a woman may swear a great oath, I swear by Leonidas that saved Sparta and by Christ Jesus that saved this world, so will I come by my queenship and so act in it that, if God give me strength the whole world never shall find speck upon mine honour - or upon thine if I may sway thee.'<sup>35</sup>

The angry words of a common labourer demonstrate the same approach.

'Seek another channel,' he cried, and waved his arms at the low ceiling. 'Before the face of Almighty God I swear that I ha' no truck with Margot my niece. Since she has been sib with the whore of the devil called Kat Howard, never hath she told me a secret through her paramour or otherwise. A shut head the heavy logget keepeth - let her not come within reach of my hand.'<sup>36</sup>

Structurally the trilogy gives evidence of Ford's skilled craftsmanship. The three books, although complete individually, are artistically linked together making it possible to read the set as one novel. The first book, The Fifth Queen, opens with the presentation of the pedagogue, Nicholas Udall, who seeks shelter from the weather in the workshop of a Protestant printer whose niece he admires. In the ensuing conversation the bitter religious controversy of the period is given from the common man's point of view. Among those people, Magister Udall is feared as Cromwell's spy, and he encourages their fear of him. At court he is Lady Mary's tutor whose services as a proficient Latin scholar are called upon by Cromwell and the King. Book two, Privy Seal, also opens with Magister Udall now amorously pursuing the Widow Amnot in her Paris hostelry, having been sent to Paris

on a mission by Cromwell. Three chapters are devoted to Udall's activities in the hostelry which, through conversation, indirectly acquaints the reader with the major plot, and prepares the reader to give the desired reaction to important figures. The Fifth Queen Crowned opens a year after Frivy Seal closes. Thus, much of the exposition of background material seems logically to be intended to fill that gap. As a unit, the trilogy gives Ford the opportunity to develop, in great detail, the complexities, the constantly shifting patterns, of Tudor society. Within the scope of three books, Ford can trace adequately the formation of the smallest link in the chain of circumstances which gradually weighs the heroine down to her doom; and Ford can indicate the furthest reaches to which the ripples of the tragedy extend.

Within each book, Ford's organizational skill can readily be seen. Part One of The Fifth Queen consists of seven chapters. The first outlines the state of the kingdom as the peasants see it. The second introduces Cromwell under whose rule the populace are terrorized, but presents the fear of treachery under which Cromwell himself must live. From Cromwell's point of view the reader sees the important court figures and learns of the King's antipathy to Anne of Cleves. Chapter three depicts a violent clash between Protestants and Catholics outside the palace walls, a fight in which an unnamed woman injures her arm as she is being led on horseback to the palace. The fourth chapter introduces the King and presents his relationship to Cromwell. The King idly notices the woman on horseback as the chapter ends. In the fifth, Norfolk,

a minister, is forced by circumstances to recognize the woman as Katharine Howard, his niece. The King and Cromwell returning to the scene meet the woman, and Henry, idly attracted, assigns her to Lady Mary's household. The sixth chapter presents Cromwell escorting Katharine to Mary's residence. Each takes cognizance of the other and their essential relationship is established. The proud Mary is introduced as the chapter ends. The final chapter of the first part depicts Mary's residence, her women's positions, Katharine's entry into the household, and concludes leaving the impression that the court of Henry VIII is filled with intrigue and suspicion. The world of fifteenth century England in all its levels, with all its problems, is artfully created; the stage is set, the action begins.

The key to the successful development of each chapter is Ford's mastery of scene easily discovered in the trilogy. Richard Cassell selects as evidence the opening scene of The Fifth Queen Crowned in which Henry discusses with Archbishop Cranmer the writing of the letter of contrition to Rome that Katharine is so anxious to have done. Henry taunts the Archbishop with his precarious position, as he is considered a heretic by Rome; he mocks the proud man for the dismal quarters assigned to him, all the while considering the humbling of his own pride in consenting to write to Rome. Lascelles enters and is bid to kneel to write. Henry dictates various phrases beginning with a list of his imposing titles, switches abruptly to humble pious ones, then disconsolately changes it all, and finally leaves saying he will have it

done better upstairs. The implication that Katharine will write the letter is recognized by Lascelles and Cranmer. Cassell discusses the mechanics of the scene which demonstrate Ford's use of the time shift:

The scene is divided into three envelopes of action, each set off by extra spacing between paragraphs. The first begins with an unfinished statement by Cranmer taken from the middle of the scene. The action is taken up from there until page five, the conclusion of the first envelope, when Ford mentions that Henry had entered Cranmer's chambers saying, "Make you ready to write a letter to Rome." The second section begins by picking up dialogue suspended before the end of the first, introduces Lascelles, and ends with Henry leaving. The third, less than half a page long, shows Cranmer and Lascelles reacting to their realization of the Queen's power. "Then their eyes met. The one glance, panic-stricken, seeing no issue, hopeless and without resource, met the other - crafty, alert, fox-like, with a dance in it."... The scene has successfully dramatized Henry's indecisiveness, which is going to lead him to postpone the letter time and again, and Lascelles' latent treachery, prefiguring his crafty lying and spying which will help bring Katharine to her doom.<sup>37</sup>

Told by an unseen narrator whose minute observations give the effect of cinematic closeups, the entire scene has tremendous impact. "A progression of such skilfully contrived scenes, each one in itself dramatizing contrasts in characters and motivations, emphasizing shades and shadows, showing the effects of one character upon another (by action and speech, not exposition), and visualizing highly selected details ... creates a full picture. And each chapter somehow contrasts with or comments on the one preceding it until the colourful, almost sensational, tapestry is complete."<sup>38</sup>

Finally, let us consider Ford's presentation of character

in the Fifth Queen series. That he chose to handle well-known historical figures rather than take the safer method of inventing characters makes his achievement all the more remarkable. The danger of presenting royal personages, with the important figures of their courts, lies in the possibility of detracting from their dignity, of not quite reaching their elevation, with the result that the general tone rings untrue. In Ford's trilogy, the historical figures are depicted with such skill that their reputations can only be enhanced as they spring to life in his pages. It is his vivid portrayal of the key figures, King Henry VIII, Katharine Howard, and Cromwell, that makes the series, for Ford, a triumph in the genre of historical fiction.

Particularly interesting is Ford's characterization of Katharine. Ford sees her as a woman of great spirit who fights nobly for a lost but distinguished cause. Historically, she owed her rise to Queenship to her beauty and wit, but Ford adds to these intelligence, education, and a transcendent zeal to see Catholicism re-established in the realm. In her figure Ford focuses the central conflict of the trilogy - whether a state should be ruled under God through the Church, or whether it should be ruled finally by a secular power. It is she who vies against Cromwell for Henry's soul and England's peace through a return to the old faith. Anything derogatory in Katharine's background is presented as merely rumour or, as in the case of her relationship with Culpepper, left so ambiguous that it doesn't affect one's total impression of Katharine. As Cassell says, "... Katharine Howard

is perhaps the first major character in Ford's fiction for whom the reader can feel a wholly deep sympathy and compassion."<sup>39</sup> That Ford cultivated in the reader a sympathy for Katharine is obvious throughout the three books yet he constantly tempers it with irony focused through the reactions and comments of other characters. The effect is to give a detached view which serves to show up the self-deceptions that are often a part of idealistic natures. For instance, in Privy Seal, the maid Margot Poins, asked Katharine how she could love the King's person.

'Child,' Katharine answered, 'his Highness distilleth from his person a make of majesty; there is no other such a man in Christendom. His Highness culleth from one's heart a make of pity - for, for sure, there is not in Christendom a man more tried or more calling to be led Godwards. The Greek writers had a myth, that the two wings of Love were made of Awe and Pity... I will not, to be his queen, have word in divorce, for I have no truck with divorces; but I will humble myself to his Queen that is to pray her give me ease and him if the marriage be not consummated. For, so I love him that I will humble mine own self in the dust; but so I love love and its nobleness that, though I must live and die a cookmaid, I will not stoop in evil ways.'

Margot comments cryptically,

'There is no man worth that guise of Love.'<sup>40</sup>

Later, in Privy Seal, as Katharine seeks to satisfy her conscience by conversing with Anne of Cleves she claims, "If I will be Queen, it is that God may bless this realm and King with the old faith again." Anne replies, "It is best known to yourself why you will be Queen." ... "It is best known to God what faith he will have in this your realm. I know not what faith he liketh




best, nor yet what side of a queen's functions most commendeth itself unto you."<sup>41</sup> In both cases Ford achieves a balanced presentation which enables the reader, with detached insight, to see Katharine as a rounded character. The depth Ford sounds in Katharine's characterization gives her a vitality far beyond Moffat, in The Benefactor, who remains essentially an unsatisfying character.

Contending against Katharine is the powerful figure of Cromwell. Far from being an idealist, he is the Machiavellian expert to whom 'God is very far away'. As the trilogy opens, he looms like a scourge over the land and dwellings of Roman Catholics, the terror of his might being carried to the furthest hamlet by his spies. Immediately beside this picture of the man is set, in Part I, Chapter II, the reveries of Cromwell. He sees himself as "perpetually beside the throne". "He would be there by right; he would be able to give all his mind to the directing of this world that he despised for its baseness, its jealousies, its insane brawls, its aimless selfishness, and its blind furies. Then there should be no more war, as there should be no more revolts. There should be no more jealousies; for kingcraft, solid, austere, practical and inspired, should keep down all the peoples, all the priests, and all the nobles of the world".<sup>42</sup> Between the opinion of the populace concerning Cromwell and Cromwell's opinion of himself, Ford presents Katharine's changing opinion. From her simple hatred of the 'flail of the monks', she comes to

respect him for the shrewd judge of character that he is, for his high aim for England, for his zealous dedication to its pursuit; yet her fear of him is magnified concomitantly as her respect for his integrity increases. While Katharine's idealism prevents her from using dishonourable methods in the struggle to win the King to her side, Cromwell has the advantage of recognizing her limited position and the statecraft to use to the full the unlimited freedom of action of his own. Interwoven with Katharine's impression of Cromwell are the opinions of the King and the important ministers of the court, giving to Cromwell's character the many facets which make his portraiture vividly alive. In developing the situations involved in this interplay of personalities, Ford causes Cromwell to emerge as an imposing figure, a worthy adversary for his heroine.

Between Katharine and Cromwell stands the huge figure of King Henry VIII. Yet, for all the ponderous, bull-like, physical might of the man, Ford presents him as tormented by troubles of the mind and afflictions of the body. Hounded by a sense of guilt and a fear of treason, suffering an ulcerated leg and unable to sleep, Henry sees comfort and peace of mind in the beauty, brains, and firm faith of Katharine, while he sees power, wealth, and a subdued realm in the statesmanship of Cromwell. Vacillating between the two extremes, the king has no fixed purpose of his own. With the complex juggling for position and power that occupies the court, Henry's irresolution is very dangerous for both Katharine and Cromwell. Cromwell recognizes the king's nature and



manipulates it for his own purposes; Katharine only recognizes it when it is too late. She cries to Henry, "But you - never will you cross any Rubicon; always you blow hot in the evening and cold at dawn. Neither do you, as I dreamed you did, rule in this your realm. For, even as a crow that just now I watched, you are blown hither and thither by every gust that blows."<sup>43</sup> Yet the final impression of Henry is not merely one of a weak-willed character needing strong support. His brute strength, his choleric rages, his great laughter, the fear he stirs in Cromwell himself, the gentleness of mien with his son, the tenderness of moments with Katharine, the majesty he conveys in his court and realm, all make him a complex and compelling figure whose stature is not one whit overshadowed by the figures of the heroine and her adversary.

Ford shows shrewd judgement in the methods he chooses for the presentation of these key figures. Katharine, who is much more his creature than either Cromwell or Henry, is presented from a point of view partly within, and partly without, her consciousness. The reader is given insight into her motives at the same time as he is given the setting and the circumstances affecting her motives. Thus the reader is in a position to know more about the situation than the character involved in it and enjoys the stimulation this provides. But with the King Ford uses the point of view of the author, present at the scene, who only sees external behaviour. There are two particular advantages of this treatment of Henry: one, the difficulties of convincingly

portraying the innermost thoughts of such a controversial, complex figure as Henry are bypassed: two, interest is maintained far more in Henry's case by the suspense of not knowing what he thinks, and therefore not knowing what he will do in any situation. The combination of these approaches used judiciously gives a depth to the three novels far beyond that achieved in The Benefactors.

Over the length of the trilogy, the gradual curve of Katharine's fortunes, the falling line of Cromwell's fortunes, the shifting movement of the King's course produce a rhythmic pattern of tensions which sweeps the reader along to the joyless death of Cromwell, the tragic death of Katharine, then leaves him (as the series closes) to stand with Henry as he dashes his hat to the paving in discontent and futility.

Yet, there is much to mar the performance along the way. As John Meixner points out, there are structural flaws in each book of the series. After the exciting opening chapters, the middle third of The Fifth Queen appears clogged with material; the presentation of characters like Sir Nicholas and Cecily Elliot is inadequate, they merely serve to advance the plot; and the device of the interception of letters has little effect on the final outcome. In Privy Seal there is a significant flaw in the plot. The imminece of Cromwell's defeat is so apparent that Culpepper's progress to court fails to stimulate interest, while the termination of the struggle by sobering Culpepper is a contrivance which also fails to be compelling. Finally, in The Fifth Queen Crowned there is revealed a basic inconsistency. On the one hand, Ford

has chosen to alter freely the historical personages of Katharine, Culpepper, and others, while, on the other hand, he has included the complicated material involving Manock, Dearham, Mary Lascelles, and other figures concerned with the historical Katharine. Far too much explanation is required before significant action can begin.

Other weaknesses include the overworking of the device of the letter in the first two volumes and the similarity in dramatic tension of Culpepper's impetuous drives to get to Katharine in the second and third books. There is even a similarity in the endings of the first two novels where Henry masterfully overcomes the appalled Katharine in both instances. Then characters such as Udall, Foins and Culpepper are inadequately drawn, appearing as "humours" yet lacking sufficient charm or comedy. Monotony of effects and shallowness of characterization detract from the total impression of the trilogy.

More serious still are flaws in the presentation of Ford's important figures. The force of Cromwell's portraiture in the first book is not maintained in the second. As a result, the reader cannot see his fall as the terrible thing Katharine sees it to be. Then, Lascelles, who carries on in Cromwell's wake, is not sufficiently differentiated from his predecessor and merely acquires the status of villain. Similarly does the quality of Katharine's portrait decline from that of a shrewd, intelligent, high-spirited girl to that of a sentimentalized creature too delicate and fine for the intrigue-ridden world of the court. The

decline can be attributed to Ford's relaxation of irony. As John Meixner says: "No longer does his vision stand apart from Katharine's, adding a reverberation of meaning and the appearance of independent life. There is no Cromwell or Anne of Cleves in the final novel, for example, to challenge the authority of her attitudes. Nor is the sense conveyed that her ambition and compromises qualify her idealism and therefore humanize it."<sup>44</sup> Thus Katharine and the book lose vitality and significance.

The Fifth Queen Crowned is further marred by the defect of borrowings. John Meixner clearly shows that much of the last half of the novel has 'Shakespearian echoes'. In particular the crucial episode late at night in which Culpepper bursts into Katharine's room is directly modeled on the scene in Othello where Desdemona prepares for bed. But where the latter has 'piercing poetry', 'psychological depth', 'the vivifying sense of newness', the former is 'empty work', a pastiche. Essentially, Ford could not embody his conception; it is the case of a young writer attempting to go beyond the scope of his powers. Yet the trilogy is a creditable achievement and work of great promise.

While working upon the Fifth Queen series, Ford dashed off An English Girl which was published in 1907 and, at the same time, produced Mr. Apollo which appeared in 1908. The former can be dismissed as a hasty portrayal jumbling together farce, social satire, and psychological novel of character in a weak presentation of James's international theme. The latter is a remarkably appealing novel, rich in imagination, in the intensity of its feeling,

in the excitement of its vision. It is a notable work among the novels Ford produced prior to 1914.

In Mr. Apollo Ford dramatizes the position of religion in the modern world, presenting objectively both the sceptics' and the believers' opinions. An impartial presentation of all opinions is made possible through a stroke of genius on Ford's part. He chooses God as his central character conceiving Him as coming to earth in the form of the Greek god Apollo to study humanity in the very act of living. This literary device gives two advantages: one, through the Divine Godhead he can ask questions ordinarily never raised in society and, from the Godhead's reactions to revealing answers, he can reflect the ideal standard for human endeavours; two, by presenting God as the Greek Deity Ford avoids the difficulties of attempting to portray the Christian God, while providing himself with the impressive qualities given body in the Greek god, Apollo, to form the basis for his own conception. In the development of this unique character, and in the presentation of his impact upon the people with whom he associates, Ford is able to give social satire of particularly broad scope and peculiarly piercing quality.

The Deity visits and studies three distinct London groups: a Protestant minister and his family; a group of intellectuals who gather each week at the flat of the school teachers, Alfred Milne and his wife, Frances; and the newspaper tycoon, Lord Aldington, with his associates. The reaction of each group to this 'man', about whom they all sense some special power, forms the chief

movement of the novel.

Since "it is a natural law that no man may entertain a divinity and be as he was before",<sup>45</sup> each group undergoes a change. Mr. Todd, the Protestant minister, reveals himself as a militant Christian merely using the banner of Christianity to cover his desire to be superior. During a conversation with Apollo, he is surprised into giving his honest opinion that the human mass ebbing and flowing in the streets are 'the stuff to fill graveyards'. His performance as a minister to the people and as a husband and father is in direct accordance with this belief. In contact with 'Prince Apollo' all the unpleasant facets of Todd's character are brought out. In fact, his natural thoughtlessness, acquisitiveness, and utter selfishness are aggravated to such an extent that Apollo, in swift retribution, causes Todd to disappear, while later it is noticed that an eighth bay tree stands in the garden where before were only seven. Because Mrs. Todd pleases Apollo with her simple, immediate adoration, He is moved to give Todd a second chance. If the first words spoken by Todd show any redeeming qualities, he will be restored. But Todd fails the test and is immediately stricken with a paralysis which reduces him to an infant-like state, to be cared for by Mrs. Todd who had earlier cried that if God were kind to mothers He would not let babies grow up. Her reward for pleasing Apollo is simultaneously her punishment for failing to assert herself as an individual in her home. She merely wishes to have a situation in which she holds



power as her husband did in their home. She does not condemn her husband's actions so she is forced to suffer the consequences of Apollo's condemnation of Todd. With this macabre satisfaction of Mrs. Todd's desires, Ford exemplifies the detached, august justice of Mr. Apollo.

The situation laid bare by Mr. Apollo's entry into the crass world of the newspaper king, Lord Aldington, is that of a man completely immersed in manipulating the profit system of his business. At the moment of meeting he is preparing to proclaim abroad the wonders of a mind-reading pair, the Krakroffs. Mr. Apollo's visit intensely affects Aldington. He believes in the Deity and wishes Him to write His story for publication. But the stark truth of Apollo's statement: "I am the God Apollo! I am God! I am immortal! I am omniscient! I am omnipotent! I was, and I shall be. I am God!"<sup>46</sup> is frightening to Aldington. He cannot print it. His explanation, that it is neither the time nor the method, implies a caustic comment upon the millions of people for whom he is the voice. Supernatural trivia represented by the Krakroffs is acceptable, but not the wonder of the Godhead. Aldington seeks to appease Apollo in anguish of soul but can offer only money to the Deity. Refusing to act according to his belief, Aldington is left a prey to the disease afflicting him, a wretch without peace of mind.

The third group presented by Ford gives a marked contrast in many ways to the two groups briefly discussed above. The world of organized religion as represented by Todd and the world

of big business as represented by Aldington, are found sadly empty, futile worlds. But what of the group of intellectuals? From the extreme left of opinions held by the atheistical Mr. Clarges and by the sceptical science teacher, Carver, to the changing opinions of the Milnes and to the faith of Margery Snyder, Ford gives a cross-section of the intelligentsia's attitudes toward religion. In the rendering of these characters and their reactions to the catalytic presence of Mr. Apollo, Ford presents the most fascinating parts of the novel. In this group are the most sympathetically drawn characters whose points of views, though diverse, do not bring down upon them either the scornful pity or the terrible wrath wreaked upon the other two groups by the Divine Visitor.

The young Milnes form the centre around which the others revolve. Their apartment is the meeting place. As Ford introduces them they are finding the crush of day-to-day living bearing them inexorably away from the modest but fervent hopes of their youth. Cramped in a city apartment with an insufficient income they see their dream of directing a school on the Wiltshire downs gradually fade. Alfred Milne sinks slowly into despair, his health deteriorating at the same time. Frances lives for him rather than for the once shimmering dream they had shared. She is able to sustain herself in hope only so long as Alfred can keep up appearances and plod on. When visibly he begins to succumb to his despair, Frances also is shaken. Imperceptibly both have moved from the atheistic opinions of their University days to a state of dissatisfaction where they are groping for they know not

what. At this point Apollo visits them, when a group have gathered at their home.

Quite naturally the discussion turns to belief versus unbelief, with a lengthy debate about the Church. In the animated conversation which ensues, much of the exciting dialectic, with which Ford effectively sustains interest in the novel, is expressed. Taking a combative position against belief is Mr. Clarges, an elderly man who has vented his spleen through the years in articles accurately criticizing for its shortcomings whatever government was in power at the time. He is vividly rendered by Ford in a manner which draws the reader's respect, admiration even, but which leaves him to conclude that Clarges's opinions are out-moded. As the chief antagonist to the Deity he debates with a vigour unmatched by any other character in the novel. But, finally, as his anger becomes uncontrollable, he flees. However, Apollo does not condemn Clarges; seeing into his heart He comments that although the Christian God is unpalatable to Clarges, 'fighting men have fighting Gods'. Alfred Milne and his wife have progressed to the point where Milne can say for them both, "I should define God as the principle with which we act in harmony ... If you've any ideal you have a God."<sup>47</sup>

The Church comes under scrutiny when the gentle Roman Catholic, Margery Snyder, remarks that its doctrine is unfolding as the opened rose holds many petals in its bud. Carver, the anti-Catholic scientist mocks this statement saying that each new doctrine the Church puts out is a new petal. But Apollo, exerting

his miraculous power, causes Carver to say all that he thinks, not just part of it and to say it without diatribe. Carver's reflections give the Church a dignity and worth he had previously denied it by his half-truths. He admits there is truth in the image of the rose, but his objections to the Church's slowness to assimilate truths, to its claims to authority, are not controverted for the issue is not important; "it should be evident to you that to a divine nature the beliefs of man must be a subject of indifference,"<sup>48</sup> says Apollo.

The Milnes are so attracted to Mr. Apollo that he is invited to stay with them for three weeks. During that time Alfred Milne finds himself more and more emotionally stirred by Apollo's presence, more and more despondent over his situation in life, and more unable intellectually to accept Apollo's claim to Godhead that is constantly being pressed upon him. Finally, in anguish he tells the Deity that He must be regarded as a foreign adventurer and must leave the house. Mr. Apollo goes leaving Alfred to decline into a fever from which Frances knows he can not recover. Watching her beloved husband fade under her very eyes, she calls in sudden faith upon God. Apollo comes and hearing from Frances's lips the request for the one blessing he approves, says, "For if you will have God with you, you must serve God; and if you serve God, God will be always with you."<sup>49</sup> The novel ends as Milne in his feverish dream shouts out his belief which immediately restores peace to his troubled spirit and hope in the home.

Mr. Apollo's impact upon the members of the third group

representing the intelligentsia causes a reassessment, in each case, of positions held. A change in position is not necessarily implied. However, from the evidence provided in the Milnes' course from extreme atheism to firm conviction, the point of view of the book is impressed upon the reader. Doctrine is not important but belief is all-important.

As remarkable as is Ford's conception of the novel, it is no more remarkable than the art with which the story is told. Interest is captured at once by the sudden strange appearance of the Godhead on a London street at night and, within a brief interval, by the presentation of the first instance of His terrible judgement. Interest is sustained in the subtle revelation of the nature of Mr. Apollo and in the miracles He performs. The variety of characters portrayed, the impressions given of all levels of London life, these add to the fascination of the novel. But one cannot fully appreciate the degree of success Ford achieved in Mr. Apollo without a lengthy analysis of his organization and technique. However, in this limited account, merely a suggestion of the areas in which Ford improved must suffice.

The gradual unfolding of Mr. Apollo's character is the pivotal movement of the book. As he makes contact with the various groups there is a reciprocal action in which, as has been shown above, each character reveals his nature and, at the same time, causes 'the Prince' to reveal more of his nature. Beside the unifying element of Apollo's figure, Ford carefully links together the people of each group to offset any episodic tendencies. Todd's

daughter plans to marry the young writer, Arthur Bracondale, who gains a position on Aldington's newspaper; Mr. Clarges is busy revealing the false pretences of the Krakroffs; and Alfred Milne is connected with each group. In various conversations, Mr. Apollo ties the groups together as in the climactic moment when he tells Alfred Milne of his agreement with Lord Aldington to publish his claim to Godhead which forces Milne to make his final retreat and drive the Deity away. Such careful interweaving gives a thickness of texture, a solidity, to the life represented in the novel.

The most striking structural achievement is Ford's use of progression d'effet and the time shift. The pace is most rapid and the effect most intense in the culminating four chapters of the book. In the first of these chapters Mrs. Todd's anxious fears over her husband's disappearance are presented with her appeal for his return. He is returned, found unrepentant, and he falls into a paralyzed condition as the chapter ends. As the next chapter opens, the scene is set in Lord Aldington's office. With him are Mr. Apollo and Arthur Bracondale. The Deity tells the astonished pair of Mrs. Todd's prayer and His answer to it. Upon checking, Aldington finds the Prince's statement true and, elated, is prepared to publish news of the Godhead. The following chapter presents the Prince with Alfred Milne. It is in the course of their conversation that the reader learns of Aldington's request that Mr. Apollo write His own statement for publication and then becomes aware of its repercussions upon Milne whose rejection of the entire situation forms the climax of the book. The final

chapter is presented from Mrs. Milne's point of view. A number of weeks have passed by and Milne lies in a fevered sleep. Frances's reminiscences inform the reader of Aldington's frantic search for Mr. Apollo to make some recompense. Similarly is the reader informed of Frances's realization that belief is the one requirement necessary for her husband's cure. Thus directly and indirectly one vital action is made to incite another, while much clogging exposition is avoided. The economical compression gained, the striking effect achieved by disrupting chronological events to set one vivid scene against another, increases the intensity of experience which is the distinguishing mark of Mr. Apollo.

Not least of Ford's improvements is the prose style he develops in the novel. From the sonorous sentences of Mr. Apollo, to the snarled phrases of Mr. Clarges, to the languid cadences of Frances Milne's reverie, Ford demonstrates his craftsmanship. Yet the style is not showy; it does not attract the reader unduly. In fact, so imperceptibly does the prose style cast its spell that the reader is likely to accept its excellence as a matter of course. Yet, if one stops to consider various passages, the practicality, the precision, the beauty of its arrangement cannot be ignored. Take, for example, the following selection:

And they had nothing to offer for his return: they were such poor people, with such simple ideals. You could not imagine a wonderful man, and a man obviously wealthy and likely to be beloved by many people... you could not imagine him seeking out, of his own volition, two poor school teachers whose uttermost visions were bounded by an already fading white dream of a school-house in Wiltshire.

They had nothing to offer him. And it must be

remembered that neither Alfred nor Frances Milne had any touch, either by birth, tradition or upbringing, of that romantic strain that makes many of us believe in a special providence ... a special providence who will cause an indefinable "something" to "turn up". Nothing that would turn up entered into their scale of ideas: they calculated solely upon their own efforts. Life for them was cause and effect: what they did today would earn for them what they would enjoy or suffer from tomorrow. They hadn't either of them, as children or young people, read novels enough to imagine ... as so many of us will imagine ... that their lives would be rounded up, connected, or helped, by a benevolent fate, over stiles. If they went lame they would have to bear it.<sup>50</sup>

From the quiet pathos of the opening statement, 'And they had nothing to offer ... ', the first paragraph moves to its close through one other complex sentence carefully cadenced to suggest the hope that cannot quite gain strength enough to dispel the deepening gloom. Ford chooses simple definite description compressed to give the contrast that saddens Frances Milne when she contemplates her situation versus Mr. Apollo's. She and her husband are 'poor' and have 'simple ideals'; He is 'wonderful', 'wealthy', 'beloved'. Most touching is the contrast between the immensity suggested by 'uttermost vision' which, actually, is merely a 'white dream of a schoolhouse in Wiltshire'. It is so little to ask, yet, even that little is qualified by the words 'already fading' to set the seal on Frances's despair. Ford links the second paragraph to the first by the repetition of the opening words of the first. With repetitions of verbal groups like 'could not imagine', with the careful placement of the word 'nothing' in both paragraphs, with the accumulation of 'nots' generally throughout the passage, the negatives create a knell-like effect. However,



from the wistful opening the passage is not allowed to decline into some sentimental conclusion. Ford closes the second paragraph with a concrete image in the stoical statement, 'If they went lame they would have to bear it.' With authority Ford fashioned this prose, achieving in it exactly what he planned.

As proficient as is Ford's performance in Mr. Apollo, there are flaws which detract from its value. His daring decision to introduce God among the characters portrayed sets the seal of fantasy upon the work. Removed from the sphere of every-day experience, the novel is prevented from assuming the importance it might have achieved as a social document, and must be classed, with Ford's historical novels, as a tour de force. Then Ford's presentation of a number of the characters leaves much to be desired. The Reverend Mr. Todd makes a vivid impression on the reader but he appears to have no redeeming qualities to balance the many undesirable ones; he is not, then, a humanly satisfying figure, and the reader cannot wholly sympathize with Mrs. Todd's desire to have him restored to her. Then, Lord Aldington is not distinctly drawn. Since, as chief representative of the third group visited by Apollo, Aldington occupies a significant place in the last third of the book, that part of the novel is substantially weakened by Ford's inadequate rendering of the man. Furthermore, even a character like Mr. Clarges leaves one with the feeling that he is more the embodiment of a type than a rounded individual in his own right.

Other faults include lapses in tone, careless sentence

structure and even errors of fact. As Mr. Meixner<sup>51</sup> points out, the farcical overtones of Apollo's magical appearance before a London policeman at the novel's opening miscue the reader, and the speeches in dialect given by lower class people attract attention unnecessarily, giving an unreal stagey effect. Such lapses definitely detract from the solemn, almost elegiac tone which is the novel's final impression. The sentence "They came in very often, and very often they came when Alfred Milne, and his wife out of sympathy with him, were wearied with the day's work"<sup>52</sup> is certainly far removed from the carefully constructed sentences of the passage cited above.<sup>53</sup> Then, further shaking the reader's security, is the repetition of Apollo's designation as 'son of Maia' when it should be 'son of Leto' as Mr. Meixner observes.

These faults cannot affect the conclusion, that Mr. Apollo is a work of literary art which, within the limits set upon it as a fantasy, a tour de force, achieves a level of beauty, skill, and imagination making it second only to A Call in its importance as a novel of Ford's early period.

In 1909 Ford published The "Half Moon", a narrative based upon Henry Hudson's voyage of discovery to the famous river that now bears his name. This was a period fascinating to Ford. As he said in the Dedication of the book: "...the psychology of the Old World in the days of Hudson ... is, as you know, the subject to which I have more than anything devoted my attention: for at that date the Dark Ages were finally breaking up, ... men were beginning to disbelieve ... and in consequence men were beginning

to look out for truths of all kinds: for new faiths, for new methods of government and, perhaps above all, for lands in which Utopias might be found or might be founded. So that it was a comparatively easy task for me to shadow forth one of the chief causes for the voyage of the "Half Moon"...."54

But Hudson is not the central figure in the novel. The chief character is a quiet, industrious ship builder named Edward Colman, who is forced to flee his home-port of Rye for having broken a trading law which actually was generally flouted. He is loved by, but does not return the love of Anne Jeal, the Mayor's daughter. It is through the figure of Anne that Ford introduces the supernatural element which becomes the dominating force of the book. Anne Jeal is a witch who, aroused by Colman's rejection of her love, manipulates all her evil powers to hound her lover wherever he goes in the Old World and the New, finally, in jealous rage, causing his death on the shores of the Hudson River.

The element of fantasy permeates this book to an extent not found in any of Ford's other novels. Yet it is not used merely as a proven story-telling device, although its inclusion undoubtedly adds excitement and suspense to the account. The supernatural element emphasizes the fundamental meaning and effect of the book. For the hounding of heretics as instruments of evil in part led to the great westward movement, Yet, wherever the tides of humanity flow, the same elements of human error cause unhappiness and tragedy. This sense of irrevocability is achieved in The "Half Moon" through the inclusion of witchcraft. There

can be no Utopia, nor can one flee the consequences of being human. Colman, the interpreter, the builder, the man who envisions the cities of the New World, dies. But evil, in the person of Anne Jeal, does not win, either. In Anne's vision, Colman, dying, reaffirms his love for his wife, while his wife looking westward contentedly bears a child of the next generation within her. Nothing in the human drama is changed nor could it have been. Thus the reader senses the awe and mystery of inevitable human destiny, the ultimate aim of the novel.

The "Half Moon" can only be considered a minor work. In 'shadowing forth' the atmosphere of the period and the characters of that time, Ford is not nearly so successful as he was in the Fifth Queen trilogy. For instance there is not the authoritative inclusion of detail that reveals the master craftsman steeped in the historical background of his novel. Characterization is vivid but too external; the characters do not live, they function as representatives of ideas. Anne Jeal personifies the power of evil, for example, while Colman is merely the victim of the suffering her power causes. Nevertheless the narrative is exciting, with a flight from the law, a tense murder attempt, mutiny, savage hordes, wild storms, intrigue, all reminiscent of Ford's collaboration with Conrad in Romance.

Before leaving The "Half Moon" it is worthy of note that, in the figure of Anne Jeal, Ford presents for the first time the tyrannous woman who resolutely persecutes the man she loves, seeking revenge for the rejection of her love. This figure is to

appear again and again, as Countess MacDonald of The New Humpty Dumpty, as Katya Lascarides of A Call, as Leonora Ashburnham in The Good Soldier, and, most memorable of all, as Sylvia Tietjens of Parade's End.

After writing historical novels, novels of social satire and the supernatural, Ford returned again, in A Call, to the novel of "Small Circles". This book was published in 1910, the year of his disassociation from The English Review, a magazine of renowned literary merit which he had edited, and in which A Call first appeared. During this year divorce proceedings began, and Ford entered the second period of ill-health and mental torment which intermittently dogged his days. Gone for a time were the days of living as a small agriculturalist. Ahead was the hectic period of living with his paramour, Violet Hunt, at her home, South Lodge. At the age of thirty-seven, Ford was no longer le jeune homme modeste but le jeune maître. The years of varying experiences had deepened his understanding, quickened his awareness, accentuated his sensitivity, and enabled him to sharpen the tools of his craft to the point where he could produce A Call, the richest and most accomplished work of his early period.

In A Call we find the emerging lines of Ford's world given further clarification and distinctness. The small circle involves five people whose personalities are entangled in the conflict between individual passion and civilization's enforced code of behaviour. We meet again Ford's typical vacillating hero, we meet again the gentle, loving female born to suffer.

Briefly, the "affair" rendered in A Call is that of Robert Grimshaw, a partly Greek, partly English Londoner of much wealth. He is greatly attracted to the vibrant Katya Lascarides, his childhood sweetheart of Greek origin, yet he loves Pauline Lucas, the pretty, quiet, typically stalwart English girl. Grimshaw's concern that Dudley Leicester, a member of the landed gentry, measure up to the demands of his class, leads him to feel that if Pauline were to marry Dudley he would achieve tremendous success and have the backbone to take his traditional place in society. The marriage is arranged even though Pauline loves Robert as much as he loves her. The fifth character complicating the affair is Etta Hudson (née Stackpole) once Dudley's lover.

Grimshaw quickly realizes the folly he has committed, but cannot foresee the tragic consequences until the coils of the maze he has created are gradually straightened out. He thought he could marry the woman he loved to his best friend, for purposes they did not know and he did not fully understand, and that he would not be adversely affected by the act. Grimshaw sees his mistake in the terribly empty feeling he experiences as Pauline walks down the aisle, and in the 'death-like' expression of Pauline's face as she boards the train to begin her wedding trip. He rallies himself with the old motto of his class - do what you want, what seems proper and expedient - and take what you get for it - and decides to watch over Pauline and Dudley while saving himself for Katya who has loved him from her youth.

Shortly after the marriage, while Pauline is away from

London visiting her very sick mother, Dudley is thrown into the company of Etta Hudson who forces him to see her home and coaxes him inside. Robert witnesses this and in sudden jealous suspicion calls Etta's house to verify it. Dudley answers the telephone, is recognized, but does not know who called. Robert feels this proves Dudley's involvement in an affair with Etta. Dudley, in panic, fears circumstantial evidence will ruin his marriage to Pauline.

Later, Pauline comes to share Robert's suspicion and, through more of Robert's meddling, attempts to bring the whole situation out in the open, but only succeeds in driving the hypochondriacal Dudley into a catatonic state. Pauline rises nobly to the occasion, continuing plans to have Dudley run for election to Parliament and generally carrying the whole catastrophe off with such poise that no one but a few close friends and relatives knows of Dudley's affliction.

Robert is lost in wonder and admiration of Pauline. But when he tries to draw closer to Pauline, she lets him know, quite definitely, that it is through his lack of knowledge of the human heart, through his meddling, that he has forced her into a veritable hell. She shows him that she can rise to the occasion and, in the noble English tradition, make a success out of her new vocation as Dudley's wife. Robert realizes he has irrevocably lost Pauline, while he learns, in an interview with Etta, that Dudley was not involved in any affair and that it was his call which caused Dudley's misfortune and Pauline's unhappiness. At the

same time Robert realizes that he no longer feels anything for Katya.

Katya, who from the first has been determined to possess Robert body and soul, is called upon to bring Dudley out of his catatonic state using her knowledge of psychiatry, learned in America. Her condition is that Robert must take her to wife according to her earlier plans (i.e. without marriage, for her parents had lived together without marriage and she desires to emulate her beloved mother in every way). However, at the moment of Dudley's cure, Katya demands marriage for she jealously sees that both Robert and Pauline are still in love with each other. In utter despair, completely sapped of his strength, Robert says, "So that you get me both ways" ... and his hands fall desolately open at his side. "Every way and altogether," she answers as the novel ends.

Ford presents the complex coils of this story in an extremely subtle manner. And, in fact, so hidden are the inner lives of these people, entrapped as they are by the mores of their civilized existence, that only in an oblique manner, only by adroit suggestion, could he hope to capture the fleeting moments of crisis briefly breaking through their controls. Obliquely presented, also, are the settings and changing seasons. Indeed, it can be said that A Call is the most oblique in presentation of all Ford's novels and requires the greatest concentration by the reader. So much attention was required of readers when the novel first appeared in the English Review, that Ford decided to make certain



revisions when publishing the book. He was very surprised to find it necessary to do this for the narrative appeared to him to be 'as plain as a pikestaff', as he says in the 'Epistolary Epilogue'.

Ford's method in A Call is to present the account from the point of view of the author who at times is omniscient, being half within, half without the consciousness of the characters. Generally, however, Ford prefers to indicate what is going on within the mind of a character by noting some small, swift, revealing action or brief exclamation. For instance, Pauline flings to the ground the bouquet Robert gave her as she boards the train for her honeymoon trip with Dudley; Pauline's face wears a thin little smile as she contemplates making a vocation out of being Dudley's wife after Robert has made comforting overtures to her; or Robert's hands fall limply to his sides as Katya gives her ultimatum. Much information must be inferred from a simple "Ah." said by one of the characters in a moment of tension.

Emphasis upon external, essentially dramatic action was in part thrust upon Ford, for he chose to conceal the identity of the person who made the call almost until the end of the novel. He could not enter the consciousness of the guilty party and keep this fact a secret. However, suspicion and suspense are aroused by these provocative actions, expressions, and exclamations, which carry the reader forward from crisis to crisis until he arrives at the resolution.

Structurally, Ford chose to present a series of scenes in

which some important action, the result of intense feeling, is portrayed. Leading up to these scenes are sections, almost solely expository, which prepare for the scenes as their logical and exciting culmination. Within each scene Ford includes some action from which develop new complications leading toward the next scene. This rhythmic rise and fall of tension engendered in the novel by the structural pattern enables Ford to achieve maximum interest, suspense, and meaning. For example: Chapter three opens after the lapse of a year and gives a sketch of the married life of Pauline and Dudley. It also presents the circumstances which force Dudley to fall into Etta Hudson's clutches for it gives an account of the illness of Pauline's mother which necessitated Dudley's being left in town and in need of companionship for dinner. Chapter four gives a character sketch of Dudley. He is a tall, awkward, nervous man, one who has not actually done anything in his entire life. Typical of his lethargic approach to life is the statement that he didn't want to go to his Club that particular evening because "there wouldn't be at his Club or in the Park anyone that he wanted to be talked to by."<sup>55</sup> The information that Dudley "suffered from constant panics"<sup>56</sup> is inconspicuously woven into the general information given. The Chapter ends with a most provocative description of Etta Stackpole seated at Dudley's side at a dinner table. Her intentions can be understood from the three red roses she has placed in her hair.

Chapter five sketches in Etta's background and her past relationship with Dudley. Then, in Chapter six, Dudley, unable

to ignore Etta's charming manner, finds himself forced to see her home. Ford aptly describes Etta leading Dudley "as in a picture a nymph might lead away a stripling into scented obscurities into leafy woods."<sup>57</sup> Indirectly, in Etta's conversation, Ford again informs the reader that Dudley is subject to sudden panics. As the chapter ends, Dudley is persuaded to step into Etta's house for a few moments. This chapter ends Part I and the stage is set.

In Part II, Chapter one, the crisis comes immediately. The telephone rings. Dudley answers, is recognized, and hangs up the telephone in terror without finding out who called. Completely shaken, Dudley enters 'a world of dread' as the chapter ends. The next chapter presents the many facets of Dudley's growing fear, but brings in the information that Katya Lascarides is returning to England, ostensibly for professional reasons, but actually to claim Robert. And so another coil begins.

The obliquity of Ford's method in revealing his characters and rendering their narrative is augmented by the impressionistic approach he uses skilfully to sketch, with swift strokes, the settings in which the characters move. Consider how he catches the evanescent freshness of early Spring in the opening of Chapter one, Part III - Katya, awaiting a visit from Robert, is seated in a deck-chair knitting, "her eyes upon the April landscape, where bursts of sunlight travelled across these veil-like films of new leaves that covered tenderly the innumerable hedgerows." And consider the peculiar quality of the loneliness evoked by Ford in this description of a wood in late Spring as Grimshaw sits on a Park bench

filled with thoughts of Fauline's unhappiness, and of her predicament with Dudley as election time draws near:

Silence and loneliness. In the long grass, engrossed, mere small spots of black, the starlings in a little company went about their task. From beneath the high trees came the call of the blackbirds echoing in true woodnotes, and overhead a wood-pidgeon was crooning incessantly. The path ran broad down the avenue. The sounds of the wood-cutters at work upon the trees felled that winter were sharp points in the low rumble from a distance, and over all the grass that could be seen beneath the tree-trunks there hung a light-blue haze.<sup>58</sup>

Obviously Ford's control over language has reached the point where he can create whatever effect he desires.

In conception, in general structural organization, in particular scenes, such as the interview between Etta Hudson and Robert Grimshaw in Bushy Park, Ford's performance is brilliant but not flawless. Having said the performance is brilliant one must add that the full brilliance only becomes apparent on second or third reading. Principally, this is because Ford chose to withhold the information that Robert Grimshaw made the call. Not knowing this, the reader misses much of the significance of Robert's gestures, facial expressions, etc., and does not always sense the tension underlying certain scenes. For instance, in Part I, Chapter four, after Dudley's collapse, Robert, standing futilely in the hall sadly reviewing the circumstances, suddenly strikes himself on the forehead with his gloved fist. Saunders, the servingman seeing, says to himself - "Ah! I thought it would come to that."<sup>59</sup> Neither Robert's action nor Saunders's comment can be fully appreciated without the knowledge that Robert is guilty and

Saunders knows. The knowledge, when it comes almost at the end of the novel, does not cause a flash of illumination sufficient to shed light in retrospect over such scenes as this.

Perhaps a greater fault lies in the general dissatisfaction the reader feels, having come to the end of the novel. When the novel first appeared in book form, Ford, against his own judgement, added a scene at the end showing the characters a number of years later than the original ending. Robert and Katya are apparently happily married, while Pauline and Dudley, now a successful Parliamentarian, have four children; Etta has entered a convent. Ford feels disgust at the necessity of adding anything more to the original closing of the novel. Such a conclusion is arbitrary and not at all like life for, as he says, "There is in life nothing final."<sup>60</sup> But the need for something more would probably not have been felt by many of his readers had the original ending appeared inevitable. This fault has its basis in another flaw.

Neither in Robert's character nor in Katya's character, as revealed by Ford, is there sufficient illumination to justify the circumstances of their agreement to marry. Katya is not involved in any crucial action which brings about the situation she hopes for, the moves are all Robert's; she merely waits on the sidelines for the right opportunity. But why Katya is willing to marry Robert knowing he loves Pauline and why Robert, knowing he feels 'as cold as a stone' to Katya, can plan to marry her, is not made clear to the reader. Psychological depth in depicting these characters is missing, possibly because they are presented

mainly through external gesture, expression, etc; we get only the briefest glimpses into their minds. Thus the novel ends aridly; it does not stir the reader emotionally.

Other flaws, involving structure and characterization together, include the loss of Dudley as a vital personality for almost a third of the book. Being almost nonexistent in the scene where Robert and Katya bargain above his inert form, his plight loses its urgency and their bargaining loses intensity. Furthermore, a character like Sir William Wells, the psychiatrist called in to help Dudley, is merely an intrusion into the world of the novel. He is a distracting caricature serving no useful purpose in the development of events. Finally, in an attempt to elucidate part of his vision Ford found it necessary at times to insert whole scenes whose functions had little or nothing to do with developing action or with the central problem being handled; for example, much of the lengthy discussion between Robert and Katya upon the nature of Americans.

In conclusion, it must be said that the problems of human personality versus society's stifling code could not be fully explored in the particular vehicle provided by his conception of A Call. A certain depth is reached, certain avenues explored, but the form in which his larger vision can be rendered is still beyond Ford's reach. Nevertheless as John Meixner says "in the confidently selected detail of A Call, its absence of strain, and its supple unfolding - in, briefly, its creative ease - Ford plainly reveals the high level of artistic ability he had attained by the

time of his editorship. The work undeniably bears the marks of a master talent."<sup>61</sup>

Between A Call (1910) and The Good Soldier (1915), Ford published seven novels. The Portrait (1910) and The Panel (1912), published in America as Ring for Nancy (1913), are farces; Ladies Whose Bright Eyes (1911) and The Young Lovell (1913) present medieval lore and superstition; The Simple Life Limited (1911), The New Humpty Dumpty (1912), and Mr. Fleight (1913) attack aspects of British social and political life. None of these novels has great distinction although one, The Panel, is a delightful entertainment, and another, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, was very popular during Ford's lifetime, received literary acclaim, and was thought by Ford to merit revision in 1935. However, in these novels, Ford explores various aspects of his vision of twentieth century life and introduces new characters, or continues the evolution of characters already created, all of which is incorporated into the complete worlds of The Good Soldier and Parade's End.

Not much needs to be said about The Portrait. Set in the Restoration period, it presents the wealthy, arrogant gentleman, Mr. Bettsworth, who gambles £20,000 on the bet that he will find, bring to London, and marry the model of a well-known portrait that he has never seen. Eventually, he discovers that the model is the woman he loves. The novel ends in Bettsworth being properly humbled while his lady moralizes that all great victories are nine parts luck to one part merit. Lacking a consistent approach, with a weak plot, with stock characters lifted straight from

Restoration comedy, The Portrait deserves little attention. Yet the characterization of Bettesworth proves interesting, for in his confidence, his enveloping self-pride, his great knowledge, his great wealth, his connoisseurship in art, he is a precursor of one side of Christopher Tietjens.

Much more pleasing is The Panel, curiously unique among Ford's works in being purely an entertainment designed for a popular audience. In the dedication Ford calls the work 'frivolous' but its gaiety and lively spirit make the book memorable. Particularly funny is its witty mockery of Henry James. The hero, Brent-Foster, earned promotion to the rank of Major in the British Army because he had read all the works of Henry James, finding the task of comprehending James's convoluted style 'extraordinarily strengthening to the brain'. The novel skilfully handles many comedy features such as the Lady Mary Savylle impersonating a lady's maid in her own home which has been rented for a time by the hero's aunt. That Brent-Foster loves the Lady Mary adds to the complications. The four other women who revolve around the hero: his aunt, his jealous fiancée, a popular authoress who is determined to marry him, a music hall artiste, all with Lady Mary, successively find themselves, by accident or design, in Brent-Foster's bedroom, causing hilarious situations. Certainly, the novel seems to be apart from the mainstream of Ford's novels although Ford often displayed a gift for the comic; for example, in the amusing picture of the two old knights tired out with jousting in Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, or the many funny incidents in The Simple



Life Limited. Nevertheless, the novel is well-constructed, amusing, and in terms of its aim, a successful venture.

Of the two historical novels set in the medieval period, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes and The Young Lovell, the latter can be summarily treated. It is set in the first year of Henry VII's reign and centers around the young knight, Lovell, who is bewitched by a beautiful woman and held in her power for three months. In the interval, his inheritance is taken by his brother who also covets Lovell's betrothed. Lovell, recovering from the spell, tries to regain his lost property. In a battle at his castle Lovell is killed and enters another world to be with the beautiful White Lady. The book gives evidence of hasty writing, being weighted with long expository scenes, with chatty intrusions by the author, with inconsistencies in plot and setting - such as a witch's threat that is never carried out, or lush green land described in one place that becomes drought-stricken land in another place because Ford wanted to give a storm scene as the final one. However, there are flashes of Ford's craftsmanship in such scenes as Lovell's long lonely vigil on the eve of his knighthood, and in striking descriptions of his characters' appearances. But these flashes are brief and do not affect the conclusion that the work fails as a coherent work of art.

In Ladies Whose Bright Eyes Ford gives an attractive picture of life in the fourteenth century juxtaposed with that of the twentieth century. The contrast is seen through the eyes of Mr. Sorrell, a modern businessman who has been transported back to the

medieval period in a vision caused by his being involved in a train accident. When he recovers and finds himself in the twentieth century, he is disgusted, for he has come to appreciate the values of the chivalric code, the joy of being self-sufficient, the pleasures of the simpler, slower way of life; and he has fallen in love with a medieval lady. The rushing, superficial twentieth-century world appals him in comparison. However, helped by his nurse, Dionissia Morant, the modern counterpart of the medieval lady who is, in fact, her direct descendant, Sorrell decides to bring his new outlook to bear upon the practices of his business. Realizing that they love each other, Sorrell and Dionissia concluding that one century is as good as another, plan to set out together to improve their small sphere.

The novel is skilfully constructed; the plot is handled with care. The medieval world with its customs, institutions, beliefs, springs to life through the rich detail of dress and setting, and the carefully distinguished characters who animate the scene when touched by Ford's life-giving artistry. Memorable scenes include Mr. Sorrell's first supper as a guest of Lady Blanche and his experience in cleansing himself in a special bath constructed in the castle. Faults which mar the Fifth Queen trilogy such as arid passages of exposition, or borrowings from Shakespeare, do not appear in this, the most professional of Ford's historical works.

Nevertheless, the charge can be made that the work lacks artistic integrity because of the sentimental illogicality of its

conclusion. Essentially the novel is a reply to Mark Twain's treatment of the middle ages in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Mr. Meixner points out.<sup>62</sup> Where Twain, by sending the Yankee back through time, ridicules the past in order to reflect honour upon and rouse appreciation of democracy and rationality, Ford attempts through Sorrell's experience to give a civilized picture of the medieval period. Logically, to answer Twain, Sorrell should be left in the twentieth century sadly bemoaning his loss. Mr. Meixner suggests that Violet Hunt, at that time Ford's constant companion, had influenced him to give the highly uncharacteristic sentimental conclusion to the original novel. Ford showed that he was unsatisfied with the ending of the 1911 version and revised it in 1935. The new ending, although it has Sorrell look back in longing, has him setting off for the Caucasus with Dionissia to put his engineering knowledge into the development of a mining concern important in the growth of a new state. Neither conclusion satisfies the demands of the plot.

Other faults include a general slowness in tempo, a lack of that tension and excitement which make the Fifth Queen series memorable. The freshness of the style he created for the Katharine Howard trilogy has become mannered, detailed descriptions become mere word-painting. His characterizations suffer, also, from a lack of that tension, that intentness, which vivifies the characters of the Fifth Queen novels. In the revised edition, Ford attempts to correct all these faults.

Ford spreads before us in The Simple Life Limited, The New

Humpty Dumpty, and Mr. Fleight, a broader canvas crowded with figures. He focuses on the whole of his society instead of choosing some small circle within it. Ford's perception of social decay, which is an underlying theme of The Benefactor, The "Half Moon", and Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, as well as later important works, is given wider yet more concentrated treatment in these satires.

The Simple Life Limited is an account of a group of people who are dissatisfied with their society and withdraw from it to form a socialistic colony of their own which will give them the freedom of the simple life. In the course of the novel the characters, who range from the doctrinaire socialist, Ophelia Brandson, to Lady Croydon with her concern for mere empty form; from the mentally disturbed poet, Simon Brandson, to the parasitic Horatio Gubb; all are shown to be a pitiful, ineffectual, ridiculous band. Having no real understanding of the socialist doctrine they affect, knowing less about themselves or the society from which they have withdrawn, they set up a pattern of living which, merely to be different from the old life, substitutes discomfort and ugliness in dress and habitat, while ideosyncratic behaviour encourages the uncovering of prejudices and absurd fancies making social converse disagreeable. In such a situation the colonists easily fall prey to the cunning Horatio Gubb who manipulates them to form from the idealistic socialist colony a successful business concern that after one year shows a profit. This reversal is surely one of Ford's cleverest satiric stratagems. The novel ends with the disillusionment of the "Simple Lifers", the burning of their quarters, and their return to the rest of society.

While Ford merely mocks the fumbling efforts of most of the colonists to establish their socialist state, he is disturbed by that element of socialism, represented by Ophelia Brandson, which makes doctrine more important than human rights. His disapproval can be felt. Strongly criticized also is the cynical opportunism of the patronising Horatio Gubb. Between the two extremes many other types come under satiric fire, for example, the hypocritical upper-class matron, Lady Croyden; the shrewd agitator, Miss Stobhall; Mrs. Lee, unable to see the trees for the wood in her zealous backing of Russian revolutionaries. Obviously, idealistic delusions on the one hand, and the materialistic, impersonal, inhumane tendencies of the machine civilization on the other, are the issues Ford attacks in the novel.

Technically notable in The Simple Life Limited is the fact that Ford depends upon biographical detail to a great extent in sketching in his characters. So authentic is the effect that the reader can surmise that Ford drew upon his knowledge of originals. Certainly the types and situations were familiar to him for, after his marriage to Elsie Martindale, he had gone to the country to live the simple, self-sufficient life. His disillusion can be sensed in the novel.

Ford used all his technical devices to advantage in this work. The action is skilfully advanced by shifting the point of view from character to character, and its movement coincides with the growth pattern of the colony. Each new development is handled deftly by Ford as he employs the striking openings and methods

of exposition required by his impressionistic creed. However, in the later part of the novel, exposition, through the meditations of a character like George Everard, the successful, generous producer of musicals, tends to be lengthened and weighted to such an extent that the end of the book drags.

Dragging exposition makes up the greater part of The New Humpty Dumpty as well. The story centers around the Count Sergius MacDonald who is an honourable, educated Christian gentleman anxious to seek out causes in which he might put his code of honour into action. He finds a cause in restoring a benevolent monarch to Galizia, a small Mediterranean country which had lately been taken over by a slipshod republican council. Aiding him at first is Pett, the leader of a New Toryism modeled on the British chivalric code. Bitterly obstructing MacDonald is his wife, a shop-keeper's daughter and ardent socialist. Richard Cassell brands her as "the first thorough and ravenous bitch in Ford's fiction"<sup>63</sup>, although earlier prototypes appear in the figures of Anne Jeal and Katya Lascarides. So vindictive is she toward her husband for his rejection of her, and for his inordinate goodness which is frightening to her, that she persecutes MacDonald mercilessly, driving him finally to divorce her. Later, his murder only brings from her cries of joy.

Considered as a novel, The New Humpty Dumpty fails completely. Its plot is overmelodramatic and depends upon coincidence to bring certain actions about. Its characters are so many and so thinly drawn that they have little or no life. Much of the

book presents expository material rarely enlivened by a scene. If, however, the book fails artistically, it is interesting for its presentation and further development of characters who play important roles in his later masterpieces. Already mentioned is the figure of Countess MacDonald, the possessive, spiteful, unloved wife who foreshadows Sylvia Tietjens.

In the evolution of Ford's chief male figure, Count MacDonald holds an interesting place. He is the typical character of great intelligence and talents, born to wealth, educated, having a tremendous store of knowledge and an almost incredible sense of honour. But where, for instance, George Moffat of The Benefactors leaves one with the unpleasant feeling that in not acting he is an indecisive weakling, the Count, it is felt, does not act because he chooses to hold himself aloof, although willing to render aid from the sidelines. The change in emphasis makes the Count's character much more appealing. In his later work this new personality trait has an important effect in making Ford's most remarkable characterization, Christopher Tietjens, acceptable.

The third satiric novel in this group is Mr. Fleight. Starkly realistic in approach, the work is a castigation of British Parliamentary practices. Its title character is a Jew who has gathered great wealth and feels he would like to "do" something and be "somebody". Accordingly he places himself in the hands of Mr. Blood, a wealthy English landowner who has refused the public career expected of him. Mr. Blood is a highly intelligent, well-educated man, omniscient and aloof; a man who cynically plans

to take the Jewish Mr. Fleight and, using all the crooked methods open to politicians, set him in a seat in Parliament. For Mr. Blood this is a kind of revenge on the modern world with its "dirty comedy of life"; he will beat it at its own game. In the process the rather listless, aimless, indecisive Mr. Fleight is forced to spend exorbitant sums of money on the advice of Mr. Blood; he is encouraged to marry Augusta Macphail who despises Jews but marries him for his money and social prospects; and, in the race for public office, he loses all hope of the private, quiet domesticity that is his heart's desire. The victory when it comes at election time is a hollow one for him.

Ford's treatment of the Jew in this novel is interesting. It is plain that he is troubled about the entry of the wealthy Jew into British politics, for he has Reginald Blood say to Augusta Macphail, "The appearance of the Jew in our society means that the Jew is an unrivalled soldier of fortune. He isn't part of our country; he hasn't got our morality, but he's extraordinarily able as a ruler. So our side takes him up and uses him. It doesn't matter to him which side he's on, because he can't begin to understand our problems or our ethics or our morality or our way of looking at things."<sup>64</sup> Yet Mr. Fleight is presented more sympathetically than any other character in the book. Although given an unprepossessing appearance, although sentimental and at times foolishly vain, he has moments of dignity and, at the height of social success, is capable of showing compassion to an insignificant young girl who is unhappy.



Besides the pictures of the cynical, superior Mr. Blood and the innocent, ineffectual Mr. Fleight, Ford's gallery includes brief portraits of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, an idealist who specializes in generalizations; a post office clerk who calls himself a "new democrat" and can only parrot others' ideas; Mr. Leroy, the poor man who merely wants to be left alone by government 'do-gooders'; Mr. Garstein, a dealer in crooked political maneuvers; some ridiculous Soho intellectuals; and Reginald Blood, the quiet, honourable gentleman of the traditional ruling class, twin brother to Mr. Blood. Most of these portraits never come to life. Ford has not delved into their personalities enough to present them as rounded figures. As vivid a character as Mr. Blood borders on caricature - there is not enough of the humane element in him to balance his almost savage cynicism.

The plot fails to end logically. The novel is divided into three parts each including a time-shift to detail Mr. Fleight's relationship to the shop-girl, Gilda Leroy. The relationship almost precipitates his political ruin. In fact, with this construction the reader is led to expect Mr. Fleight to fail. The reader knows that failure in the election would make possible Mr. Fleight's achievement of real happiness with someone like Gilda Leroy. The reader realizes that Mr. Fleight's failure would cast justified approbrium upon Mr. Blood's disreputable activities behind the scenes in the campaign. Ironically, Mr. Fleight wins; and it is not through further efforts of Mr. Blood's, but through the contrived death of Fleight's opponent on the morning of election

day.

Through Ford's brilliantly acute observation and insight, the novel offers a varied and interesting picture of English literary and political life in the early years of this century. Yet the final impression is that there is a brittle hardness about the book which detracts; the novel is not appealing.

The year after the publication of Mr. Fleight marked for Ford the greatest catastrophe of the human race - the outbreak of the First World War, 1914-18. Ford's experiences during this period provided the final toughening process from which he emerged prepared and able to write a work that would elucidate fully his vision of life and would show all he knew about writing. Throughout the preceding thirteen years, Ford had produced eighteen novels (including three collaborations with Conrad) and edited The English Review. In retrospect, it can be seen that Ford gradually moved from the rather vague romantic approach, the blurred effects seen in Romance, in The Benefactor, in the Fifth Queen trilogy, to the tougher, more concrete approach of the novels like Mr. Fleight. But much more pleasing are the earlier works than the later ones, leading one to feel that Ford's forte lay in the Romantic approach. Nevertheless, from the surface presentations, the mirror-like images produced in the historical novels, Ford improved his technique so that he could cut deeper into the heart of life in his satires and novels of small circles, enabling the reader to see the surface, but as in a prism, see the many facets through the surface which make life the bewildering thing it is. As the next chapter

demonstrates, in the artistic culmination of this period Ford achieves a blending of his romantic sensibility with a tougher, more precise prose, that makes The Good Soldier a perfect vehicle of his vision, a triumph of twentieth century literature.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, The Shifting of the Fire, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup>Ford Madox Ford with Joseph Conrad, The Nature of a Crime, London: Duckworth, 1924, Preface, p. vi.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>5</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>8</sup>Ford Madox Ford with Joseph Conrad, The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story, London: Heinemann, 1901, p. 152.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>10</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance, p. 134.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>17</sup>Ford Madox Ford with Joseph Conrad, "Romance", Memorial Edition, Collected Works of Joseph Conrad, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., MCMXXV., Vol. VII, pp. 117-118.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>19</sup>Ford, Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>Ford with Conrad, "Romance", Memorial Edition, Collected Works of Joseph Conrad, p. 29.

- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 261.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 331.
- <sup>23</sup>See page 39.
- <sup>24</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels, p. 76.
- <sup>25</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, The Benefactor, London: Brown, Langham & Co., 1905, p. 10.
- <sup>26</sup>Meixner, John Albert, Ford Madox Ford's Novels: A Critical Study, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 130.
- <sup>27</sup>Ford, The Benefactor, p. 341 ff.
- <sup>28</sup>See Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels, p. 136 note.
- <sup>29</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, pp. 133-135.
- <sup>30</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels, pp. 145-146.
- <sup>31</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, "Privy Seal", The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford, Vol. II, ed. Graham Greene, London: The Bodley Head Ltd., 1962, p. 365.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 141.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 421.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 336.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 338.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 354.
- <sup>37</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford; A Study of His Novels, p. 131.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 133.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 120.
- <sup>40</sup>Ford, "Privy Seal", The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford, p. 350.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 368.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 588.

- <sup>44</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, p. 61.
- <sup>45</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Mr. Apollo, London: Methuen & Co., 1908, p. 32.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 297.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 196.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 125.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 309.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 163-164.
- <sup>51</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, p. 126.
- <sup>52</sup>Ford, Mr. Apollo, p. 93.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-53.
- <sup>54</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, The "Half Moon", London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909, Dedication, p. vi.
- <sup>55</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, A Call: The Tale of Two Passions, London: Chatto and Windus, 1910, p. 49.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 49
- <sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 210.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 149.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 299.
- <sup>61</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, p. 135.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 67.
- <sup>63</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels, p. 122.
- <sup>64</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Mr. Fleight, London: Howard Latimer, 1913, p. 213.

### Chapter III

#### Chaotic Immediacy - Ford's Middle Period

In the hectic months preceding the outbreak of World War I, Ford, in his fortieth year, felt impelled to write The Good Soldier. After the war ended, he brought forth his massive tetralogy Some Do Not (1924), No More Parades (1925), A Man Could Stand Up (1926), and The Last Post (1928), later published in one volume entitled Parade's End. Standing between the nineteenth century political novel, which contemplated the menacing, destructive powers lurking beneath the smooth surface order, and the twentieth century novel, which accepts the destruction of the old order as an accomplished fact, Ford had the peculiar advantage of watching English society as it came apart. In the pre-war novel, his vision penetrates the disintegrating forces operating within a 'small circle'; in the post-war tetralogy, he develops his vision of disintegration as it is reflected in the collective life. Both remarkable creations are lacerating tales that score the reader's memory. This chapter will treat them in turn.

The events rendered in The Good Soldier cover almost a decade in the lives of five entangled personalities - an American couple, John and Florence Dowell, an English couple, Edward and Leonora Ashburnham, and their ward, Nancy Rufford. Both couples have sufficient wealth to enable them to spend part of the summer months at the Continental health resort of Nauheim, while during

the rest of the year the English couple reside at their county manor and the American couple return to France where they have taken up residence.

The two couples first meet at Nauheim in the month of August, 1904. Florence Dowell, ostensibly suffering from a bad heart and assiduously cared for by her husband, who is husband in name only, quickly becomes the mistress of the handsome Edward Ashburnham who is also said to be suffering from heart trouble. Leonora Ashburnham is aware of the situation from the beginning but John Dowell knows nothing of it. For nine years the situation remains, in exterior view, unchanged. During these years Nancy Rufford has grown to be a strangely beautiful young woman of twenty-one years, who from her thirteenth year has been affectionate to Dowell and adoring to Ashburnham. Then, in August, 1913, at Nauheim, Florence commits suicide by taking prussic acid; four months later, at Branshaw manor, Edward cuts his throat; while a few days later, at Brindisi, Nancy goes mad. The completely bewildered Dowell is left with the calm Leonora to sort out and make sense of "the breaking up of our little four-square coterie" - "the unthinkable event."<sup>1</sup>

Stated baldly like this, the tale may appear to be a sordid, rather melodramatic tale of not uncommon incidents, which claims attention merely by the combination of violence in which the story ends. That, in fact, the narrative is a penetrating study of five people inextricably caught in the maze of a transitional society, whose characters and code of living force upon them a course



of ruin; that the presentation of this narrative is done with consummate artistry, the compelling power of which has caused fifteen critics to subscribe to the statement that the novel is one of the fifteen or twenty greatest novels produced in English in this century<sup>2</sup>; that these claims are fully justified, will be shown in the following analysis of The Good Soldier.

The opening paragraph sets the tone of the entire tale. John Dowell, in a disarming conversational style, begins to narrate, laying, in the first sentence, the superlative claim that it is to be "the saddest story". The whole affair is a puzzle, Dowell says, which he will try to work out. That the reader is to be every bit as puzzled as Dowell and forced to follow him into the dead ends and blind alleys of the maze, is apparent from the contradictions given throughout the first paragraph. For nine seasons, Dowell says, he and his wife had known the Ashburnhams with "an extreme intimacy". Immediately he qualifies this saying it was instead "an acquaintanceship", "loose and easy". Then he claims they knew the Ashburnhams "as well as it was possible to know anybody", only to add, "yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them". The paragraph concludes as Dowell says, "Six months ago ... certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart. I had known the shallows". Implicit is the promise that, in the tale to be told, the reader, with John Dowell, shall 'sound the depths'. Interest is immediately stimulated by the exciting prospects within the promise, by the desire to solve the puzzle; curiosity is aroused about the nature of this

man who for nine years could be so unknowing as he claims; the emotions are just faintly stirred by the general atmosphere of futility.

The novel is divided into four parts each unified by crises in action or emotion, each moving towards its own powerful climax. In Part One there are six chapters each contributing its own peculiar turn to the screw which draws the reader's emotions taut. The remarkable opening chapter of Part One discloses the basic facts of the story.

Cited above, from the opening paragraph, is the theme to which the narrator, Dowell, returns again and again in perplexity. Is appearance reality? If it is not, what is appearance, and what reality, then? As he ponders over the complexities, we learn, quite indirectly, that the Dowells made their home in Paris but travelled in winter to Nice and Bordighera, and to Nauheim for the summer, a circuit necessitated by Florence's heart ailment which would not permit her to leave the Continent or travel anywhere by sea. We learn that Florence has died. We discover that Captain Ashburnham and his wife were accustomed to spend a month at Nauheim for the sake of his heart. The family backgrounds of the four are sketched in. At this point, following an associative pattern of ideas, Dowell mentions the ancestral home of his wife's people which happens to be near the Ashburnham manor; announces that it is from Branshaw manor he is writing at the moment; and proceeds to explain why he felt it necessary to write the tale. Here, his detached, conversational tone begins to change. Groping

for the right words to give his emotion utterance, Dowell selects a series of metaphors which culminate in a stark picture that jolts the reader out of any complacency. his opening remarks may have induced. He surprises the reader by saying at the start that "it is not unusual in human beings who have witnessed the sack of a city or the falling to pieces of a people to desire to set down what they have witnessed for the benefit of unknown heirs or of generations infinitely remote; or ... just to get the sight out of their heads". "Someone has said that the death of a mouse from cancer is the whole sack of Rome by the Goths" and this was as "unthinkable" an event as the breaking up of their "little four-square coterie".<sup>3</sup> "We were", he says, "an extraordinarily safe castle"... "one of those tall ships with the white sails upon a blue sea, one of those things that seem the proudest and the safest of all the beautiful and safe things that God has permitted the mind of men to frame." In anguish, unable to believe the tranquil years had ended "in four crashing days at the end of nine years and six weeks", Dowell asks, "Isn't there any heaven where old beautiful dances, old beautiful intimacies prolong themselves?"<sup>4</sup> Restraint is thrown to the winds as he rages bitterly, "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." The reader, unprepared for such vehemence is shocked into close attention. But Dowell, his emotion spent, begins to contemplate again the problem

of appearances, trying to rationalize it thus - "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?" His query has no answer; his conclusion, no hope. He says, "I know nothing - nothing in the world - of the hearts of men."<sup>5</sup>

At this point, Dowell begins to reflect upon his married life. The practical problem of how Florence could possibly have found the time to be unfaithful with Edward, and have long, long talks with Leonora, occupies his thoughts. The reader learns that Dowell is given to taking baths, doing Swedish exercises, being manicured, all to compensate for his enervating life as "the sedulous, strained nurse." As Dowell concludes that these periods hardly gave Florence time to carry on the protracted negotiations which she did carry on between Edward Ashburnham and his wife, he is led to consider the Ashburnhams' married life. Indirectly the reader discovers that the Ashburnhams never spoke to each other in private for all of those nine years, yet they appeared to be the model couple in every way. Dowell sketches in briefly their appearances, he - "well-set up, with such honest blue eyes, such a touch of stupidity, such a warm good-heartedness! And she - so tall, so splendid in the saddle, so fair!" In considering Leonora he discloses that she told him she had once desperately tried to take a lover to console her for "the bitterness of the endless poverty, of the endless acting", but she couldn't

go through with it, and criticizes herself for not 'playing the game'. Again Dowell is disturbed and asks, "...was that last remark of hers the remark of a harlot, or is it what every decent woman, county family or not county family, thinks at the bottom of her heart?"<sup>7</sup> Pursuing the answer to this query, Dowell says that he asked Leonora whether she had mentioned this incident to Florence. Her quoted reply contains the sentence, "With the grinding poverty we had to put up with to keep up appearances, and the way the poverty came about - you know what I mean - any woman would have been justified in taking a lover and presents too."<sup>8</sup> This statement taken together with Dowell's statement opening the next paragraph - "I don't want you to think that I am writing Teddy Ashburnham down a brute" - makes sufficient innuendo to arouse much speculation in the reader's mind.

Following the train of thought, Dowell gives a character sketch of Edward. He was

the cleanest-looking sort of chap; an excellent magistrate, a first-rate soldier, one of the best landlords, so they said, in Hampshire, England. To the poor and to the hopeless drunkards, as I myself have witnessed, he was like a painstaking guardian. And he never more than once or twice in all the nine years of my knowing him told a story that couldn't have gone into the columns of the Field. He didn't even like hearing them; he would fidget and get up and go out to buy a cigar or something of that sort. You would have said that he was just exactly the sort of chap that you could have trusted your wife with.

The paragraph ends with another jolt for the reader -

And I trusted mine - and it was madness.<sup>9</sup>

With a series of significant questions, Dowell continues to search for the solution to the riddle. Having proclaimed the

absolute chastity of his own life, he wonders,

Am I no better than a eunuch or is the proper man - the man with the right to existence - a raging stallion forever neighing after his neighbour's womenkind?... And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all other personal contacts, associations, and activities? Or are we meant to act on impulse alone?

The chapter ends as Dowell concludes in bafflement -

It is all a darkness.<sup>10</sup>

From the presentation of Chapter One given above, Ford's method emerges. As a model of what is to come it is worthwhile to outline the method here. In choosing a narrator who was very much involved in the incidents to be related but peculiarly unaware until the very day he begins to relate the tale, Ford provides himself with a remarkably efficient instrument with which to set forth gradually the details of the story; an ironic instrument which is dramatic as well as verbal. Shocked and puzzled, Dowell naturally pursues his thoughts down many paths, doubling back, taking the same path again, in the hope of discovering a source of light to illuminate the darkness. Quite natural is the chatty, familiar approach of the narrator, the apparent wandering from one subject to another in the seemingly formless patterns of thought association. In doing this, Dowell enables Ford to juxtapose memories separated by months and years which, when placed together, particularly serve the immediate intention. For example, the juxtaposition of Dowell's description of the model couple the Ashburnhams seemed to be, with the incident of Leonora's desperately trying to take a lover,<sup>11</sup> adds one more burning question of

relationships to this chapter of questions tantalizing the reader.

Quite natural, too, is the feeling of resentment that Dowell harbours against Florence, Leonora, and to a lesser degree, Edward. From this resentment come the ironic references to Florence as "poor Florence", "poor dear Florence" or the inclusion, in the essentially complimentary description of Edward, the phrase, "such a touch of stupidity". Irony woven throughout the narrative in this way makes possible a balance, a detached judgement, that gives credibility to the melodramatic events and tempers the consequent sentimentality of approach.

Dowell's state of shock makes natural, though no less jolting to the reader, his emotional outbursts strategically placed in the narrative. With the surprising reversals of feeling they induce, the reader's sensibility is drawn taut, made alert, filled with the desire to know more, and swept onward in a direction carefully calculated by Ford.

Thus amazingly does Chapter One captivate the reader's attention, give the outline of the story, introduce four of the five principal characters, shape the reader's reactions, and all in the most unassuming prose that, nevertheless, is astonishing in its sufficiency. Simple and economical in diction, unadorned in sentence structure, conversational in tone, the prose is still the most carefully arranged one can imagine. Following his canon, Ford makes every word count, and places each word where it will count most. But more than that: arranged in intricate cadences, the language communicates as much through its rhythm and sound as

it does in its literal meaning. This point can best be illustrated in later chapters,<sup>12</sup> but even in Chapter One, one can cite more muted examples from many passages. For instance:

No, indeed, it can't be gone. You can't kill a minuet de la cour. You may shut up the music-book, 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 Hession 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?<sup>13</sup>

In this elegiac lament the reader is given a sense of the long, quiet, tranquil, pleasurable years that are gone forever for Dowell. At the same time, the plaintive questions imply a philosophic acceptance of the inscrutability of human life which is to be Dowell's final recourse as the novel ends. Although the reader does not stop to analyse it, the impression is made, and it becomes a part of the shaping process by which the reader's attitude is formed to accept later revelations exactly as Ford wishes them to be accepted. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the passage above with the passage immediately following, in which Dowell's rage breaks forth,<sup>14</sup> creates an effect which cannot be described; it can only be experienced.

Part of Ford's method, also, is the arrangement of paragraphs to give in the concluding sentences an effect of finality to the thought developed there. Often the last sentence is cut-tingly ironic, surprising, or shocking. Consider the passage



describing Edward Ashburnham already quoted.<sup>15</sup> After a description which impresses upon the reader the chastity of Edward Ashburnham's demeanor the paragraph ends with an astonishing reversal. In succeeding chapters the gradual accumulation of shocks strikes the reader's sensibility giving an overwhelming feeling of constant pressure. On the other hand, Ford often links his paragraphs together, allowing no pause, either emotional or logical. For instance, in Chapter One, following Dowell's lament for old dances, which ends with a question, the next paragraph begins with a dramatic answer to the question. This in turn is followed by a paragraph begun with the connective "and", trailing away at the end with the words "I don't know ...." The next paragraph begins with a rephrasing of these words, "I know nothing - nothing in the world ...." and so it continues. These methods are used with increasing force as the novel moves toward the final agonizing chapters.

Having presented "a strong situation" in Chapter One, Ford is faced with the difficult but critical problem not only of maintaining but of further heightening interest. The five chapters remaining in Part One reveal his method of solving the problem. Since question upon question floods the reader's mind at the end of Chapter One, he naturally seeks answers in Chapter Two. But Ford does not give answers directly; instead of exploring relationships further, he begins to present individuals and their backgrounds. Thus, Chapter Two describes Florence; Chapter Three presents the Ashburnhams and their first meeting with the Dowells;

Chapter Four is mainly exposition, giving particulars of the Dowells' and Ashburnhams' activities at Nauheim, but also containing the key scene in which Florence first claims Edward Ashburnham; Chapter Five introduces the Maisie Maiden affair and other affairs of Edward's; Chapter Six gives the incidents leading to Maisie Maiden's grotesque death and includes Dowell's powerful vision of Florence's damnation. With this arrangement Ford can draw the reader along through extensive expository material; relying upon the stimulus of the First Chapter to sustain interest, supplemented by irony, emotional intensity, and rhythm.

Extending the method of closing paragraphs with jolting sentences, Ford gave each chapter an intense climax to reinforce interest. For example, Chapter Two, after giving many details of Florence's earlier life, briefly accounts for Dowell's sudden summons to the Ashburnham estate. As Dowell describes the drive from the station with Edward, the chapter ends, "And that poor devil beside me was in an agony. Absolute, hopeless, dumb agony such as passes the mind of man to imagine."<sup>16</sup> Disturbed and perplexed, the reader moves on into Chapter Three to be given further insight into the characters of the Ashburnhams and Dowells but no explanation of Edward's agony is even suggested.

Moving into Chapter Four the narrator begins to ponder anew the problem of appearance and reality. In a garrulous fashion he describes some of the features of "those nine years of uninterrupted tranquility" attempting to demonstrate the "extraordinary want of any communicativeness" on the part of both couples.

As an illustration he describes an outing taken by the four to the ancient city of M--, to a castle where Martin Luther was believed to have slept and where a pencil draft of his famous Protest was displayed. The journey through the countryside by rail is very pleasant. In fact Dowell sees a most comical incident which amuses him for miles - on a stream's edge a brown cow hitches its horns under the stomach of a black and white one and pitches it on its back into the middle of the stream. Finally the destination is reached and Florence takes charge, becoming "positively electric" upon reaching the historic old room high in the castle's turret. Happy to be "off duty", Dowell watches Florence display the document and explain its significance, all the while gazing into Edward Ashburnham's eyes. Then she lays one finger upon Edward's wrist. Suddenly, astonishingly, the mood changes. Dowell says, "I was aware of something treacherous, something frightful, something evil in the day."<sup>17</sup> In Ashburnham's face there is absolute panic. Leonora clutches Dowell's wrist so hard she causes him pain, and in an extraordinary passion cries, "I can't stand this, ... I must get out of this."<sup>18</sup> In panic Dowell and Leonora rush down the stairs and out on a terrace, where Leonora hysterically laments, "Don't you see that that's the cause of the whole miserable affair; of the whole sorrow of the world? And of the eternal damnation of you and me and them...."<sup>19</sup> Dowell stands amazed, unspeaking, as Leonora "ran her hand with a singular clawing motion upwards over her forehead. Her eyes were enormously distended; her face was exactly that of a person looking

into the pit of hell and seeing horrors there."<sup>20</sup> Then as swiftly, she stopped; the terror ends, and the chapter closes as Leonora, in her clear hard voice, says "Don't you know that I'm an Irish Catholic?"

Shaken by this unexpected eruption of violence, perplexed anew, the reader goes on to Chapter Five, only to find Dowell reflecting upon his 'career' as a male sick nurse and comparing it to Leonora's occupation of caring for Edward. In the process the reader discovers that there is nothing the matter with Edward's heart, but that he had come to Nauheim bringing Maisie Maiden who did suffer heart trouble; that this affair was not the first; that Florence, seeing Leonora box Maisie's ears as she leaves Edward's room, gains a hold over Leonora; that Edward's affairs have forced the Ashburnhams to live frugally in India to recoup their fortunes; that it was Leonora who paid for Maisie to accompany them to Nauheim. This chapter ends where Chapter Four ended, with Dowell, recovering from his shock and surprise, apologizing for Florence, while Leonora, in the face of his ignorance, says ironically "Oh, I accept the situation ... if you can."<sup>21</sup>

Part One moves to its close in Chapter Six, appropriately the chapter containing the most sustained intensity thus far. Carrying immediately on from the end of Chapter Five, Dowell stresses his own ignorance of the situation, claims he feels nothing at all about it, now that both Florence and Edward are dead. Yet, in a vision which appears to him at night, he sees a terrible picture of judgement which he describes;

But upon an immense plain, suspended in mid-air, I seem to see three figures, two of them clasped close in an embrace, and one intolerably solitary. It is in black and white, my picture of that judgement ... And the immense plain is the hand of God, stretching out for miles and miles, with great spaces above it and below it. And they are in the sight of God, and it is Florence that is alone....<sup>22</sup>

Dowell then states plainly, "For I hate Florence, I hate Florence with such a hatred that I would not spare her an eternity of loneliness." ... "Do you understand that, whilst she was Edward's mistress, she was perpetually trying to reunite him to his wife? She would gabble on to Leonora about forgiveness ... And Leonora would treat her like the whore she was."<sup>23</sup>

With considerable dialogue between Leonora and Florence, the subject of Maisie Maiden's death is brought up, and Dowell proceeds to describe the contents of a letter she left for Leonora, who, upon frantically searching for her, eventually finds poor Maisie dead after making an effort to strap up a great portmanteau. "She had died so grotesquely that her little body had fallen forward into the trunk and it had closed upon her, like the jaws of a gigantic alligator. The key was in her hand. Her dark hair, like the hair of a Japanese, had come down and covered her body and her face."<sup>24</sup> The chapter ends with a description of Maisie lying like a beautiful doll among the flowers under the candlelight of a mortuary chapel; and Dowell reflects that Edward soon got over Maisie's death.

This chapter, which in its opening pages presents one of the most powerful images in the book, and which closes with the peculiarly shocking picture of Maisie's death, completes the

groundwork for the story. The reader is now aware of the major events; all but one of the major characters have been introduced and given a certain depth of background; yet the reader is drawn on to find out just how and why the dire events mentioned in Part One should have occurred. Also much remains to be discovered about the relationship of the Dowells, and the tremendously important part played by Nancy Rufford hasn't yet been suggested.

It is obvious, from this outline of Part One, that much of the novel is a narrative summary related by Dowell, interspersed with brief scenes and scattered dialogue. A number of these scenes are keys to the structure of the whole novel, for each of the four parts moves towards some critical action of which the highlights are rendered dramatically in a scene. A close examination of one of these key scenes will show how Ford draws together his several techniques, adding dimensions to the scenes beyond anything he had produced before. Now they are less elaborated, more indirectly approached, frequently interrupted, and they often reflect shifting and contradictory points of view. Part One contains, in Chapter Four, one of the most remarkable scenes in the book. It has already been described in some detail, but further examination of the outing to the Castle at M-- will provide ample illustration of Ford's mastery of technique.

Ford uses the scene as a framework to enclose other action, new information which complicates the view, revelations that shed light into some dark places, all adding ironic overtones and commenting upon every level of meaning in the novel. Dowell chooses to

present this scene as an illustration of the difficulties of communicating with people beyond the superficialities of the social code. But Ford's purpose is to present Florence's declaration that she intends to be Edward's mistress, and to show that Leonora is aware of it but that Dowell is in complete ignorance. The scene, as described previously (pp. 117-118), draws the reader in ever quickening cadences through the journey, the arrival at the castle, the gradual ascent to the turret room, where in a moment fraught with tension, the crisis occurs - Florence makes her move, Leonora reacts with frightening violence and the terrified Dowell is rushed by her from the room. Gradually the tension is relaxed as, through lengthening cadences, Leonora's realization of Dowell's complete unawareness is depicted and as she forces herself to assume her public pose. The scene ends, after approximately twenty pages of digressions comprising Chapter Five, as Dowell, mistaking the source of Leonora's panic, apologizes for Florence. Florence, accompanied by Edward, rejoins them on the terrace. Then the four leave for Nauheim.

The scene taken together with its digression reverberates everywhere. In introducing an account of Leonora boxing Mrs. Maiden's ears, and getting the key of her bracelet so caught up in the poor woman's hair that she requires Florence's help to extricate it, the reader's mind flashes back to the peculiar dinner scene described at the end of Chapter Three, and the circumstances behind Florence's and Leonora's entering the dining hall arm in arm now begin to emerge. In striking Maisie while Florence

approached, Leonora had given Florence a power over her that enabled Florence to triumphantly walk into the dining room holding Leonora's arm. Furthermore, the odd bracelet was drawn to the reader's attention when Leonora's appearance was described in the same dinner scene. Now, it is that same bracelet which adds to Leonora's embarrassment at being caught striking Maisie. This series of incidents in turn suggests why Florence is "positively electric" in her triumphant behaviour at the castle.

With the introduction of Maisie Maiden's story early in Dowell's digression, the reader learns she is dead, but is given an entirely misleading impression of her affair with Edward and of Florence's part in it; which leaves the reader totally unprepared for the strange shock of Maisie's death as presented in the next chapter. Then, as Dowell's sympathy for the unfortunate Edward leads him to explain the circumstances of Edward's retreat, although not suffering from heart trouble at all, to Nauheim, he presents Edward as a sentimentalist searching for the "ultimately satisfying woman". This view the reader must balance with an earlier view of him as the chaste-minded English gentleman, and these must balance the still earlier picture of him as a "raging stallion". Certainly Edward is presented as a man to be pitied, even by the one he cuckolded, for he has had to submit entirely to Leonora's management even to the extent of her pimping for him. The reader is given a new set of perplexities concerning the course Edward takes to his death. Furthermore, Leonora's hysterical behaviour at the castle is linked to her loss of self-control when



she saw Maisie come out of Edward's room. The pattern of her frustrated outbursts is established, preparing the reader for her moral breakdown in the closing chapters of the book, when she presses Nancy to offer herself to Edward to save his life and preserve Leonora's marriage. Finally, in an apparently irrelevant description of an incident such as that which Dowell related about the overturning of one cow by another on a stream's edge, Ford gives an ironic preview of Florence's action in the castle room, which upsets Leonora's position for the succeeding nine years.

These illustrations sufficiently show the complexity of design, every part of which is under Ford's masterful control. The texture of every passage is made up of such closely interwoven strands that, the reader is subjected to a sensory and emotional interplay almost suffocating in its intensity. When it is considered that so far only Part One has been treated in this discussion, and when it is considered that, in keeping with the canon of progression d'effet, Ford continues to increase pressure, only pausing for relief periodically through Parts Two, Three, and Four, until the peak of tension is reached just before the novel ends, the reader can only be astonished at the range, power and control of Ford's creative genius.

The rest of the novel follows the design set forth in the description of Part One. From some crisis presented, the novel doubles back to fill in the background or give the justification for actions which led to the crisis. Then the novel leaps forward to another crisis, and so on to the culminating moment.

Part Two follows critical action, and therefore opens with exposition. The narrator, noting the seeming significance of the date August 4th in the life of his wife, sketches in many details of Florence's earlier years with her aunts in Connecticut; the arrangement of her marriage to Dowell; her motives so far as Dowell now understands them; and his increasing bitterness as his reflections reveal the extent to which he had been duped. Turning naturally to consider the man who had been a party to Florence's pretense for nine years, Dowell can only be sympathetic. Where, earlier, he gave a description predominantly of Edward's private virtues, now the narrator gives a description of Edward's public virtues first brought to his attention by "the poor girl". Thus indirectly is the fifth person involved in the tale mentioned.<sup>25</sup> Not until two pages after this reference is Nancy Rufford named. Nothing more is said of her, and the chapter ends with a conversation between Leonora and Dowell, brought on by the information Nancy had given Dowell concerning Edward's heroic behaviour in war-time. Again Dowell, in his ignorance, praises Edward to Leonora, whose comments are ironically double-edged. As the conversation ends, a warning note is ever so lightly sounded for the reader. Dowell, certain of Edward's admirable qualities, had gaily questioned Leonora saying, "Well, you're not going to accuse him of not being a good husband, or of not being a good guardian to your ward?" He describes Leonora's reaction as follows: "She spoke then, slowly, like a person who is listening to the sounds in a sea-shell held to her ear, and - would you believe it? - she told me afterwards

that, at that speech of mine, for the first time she had a vague inkling of the tragedy that was to follow so soon - although the girl had lived with them for eight years or so."<sup>26</sup>

Chapter II opens as Dowell reminisces that the conversation described had taken place on August 4th, 1913, just nine years from the time the Dowells and Ashburnhams had met. Dowell is led to think about the many meetings of the four during those nine years and depicts the increasingly unbearable situation of Edward, caught between the demands of Florence, "a Tartar" who threatened to disclose all if he did not meet those demands, and Leonora's warnings that disclosure would mean Edward's ruin, for she would see to it, in vengeance, if Dowell were hurt. Then on August 4th, 1913, while Edward took Nancy to the Casino at Leonora's insistence; while Florence trailed them as chaperone, again at Leonora's insistence; Dowell sat in the lounge and was approached by a man called Bagshawe, from Ludlow Manor, near Ledbury. Dowell can't remember why the place sounds vaguely familiar, but the reader remembers that that is where Florence stayed for a month during her continental tour. This information was given in Chapter I, Part One. In any case, Dowell wants nothing to do with the man. As the man talks, Florence rushes in with chalk-white face, sees Dowell, attempts to speak; sees Bagshawe, sticks her hands over her face and rushes out. Shocked, Dowell sits unmoving as Bagshawe reveals that it was while a guest at his home that "Florrie Hurlbird" had first disgraced herself with the disreputable Jimmy who had accompanied her with her uncle on their world tour. Much later

Dowell drags himself up to Florence's strangely unlocked bedroom door, enters, and finds Florence arranged respectably in death on her bed, an empty phial in her right hand. The brief Part Two ends violently. The reader is again perplexed.

Following Ford's design, Part Three is mainly expository. In the first chapter Dowell gives an account of the cataleptic state into which he fell for days. During this time he said things of which he was unaware until later told of them by Leonora. His statement that he could now marry the girl is supposed by Dowell to be the reason why Leonora could feel free to tell him, after Edward's death, that Florence had been Edward's mistress, and had stupidly committed suicide. After this reference to future events, Dowell goes back to relate the events which drove Florence to her death. The account stresses the awakening of Edward's true love for Nancy Rufford and his decision to let her alone. The chapter ends in Dowell's attempt to analyse his feelings after Florence's death, and the way he looked forward to marrying Nancy.

Chapter Two presents a portrait of Nancy and gives many details of her background and upbringing. After a particularly vivid description of her, Dowell is moved to exclaim, "And to think that that vivid white thing, that saintly and swanlike being - to think that... Why, she was like the sail of a ship, so white and so definite in her movements. And to think that she will never... Why, she will never do anything again. I can't believe it...."<sup>27</sup> An ominous note is sounded. The rest of the chapter presents Leonora's vigilant guarding of Nancy until the night she realizes

that Edward is determined, at all costs, to leave Nancy alone. In relief, Leonora relaxes, for the first time in her married life.

Chapter Three gives an account of Leonora's background, the arrangement of her marriage to Edward, and her feelings about her married life. Chapter Four gives further details of Edward's personality, his attitude toward Leonora, the way his affairs appeared to him. All the details of his affair with La Dolciquita at Monte Carlo are given. Chapter Five gives an account of Leonora's desperate business measures, taken to prevent the Ashburnhams' financial ruin, and of Edward's feelings of rebellion and despair as he sees himself set up as a dummy Lord of Branshaw with even his love affairs managed by his wife. The chapter ends with further probing of Leonora's attitudes, and expresses her pathetic hope that, when Edward has exhausted all the types of women, he will surely arrive at her type and she will finally win his love.

As the final section of the novel opens, Dowell, in Chapter One, reflects that, in his rambling way, he has brought all the strands of the story together, and presented them from all the necessary points of view up to the date of Maisie Maiden's death. Again Leonora's actions and motives come under scrutiny and her mental deterioration is carefully set forth. When Dowell comes in haste, after receiving telegrams from the Ashburnhams, he is perplexed by the apparent tranquility reigning at Branshaw. But, as he says in Chapter Two,

What had happened was just hell. Leonora had spoken to Nancy; Nancy had spoken to Edward; Edward had spoken

to Leonora - and they had talked and talked. And talked. You have to imagine horrible pictures of gloom and half lights, and emotions running through silent nights - through whole nights. You have to imagine my beautiful Nancy appearing suddenly to Edward, rising up at the foot of his bed, with her long hair falling, like a split cone of shadow, in the glimmer of a night-light that burned beside him. You have to imagine her, a silent, a no doubt agonized figure, like a spectre, suddenly offering herself to him - to save his reason! And you have to imagine his frantic refusal - and talk. And talk! My God!<sup>28</sup>

The remaining part of Chapter Two presents Nancy's growing awareness of her love for Edward, as simultaneously she realizes the great rift that lies between Edward and his wife. At the Chapter's end, Leonora, in desperation, makes to Nancy the contemptible request that she give herself to Edward to save his life. In the next chapter, Dowell relates, in detail, the agonized awakening of Nancy's knowledge of the force of passion as it is related in the divorce columns of the newspaper's society page, and of the latent violence of her own feeling for Edward. Chapter Four shows Leonora's cruel, vengeful spirit as she impresses on Nancy the fact that her union with Edward, whether he were divorced or not, could only be considered adultery, but that that is the price she must pay for her beauty which has led Edward astray.

Between Chapter Four and Chapter Five, eighteen months have elapsed, the narrator tells us. Describing his present situation he says, "Edward is dead; the girl is gone - oh, utterly gone; Leonora is having her good time with Rodney Bayham, and I sit alone in Branshaw Teleragh."<sup>29</sup> A little later he says "Well, it is all over. Not one of us has got what he really wanted. Leonora wanted Edward, and she has got Rodney Bayham, a pleasant enough sort

of sheep. Florence wanted Branshaw, and it is I who have bought it from Leonora. I didn't really want it; what I wanted mostly was to cease being a nurse-attendant. Well, I am a nurse-attendant. Edward wanted Nancy Rufford and I have got her. Only she is mad. It is a queer and fantastic world. Why can't people have what they want? The things were all there to content everybody; yet everybody has the wrong thing. Perhaps you can make head or tail of it; it is beyond me."<sup>30</sup> Then, in detail, Dowell begins to depict the horrible imbecility of the closing scenes of the Ashburnham tragedy. His choice of imagery is savage. He says of Leonora and Nancy, "Those two women pursued that poor devil and flayed the skin off him as if they had done it with whips. I tell you his mind bled almost visibly. I seem to see him stand, naked to the waist, his forearms shielding his eyes, and flesh hanging from him in rags. I tell you that is no exaggeration of what I feel."<sup>31</sup> Again the scene of Nancy appearing at Edward's bedside is drawn, this time in greater detail, showing the girl's utter cruelty to the suffering Edward. Chapter Six continues filling in the background up to Nancy's departure for India. The novel seems to be dying away as Dowell tells of Leonora's remarriage and imminent motherhood, of his life with the quiescent Nancy, who only utters her belief in an Omnipotent Deity or the one word, "shuttlecocks." Then, in a crashing climax, Dowell gives the wording of the utterly callous telegram Nancy had sent to Edward who, upon receiving it in Dowell's presence, takes out a pen-knife from his pocket and sends Dowell to Leonora with the message, saying pointedly to him, "So long, old man, I must have a bit of a rest,

you know."<sup>32</sup>

In this description of the narrative of The Good Soldier it has been possible only superficially to suggest the smallest part of what this story is all about. Certainly, from the method of approach already set forth, the reader has been made aware of the extreme complexity of the surface pattern and the savage undercurrents of the depths beneath. As Ford has said of Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale so it must be said of Ford's The Good Soldier - to grasp fully its greatness one has to read it again and again, even fourteen times. The more intimately the novel is known, the more it expands in scope, the more profound is its meaning, the more the reader realizes its power and beauty. Ford's mastery has been demonstrated in the surprise and intense drive of the narrative development; the distinctiveness and variety of his characterizations demonstrate his mastery as well.

Consider the remarkable achievement of the character of John Dowell, the narrator. Very little "justification" is given him beyond the facts that he comes from an old Philadelphian Quaker family and possesses considerable wealth. Nothing is told of his immediate family, nor do we learn of the psychological sources of his lack of masculine vitality. He doesn't feel the need to have an occupation beyond attention to Florence. Why he wanted to marry Florence in the first place is not made clear. Then, it seems almost incredible to the reader that Dowell did not suspect his wife's pretence of heart trouble, nor her unfaithfulness with two men during her twelve years of marriage to him. That



both Leonora and Edward Ashburnham treat him as deficient in some way, is significant. The nature of Dowell's deficiency is only gradually realized, for much in what he narrates makes him out to be a comic figure. However, since the reader is in a position to perceive his emotional life from within as he tells his tale, it becomes apparent that Dowell is a spiritual cripple. His neurotic behaviour is evident in his pitiful self-depreciation, his inability to act, his hyper-sensitive awareness of people's appearances, gestures, expressions, emotions, etc., and the strangeness of the imagery he chooses to express this awareness.

The combination of comic and tragic, blended in the character of Dowell, makes of Ford's creation one of the most remarkable and most subtle characterizations in modern literature. The rare blend has led critics to differ widely in their interpretation and evaluation of the narrator. Elliott B. Gose, Jr. says that our evaluation of Ford's accomplishment in The Good Soldier depends upon our reaction to the novel, and this in turn rests upon our reaction to Dowell. He questions Dreiser's view that Dowell is merely Ford's mouthpiece, and Shorer's view that Dowell is a weak and passionless self-deceiver. He suggests that Dowell lies somewhere between these extreme views of him, essentially being an "honest if not very passionate person whose attitude toward the characters and events with which he deals is in constant evolution as the novel progresses."<sup>33</sup> He feels that both Dowell and Ford make the same evolution of life. Richard Cassell,<sup>34</sup> surveying these opinions, chooses to agree with Shorer in the

interpretation of Dowell's character, but agrees with Gose in the important effect the reaction to Dowell has on any judgement of the novel.

The most penetrating analysis of Dowell's character is the interpretation of John A. Meixner.<sup>35</sup> Whereas Mark Shorer sees the narrator as simple, infatuated, essentially unbalanced; a creature to be scorned, Meixner points out that, since the reader can perceive Dowell's deep, inner sufferings, he cannot dismiss the lonely, unrooted, alienated being with scorn; he must realize that Dowell is a creature of pure pathos whose story is tragic. Rather than let the ironic context, in which much is said, lead one astray, Dowell's own statement can be taken as a guide - "Forgive my writing of these monstrous things in this frivolous manner," he says, "If I did not I should break down and cry."<sup>36</sup>

What, then, is the final impression of Dowell? He is not a tall man, for to him the line of Edward's trouser-leg seems noticeably long, and he is conscious of his small size as he paces the walks outside the baths among the much bigger Germans and Russian Jews. He is always impeccably dressed, so much so that he often feels "too polished up".<sup>37</sup> Small and dapper, he would be unnoticeable in a crowd. Shut out from normal relations with his wife, unable to share in or understand her ambitions, chained to a circuit of Continental spas, Dowell is terribly alone and terribly bored; a man without possessions, without attachments, "a wanderer on the face of public resorts"<sup>38</sup> who carries in his pocket wampum deeds of lands given to his ancestor by an Indian

chief "as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe."<sup>39</sup>

Stubborn, capable of violent anger, perceptive and extremely sensitive, Dowell is as complex as the story he tells. If, outwardly, he appears to be among the aimless, brainless, leisured Americans living on the Continent, inwardly he reveals the troubled depths of spirit of an intelligent, well-read man. His narration, interwoven with little pompous formalities, has, throughout, allusions to literature, ranging from the Greeks to Walter Pater, allusions to Art, Architecture, Sculpture, etc., which show him to be a cultured person. Yet the dapper aesthete is capable of doing physical violence when his anger is stirred, so much so that his wife, seeing him soundly beat his faithful servant, fears for her life should that anger be roused against her. The perceptive reader of literature is still capable of a stubbornness and wilful blindness, that makes him ignore the many attempts Florence's relatives made to prevent his marrying her by intimating the truth about her character; and this blindness makes him unaware for twelve years of his wife's deceptions. Yet his keen eye for small details combined with his extraordinary sensitivity enables Dowell to catch the most fleeting impressions; for example, as he watches Edward Ashburnham's eyes he says:

And, suddenly, I saw two distinct expressions flicker across his immobile eyes. How the deuce did they do it, those unflinching blue eyes with the direct gaze? For the eyes themselves never moved, gazing over my shoulder towards the screen. And the gaze was perfectly level and perfectly direct and perfectly unchanging. I suppose the lids really must have rounded themselves a little and perhaps the lips moved a little too, as if he should be saying: "There you are, my dear." At any rate, the expression was that of

pride, of satisfaction, of the possessor. I saw him once afterwards, for a moment gaze upon the sunny fields of Branshaw and say: "All this is my land!"

And then again the gaze was perhaps more direct, harder if possible - hardy too. It was a measuring look; a challenging look. Once when we were at Wiesbaden watching him play in a polo match against the Bonner Hussaren I saw the same look come into his eyes, balancing the possibilities, looking over the ground...

I looked round over my shoulder and saw, tall, smiling brilliantly, and buoyant - Leonora. And, little and fair, and as radiant as the track of sunlight along the sea - my wife.<sup>40</sup>

Class conscious, ineffectual, effeminate, given to panics which immobilize him, Dowell is not a pleasing character. Yet Florence's Aunts Hurlbird thought him a very nice young man; Nancy was quite fond of him; and Leonora and Edward turned to him in their distress. Leonora felt an affection for him as for a brother; she forced on both Edward and Florence a secrecy meant to shield Dowell from being hurt by the knowledge of their intrigue; and, after Edward's death, she invited Dowell to stay at Branshaw as long as he wished. Contradictions face one at every turn when one contemplates the nature of this man. In the continuously shifting views and altering patterns of the novel, the reader experiences all the difficulties, frustrations, annoyances which often hinder making acquaintances in life. At the conclusion, he knows Dowell a little better than when he started, but, quite extraordinarily, much has been clarified about human relations while much is still unknown about the character of the narrator. As an important character and as a remarkable technical tool, Ford's creation of Dowell is an astounding success.

Yet, Dowell is not directly involved in the terrible events

of the story he narrates. Unaware, he moved in the midst of the action as an isolated being in the eye of a storm. Instead the action centers around a series of love triangles all involving Edward Ashburnham, his wife, Leonora, and his love of the moment. Most important are the last two triangles involving first Florence, then Nancy, and it is the last tormented love triangle which is the heart of the book.

The character of Edward Ashburnham is fascinatingly drawn. We are aware of Dowell's peculiar view point from the beginning, and as his view widens so, gradually, does the figure of Ford's protagonist emerge, until Edward Ashburnham stands before us a little larger than life-size but a vital creation. Since he was born and raised in the generous, responsible traditions of the British landed gentry, his actions are guided by idealistic and sentimental values. He chooses a military career, becoming Captain of the Fourteenth Hussars. He is proud of his men and well-liked by them. He distinguishes himself twice by leaping into the Red Sea to rescue soldiers with suicidal intentions, and, after spending considerable time and money in developing an improved stirrup, he gives the invention and patent rights to the Army. At home, he is the benevolent magistrate, spending large sums to help those in distress, in particular, fallen young women. In difficult times he would reduce or waive altogether his tenants' rents.

Toward men, he was friendly, but preferred a good rousing game of polo to the telling of titillating stories in club rooms.

In fact anything gross or obscene upset him. His height, his manly grace, his handsomeness made him extremely attractive to women. Toward them, Edward felt a protectiveness that often led him into great difficulties. For he believed women to be fragile, flower-like creatures who would provide tenderness, sympathy and moral support for their lovers. That all women are not like this, made, for Edward, impossible situations from which he sought release through a search for an 'ultimately satisfying woman'. Finally getting himself caught in the clutches of the she-wolf, Florence, rubbed raw by the friction between himself and his wife, Edward, in the ninth year at Nauheim, is a man whose inner reserves of strength have been drained pitifully low. It is at this point that he realizes his search has ended. In his young ward, Nancy, he has found the 'ultimately satisfying woman' but at the moment of recognition comes the realization that he can never permit himself satisfaction. Nancy is like a daughter to him; he cannot bring himself to alter this relationship. Leonora, realizing the depth of his love for Nancy, in vengeful bitterness cannot resist the urge to tell of his other affairs and of her miserable life to Nancy, who is newly aware of her answering love for Edward. Edward, dying of love for Nancy, cannot sustain the repeated onslaughts of the two women. After Nancy's departure for India, with the managerial Leonora in charge of his estates, having only his hope of Nancy's love to support him, Edward cannot support the implications of the flippant telegram which she sends. Quietly, he commits suicide. And Dowell, whose descriptions of Edward

have grown more and more ennobling as the story proceeds, carries the reader from the frightful picture of Edward flayed to the bone by the scourges of Leonora and Nancy, to the picture of Edward "naked and reclining amidst darkness, upon cold rocks, like one of the ancient Greek damned."<sup>41</sup> He is the victim of his own generous emotions and of his sentimental view of life. Born in the twentieth century, he is a man very much out of joint with his time. Following a code no longer in general practice, he cannot survive.

Leonora, on the other hand, has a practical, materialistic approach to life. Reared on a poverty-stricken English farm in Ireland, she has early learned to appreciate thriftiness. Convent educated, she has a rigid set of values and a most melancholy approach to marriage. Husbands are generally wayward; they have to have their "rutting seasons", but they will return to the wife who is patient and the marriage will be preserved, she believed. Incapable of understanding Edward's generosity, not providing the warm relationship he longs for, Leonora proceeds along a course which continues to alienate Edward further from her. Having a passionate physical attraction for her husband, she still bars her bedroom door against him. All communication ceases between them except for necessary directions from time to time. These two inharmonious natures find themselves legally bound in what Blake aptly described as "the marriage hearse". Leonora, being Catholic, cannot divorce Edward; he, being chivalrous, will not divorce her. Valiantly, according to her own understanding, Leonora has

brought their financial state back from the verge of bankruptcy caused by Edward's 'affairs'. The more efficient and business-like she becomes, the more Edward is appalled, but Leonora cannot perceive why this should be so. All hope of gaining Edward's love dies in Leonora when she sees Florence make her claim on his attentions. The succeeding nine years are hell on earth for her. Gradually, her reserves of moral strength have been sapped until, in a critical moment, realizing she has lost him permanently to Nancy, Leonora finds her moral strength gone. Giving her passions full sway, she vindictively hounds Edward, and confuses Nancy who is already in an overwrought state. Her erratic behaviour in no small measure shapes the tragic events which close the story. In fact Dowell is moved to call her the "villain of the piece".<sup>42</sup> But, as he sees her situation, she was the 'perfectly normal woman', the woman 'needed by society' who had the normal desires for children, decorum, an establishment; who wished to avoid waste and to keep up appearances. Thrust into an abnormal situation, she reacted abnormally. "All the world was mad around her and she herself, agonized, took on the complexion of a mad woman; of a woman very wicked."<sup>43</sup> Once equilibrium is established after Edward's death, Leonora sets up the kind of life she always dreamed of with the innocuous Rodney Bayham who secretly keeps a mistress in Portsmouth.

Ford depicts Florence's character relatively in a very few strokes. Dowell says of her, "She was bright; and she danced... like a gay tremulous beam, reflected from water upon a ceiling".<sup>44</sup>



She is a tiny, well-groomed, expensively dressed woman who carefully selects colours to accentuate her copper coloured hair, blue eyes and perfect complexion. Tripping lightly on very high heels, she constantly chatters about diverse strands of knowledge she has acquired, in an effort to spread information and thereby leave the world a little brighter than before.

Essentially a cold sensualist, she actually surveys the world to assess what she can get out of it. She marries Dowell merely as a matter of expedience - he will establish her on the Continent, where she can carry on an affair with the disreputable Jimmy, with whom she had been intimate while on a world cruise during her teens. Inventing a heart attack, she prevents Dowell from claiming conjugal rights on the evening after the wedding, and forces him to become a nursemaid for the following twelve years. Just as she tires of Jimmy, Edward Ashburnham crosses her path.

In the nine years of her affair with Edward, Florence reveals herself as utterly selfish, jealous, possessive. It does not matter to her that she has forced a terrible role upon Dowell; his needs, desires, happiness mean nothing to her. In Edward she sees the 'proprietor of the home of her ancestors' as well as the passionate lover to whom she means to stick. If Leonora barely mentioned in a letter to Dowell that a woman was visiting them in England, off would go a cable in cipher from Florence commanding Edward, on pain of horrible disclosure, to come to her and assure her of his fidelity. She is an unscrupulous busybody who has the effrontery to approach Leonora in an effort to reunite her

with Edward, while she, herself, occupies his bed. When she realizes Edward has fallen in love with Nancy, when she fears Dowell has learned of her indiscretions with Jimmy, it is immediately clear to her that her one driving ambition in life, to be installed as a county lady in Branshaw Teleragh, can never be realized. Simultaneously, she knows that her life with Dowell cannot now be continued. Seeing no way out, she commits suicide.

As Dowell reflects upon these matters, while writing the story, his images of Florence change. From being 'a gay tremulous beam', an attractive coquette, she becomes a 'burdensome object', 'a Tartar'. After her death Dowell reflects that to have made any effort to prevent her suicide would be "like chasing a scrap of paper - an occupation ignoble for a grown man".<sup>45</sup> Thus is the paper personality of Florence dismissed, but there is no doubt of her vital presence as Ford has created her in the novel.

Strangest of the five characters is the young Nancy Rufford. After a bitter childhood in a home torn by the strife between a tempestuous father and a cruel-tongued mother, she had come to live with the Ashburnhams at the age of thirteen. During the nine years that the Ashburnhams frequented Nauheim, Nancy attended a convent school and vacationed with them. At the time of Florence's suicide, Dowell describes her as "tall and strikingly thin", with "a tortured mouth, agonized eyes, and a quite extraordinary sense of fun".<sup>46</sup> At times she is "exceedingly grotesque and at times extraordinarily beautiful".<sup>47</sup> She could gambol over the lawn with the puppy like a teen-ager and shortly afterward sit

demurely discussing the lives of the saints. She could vigorously ride to hounds, yet she could quietly nurse Leonora's headaches for hours. She was, Dowell says, "a miracle of patience who could be miraculously impatient."<sup>48</sup> Most frightening to him is her sense of rectitude - "a thing like a knife that looked out of her eyes and that spoke with her voice, just now and then."<sup>49</sup>

Dowell is impressed with her queernesses and touched by the plight of a girl who, at twenty-one years of age, still needs a night-light to banish the terrors that plague her mind. He feels that the combination of her unhappy childhood with "the mixture of saturnalia and discipline that was her convent life"<sup>50</sup> is responsible for her contradictory nature. That, at twenty-one, she is still incredibly naive concerning sexual matters and the actual circumstances of many marriages and many divorces, is also attributed to her convent-education and to Leonora's careful supervision. Of unstable disposition, ridden by fears, strangely innocent, Nancy Rufford is least able to sustain emotional tension. Yet it is over her head that the full fury of the storm, which had been gathering for nine years, breaks. Fiercely proud of her love for Edward, wounded deeply by Leonora's revelations that Edward is not the unspotted, god-like creature of her imagination, Nancy cruelly strikes back at him. Then unable to support the knowledge that her action has caused Edward's suicide, she goes mad. And Dowell, who has grown to love Nancy and desires to marry her, is left to care for the beautiful swan-like creature with the high, wide forehead, the deep blue eyes, the lustrous heavy black hair, who is now

merely "a picture without a meaning."<sup>51</sup>

There can be no doubt that the vivid, arresting qualities of these people make them for the reader unforgettable personalities. Markedly differentiated, they make their individual claims upon the reader's attention as they struggle against each other in a dark jungle of conflicting passions. The reader is now in a position to ask why these characters have been created and embroiled in the events previously outlined? What does the novel say that requires the expending of such tremendous literary artistry?

The Good Soldier is a major artistic document rendering the spiritual plight of twentieth century man. In his study of the heart of darkness hidden beneath the calm surfaces of conventional social life, Ford presents tragedy significantly qualified by the vision of a world where the belief in harmony between God, man, and nature is no longer accepted and where the communication lines between people have broken down. No more does the determinism of the Greek culture nor the Divine Plan of the Hebraic Christian tradition give a sense of purpose to events. Between Oedipus, Hamlet, and Prufrock a tremendous change has been wrought in man's attitude toward himself and his place in the cosmos. As Dowell says "I call this the Saddest Story rather than "The Ashburnham Tragedy," just because there was no current to draw things along to a swift and inevitable end. There is about this story none of the elevation that accompanies tragedy; there is about it no nemesis, no destiny."<sup>52</sup> There can be no heroes in this purposeless, meaningless world, only shuttlecocks buffeted about.

Restless, traditionless, lacking any religious or moral support, the modern spirit is estranged, lamed, and lost.

According to his tenets, Ford gives no conclusion, nor suggests any future resolution. He has presented his "unbiased picture of the world we live in" which, in demonstrating the futility of the struggle of man in a fragmented society, tells "the saddest story".

Lamentable, also, is the tale told in the Tietjens saga. Combining the broad canvas of his social satires with the depth in characterization of his novels of 'small circles', Ford registers in an artistic record the impact of the Great War on the British spirit and way of life. The nineteenth-century belief in a steady advance of civilization was crushed by the futility, the terrible waste, the demoralization, of twentieth-century warfare. The crucial transition was soul-shattering to Europe. To dramatize the public events of the decade from 1908 to the end of the Great War, Ford chose to create a character whose experiences in and observations of his crumbling world form the complex tale to be told.

To distinguish the complexities of the tetralogy and to order the mass of material, a brief background to the opening of the first book will be given; the important figures will be delineated among those who people their world; the action of the four books will be traced; finally, the structure and techniques will be discussed.

In Some Do Not, the first book of the tetralogy, the old

established pattern of life is still adhered to; the comfortable class divisions still provide guides for behaviour, with the assurance that those in governmental authority are the ones most fitted by birth, ability, and education to hold that power. However, Christopher Tietjens, youngest son of the owner of the great Groby lands, the epitome of the English gentleman with Tory affiliations, is suffering from the results of following his code. Tricked into marriage with Sylvia Satterthwaite, a rich society beauty, whom he had seduced on a train and who subsequently claimed she was made pregnant by him, he leads the most miserable life. Immediately after the marriage Sylvia begins to torture him for his complete acceptance of her action, her strongest weapon being the taunt that the child is not even his. Tietjens, stubbornly refusing to condemn her in any way, even agreeing that her action was absolutely right, maddens Sylvia to the point where she runs away to the Continent with another man, leaving the child, a son, with Christopher. To cover for Sylvia, her mother goes to a German spa accompanied by her personal priest, Father Consett, pretending that she is ill and that Sylvia is to look after her there. A few weeks suffice to show Sylvia what a fool she has been. She leaves the man, Perown, joins her mother at Lobschied, and from there writes Christopher an outrageous letter demanding that he take her back as his wife. Realizing that she has a strong passion for her husband, Sylvia determines to punish him for his apparent lack of passion for her, but simultaneously she hopes that in some way she will stir his love.

At college Christopher had met Vincent Macmaster, a Scot of lower middle-class origins, whom he befriended to the extent of soliciting funds from his mother to enable Macmaster to finish his studies. Macmaster, tremendously grateful, extremely aware of Tietjens's brilliant mathematical mind and encyclopaedic knowledge, is pleased to share with Tietjens his rooms at Lincoln's Inn, after both young men have gained positions in the Department of Statistics. Hating Sylvia for her treatment of Tietjens, Macmaster is shocked to learn that Sylvia intends to return to Tietjens, and aghast to find that he will take her back. This is the situation as the story opens.

Around the personal struggle of Christopher Tietjens, Ford presents the world that has been organized upon the English Tory gentleman's code. He richly peoples this world with characters, the threads of whose lives are tangled inextricably with Tietjens's. Tietjens himself is a remarkably appealing figure. A big, fair Yorkshireman, careless in dress, clumsy in movement, he lumbers about. A classicist and mathematician, he finds pleasure in tabulating from memory the errors in the latest edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Aloof, contemptuous, omniscient, caring little for the opinions of others, he rests content in the certainty that, as a Tietjens of Groby, he is answerable to no one. This is the picture of the man gained from the opening pages of the novel, a picture coloured by the admiring deference of a Macmaster who has yet to carve a place for himself in society.

Gradually, as the novel proceeds, we see beneath his stolid public front, and glimpse his inner life. To temper the admiring

portrait of Chapter I, Chapter II presents him through Sylvia's eyes. To her he is a repulsive, Ox-like creature, whose lordly, full-dress consideration for her drives her to distraction. His integrity terrifies her, for to her his views seem sheer immorality. Through successive chapters we see the many facets which Tietjens's personality appears to have to those who surround him. To Cam-pion he is one of the unpredictable intelligent - 'a regular Drey-fus', 'the sort of fellow you couldn't believe in and yet couldn't prove anything against.' To his superiors in the Department he is a genius, a walking encyclopaedia of practical facts; to Mrs. Wannop, he is a tired boy needing the peace and comfort of a woman who loves him; to Father Consett he is the innocent, suffering bitter injustice; to the common labourer, he is benevolent Quality; to the men in the ranks, he is the understanding, trustworthy officer; to Valentine, he is simply the 'splendidest'; to Edith Ethel, the male, external and threatening, odious.

The contrarities of these external views are matched by the contrarities revealed in his inner being. Apparently stolid, he shows a poet's sensitivity in his walk with Valentine, in his reaction to her home, during the ride through the fog, in numerous instances in the trenches and at the front. Arrogant and forthright on occasion, he is also tolerant, considerate and generous. Tortured within by the predicament of his marriage, repressing his feelings beyond safety, he gradually breaks down under the many pressures. Through his love for Valentine, the process of recovery begins. The gradual unfolding of the



complexities of Tietjens's character gives the reader a sense of becoming acquainted with a fascinating human being whose living presence cannot be doubted. Tietjens must certainly be counted among the great characters of English literature.

His chief antagonist is his wife Sylvia. An extraordinary beauty, she believes implicitly that with her brains and attractions she ought to be able to bring any man to do her will. Witty, reckless, arrogant, she cannot contemplate Tietjens's immunity to her charms, or his Christ-like treatment of her scandalous, cruel behaviour. A Roman Catholic, she has, nevertheless, dabbled in black magic for the thrill of it. Her mother calls her 'a wicked devil', and Father Consett condemns her behaviour, threatening her with exorcism, after hearing her say she will torture her husband by corrupting their child. The very bitterness of her hatred, the strength and purpose of her vindictiveness, gives the reader the idea that, in fact, Sylvia is in love with her husband, and does not realize it until it is far too late for her to do anything constructive about it. Tormented, unaware of the real cause, Sylvia seeks satisfaction through revenge. Yet her portrait is not drawn without sympathy. Her mother admits having been an indifferent parent, her experiences in boarding school were far from constructive, her earlier experiences with a man called Drake have been traumatic, her life in society circles has been empty and futile. She is a ship adrift on a stormy sea without a rudder or compass. The vivid entrance she makes in Chapter Two, her rude speech to the priest, her attempt at nonchalance, her

conscious use of sex-appeal, her bitter threats, her terrified retreat before the priest's wrath, all give insights into her personality that make her vibrantly alive, if unappealing; a worthy adversary for Tietjens, the epitome of Tory virtues.

Completing the triangle is Valentine Wannop, daughter of a famous Professor and a famous lady novelist. Left in financial difficulties by her father's death, Valentine works temporarily as a serving-maid, later as a Physical Education instructor in a school for working-class girls. Her experiences as a working girl lead her to become a suffragette, while in policy she is a social radical. She is young, fair, athletic, intelligent, and said to be the best Latinist in the country. We first meet her in tweeds and cotton blouse demonstrating for the suffragette movement on a golf-course. There she meets Christopher for the first time, as she calls upon his aid to help her and a companion escape the clutches of the golfers and the police. Her nimble movements and plucky behaviour have immediate appeal. Later we learn of the fortitude and sacrifice which has made it possible for her mother to continue her writing career, and has kept her brother at college. Very feminine, in a fresh, innocent way, she is nevertheless quite knowledgeable, forthright, and honest. As she recognizes the mutual attraction they have for each other, she acknowledges it freely to Christopher, yet plans no hidden affair. Her sympathies are broad, her understanding deep, her sufferings commensurate with both. After the weekend at Rye, she sees Christopher no more until two years later. In the interval both

have been brought to view their separation as no longer sensible; the Armistice brings their union without marriage. Valentine breaks with society without fear, and begins her new life in confident hope.

The practically parasitic McMaster is a contrast in every way to Tietjens. Born of tradesman parents, he is ambitious for both himself and his brilliant friend. He sees himself as someday being the associate of, perhaps, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for certainly he expects Tietjens's great gifts to win him some such post. Small, dark, excitable, he hopes to merit advance through making himself extremely serviceable, and through fostering his own fame as a literary critic. To achieve the latter end, he works diligently upon a monograph on Charles Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Anxious to please, he will do without question whatever is required of him at the Department of Statistics. He likes to be heard with respect when he speaks in magisterial manner of Botticelli, or passes comment upon a piece of antique furniture. He is tremendously attracted to healthy-looking shop-girls, only avoiding unpleasant entanglements through Tietjens's efforts. But he has a dream-woman, whose living image he discovers in the figure of the Reverend Duchemin's wife. The hypocrisy of his whole attitude to life can be seen in the sordid affair he carries on with Mrs. Duchemin, while preserving a circumspect appearance. His small, mean character is rounded out with actions which add insight to the main impression. His prompt action and social poise save the Duchemin breakfast from becoming the scene of a

dreadful fight; his sympathy for Christopher's unhappy marriage; his unflinching courtesy to Valentine; his honest regret, when it is no longer feasible to have Valentine and Christopher visit his literary salon; his guilt, acknowledged in an embarrassed glance at Christopher, after receiving a knighthood for work Christopher did; all make Macmaster a vivid character.

Many other vital people crowd the pages of this novel. There is Edith Ethel Duchemin, a Pre-Raphaelite beauty, complete with loose, flowing robes and amber beads, who likes to bury her face for long moments in cut roses in a pose she thinks is elegant. Yet, under the graceful, dignified exterior lurks another Edith Ethel, hysterical, vulgar, with rasping voice, and the vocabulary of a fishwife. Circumspect and right in appearance, she carries on a high-minded affair with Macmaster while her husband lives, then, when only a widow of a day, marries him, but keeps the marriage a secret for over nine months. A determined social climber, she sees herself as an Egeria to all aspiring writers and poets, and excludes all whom she feels unfit to grace her literary salon. Among the excluded are Valentine and Christopher.

There is Mark, Tietjens's half-brother, heir to Groby but caring nothing at all for the estate. Very wealthy, he cares nothing, either, for his post as permanent secretary to the Minister of Transport, yet is considered to be indispensable there. Reticent as only a Yorkshireman can be, he has little knowledge of the members of his family, little association with his colleagues, and no intention of changing the pattern of his life which has the

regularity, the simplicity, and the frugality of a hermit's existence. Yet, for twenty years, he has kept a French mistress in the Gray's Inn Road whom he would have married were she not a Papist. Otherwise their union is exemplary in every way and is, in fact, one of the few aspects of his life that Mark contemplates with complete satisfaction. Impeccably though unimaginatively dressed, with his protruding eyes and brown face, bowler hat, umbrella and racing glasses, Mark makes a striking picture of the incurious, self-contained Englishman.

There is the bluff, hearty, military general, Campion, with his deep-seated distrust of intelligence. There is the great Victorian lady-novelist, Mrs. Wannop, struggling to be fair in her evaluation of modern trends of living. There is the traditionless Sandbach with his nasty disposition, the worldly-wise, philanthropic Mrs. Satterthwaite, the avid, bridge-playing, martyred Irish priest, Father Consett. There are the numerous personalities met in the trenches, behind the lines and at the front. Even in their briefest appearances, these characters are unforgettable through Ford's vivid presentation.

Many of these characters appeal because they represent human traits which have been dominant, shaping forces throughout man's history. Christopher is conceived in heroic proportions; his inner strength, his fortitude, his purposefulness make him Christ-like. Sylvia is a cruel, corrupt beauty; Valentine, the vivacious, open-hearted tomboy; Mark, the eccentric, practical-minded, insular Briton; Edith Ethel, the hypocritical social-

climber; and Macmaster, the parasitic social climber. But they do not remain static types throughout the novel. Rather, they are vital characters, because it is Ford's genius, particularly in the first book, to let them alter and grow. This is remarkably apparent in Tietjens. Ford allows the reader only gradually to discover the various facets and contradictions of personality that are concealed by Tietjens's physical exterior. Tietjens's experiences force him to reveal his inmost nature, but more than that, the events bring about fundamental changes within him. Most important is the evolution of his love for Valentine and the shift in the direction of his life that his commitment to her makes. This proves to be a much more satisfying solution to Tietjens's problems than that chosen by Moffat in The Benefactor.

Nor does Sylvia remain merely the 'villain of the piece'. Through her exaggerated attempts to inflict pain upon Christopher, we begin to realize the intense suffering she, herself, is undergoing. Her completely undisciplined nature, used to plucking the choicest fruits of her world, is forced to bow to the superior force of an entirely unselfish alliance. In her desperate struggle to hold the one valuable thing in her life, the husband she loves, she strikes out in all directions. Thus, into each character Ford gives insight sufficiently developed through the novels to make their personalities impressively effective. This feat has been achieved through Ford's attempt to fuse the novel which surveys society with the novel of psychological investigation. Principally, it is his handling of point of view, with brilliant

time-shifts, that makes the feat possible. The point will be discussed later.

Briefly, the action of the story is as follows. In Some Do Not Christopher and Macmaster ride to Rye for the weekend, the one troubled about the predicament of his marriage, the other engrossed in proof-reading his monograph on Rossetti. During the weekend Macmaster meets Edith Duchemin, the very image of his dreams, and promptly makes her his mistress. Tietjens makes the acquaintance of Valentine Wannop, who is involved in a suffragette demonstration on the golf course. Tietjens's typical Tory Gentleman's behaviour at that time sets off a number of reactions which reverberate throughout the entire story. It awakens Valentine's interest in him and causes him to notice her. It upsets General Campion, who feels that this verifies rumours he has heard of Christopher's taking out other women. It outrages the politician, Sandbach, who would have enjoyed making sport of the young women. In Macmaster, when he hears of it, it arouses the fear that by his behaviour Christopher has begun to destroy his chances for a great career in government. Before the weekend is over, Christopher spends an entire night driving with Valentine over the moors after carrying a suffragette friend to a safe hiding place. They realize that they have a powerful attraction to each other, which is only faintly indicated after their horse is struck by Campion's car and Christopher narrowly saves their lives.

Meanwhile, at her mother's Lobschied retreat, Sylvia has decided the form her reunion with her husband will take. She

intends to settle down by his side virtuously, to torture him until she brings him to heel. Months pass after Sylvia rejoins Christopher. During this period, failing to break him by her behaviour in the home and the false rumours she spreads abroad, she tries to ruin him financially. Then war breaks out, as Christopher had prophesied it would, and, although middle-aged and fat, he decides to join the army. After a period overseas, he is shell-shocked and returned home, with his great memory impaired, his lungs affected by gas, his finances depleted. Because of Sylvia's machinations, cheques of his are marked overdrawn, causing his dismissal from his Club, the loss of any chance of advancement in the army, and the deletion of his name from Society's register.

Before being sent out the second time, Christopher meets his brother Mark. In spite of rumours believed hitherto by Mark, Christopher succeeds in clearing his name and establishing a warm relationship with a brother who is more laconic than Christopher himself. Mark, master of Groby since their father's late death, wishes Christopher to take over the estate. But Christopher will have none of it on point of honour. Respecting each other's positions, they are about to part when Valentine accosts them, sent there by a telephone call from Sylvia. Reassured by Christopher that Mrs. Duchemin is not his mistress, as Sylvia had claimed, Valentine feels ready to become his mistress herself. After winning Mark's approval as Christopher's 'woman', she walks away with Christopher to plan a rendezvous that night. When late evening arrives, however, they agree that even though it is his last night in England,



they are among those who 'do not'.

No More Parades divides the action between a base depot and a hotel in Rouen. Trying to carry out his duties in moving the troops up to the line, Christopher is overwhelmed by paper work, by contradictory orders from Whitehall, and by unnecessary delays in getting supplies caused by inter-camp and inter-rank politics. On the border of a physical and mental breakdown, with officers ill or mentally disturbed, under constant heavy bombardment, Christopher feels the plight of the brown ranks of men an almost insupportable burden.

The two outstanding events in this novel are: the death of O Nine Morgan, whose mangled, bloody corpse becomes a haunting symbol of all the futile horror of trench warfare; and Sylvia's unauthorized visit to Rouen, where her outrageous behaviour precipitates Christopher's being moved to the front lines. As the novel closes, Christopher faces the fact that, in his deteriorated condition, he cannot possibly survive the move, while, in the face of an imminent offensive at the front, death is a certainty.

A Man Could Stand Up opens in London on Armistice Day, shifts in Part II to the front, then returns to London in Part III. In the first unit, Edith Ethel Duchemin, with ulterior motives, calls Valentine Wannop at the girls' school where she teaches, to inform her that Christopher is back in London, alone and mentally deranged. After two years of burying thoughts of Christopher deep in her subconscious, Valentine finds her whole mind flooded with impressions of him, every fibre of her being tinglingly aware

of their possible union. The second unit opens in France in the days preceding Christopher's release. Impressively delineated is the dreadful, interminable waiting, beset by worry that is the lot of soldiers in the trenches. Compounded with the constant roar and crash of bombardment by day and the eerie sounds of digging beneath the very trenches by night, a nightmare in the mud is created by Ford. The climax occurs when a shell explodes beneath the feet of Christopher and his men, partially burying him in mud and killing a young boy who resembles Valentine. While trying to save another under fire, he finds his action causes the boy's eye to be shot away. Campion, coming to institute the Single Command, is disgusted by the entire situation in the front lines, blames it all on Christopher, and demotes him to the prison command. The closing unit brings Christopher and Valentine together in his bare rooms, stripped by Sylvia of all but a few pieces of furniture. As all London celebrates the Armistice, a group of maimed and scarred soldiers find their way to Christopher's rooms. In the midst of this motley group, Christopher and Valentine commit their lives to each other.

In The Last Post the action occurs in one afternoon. Christopher and the pregnant Valentine have established themselves on a Sussex hill-farm. With them is Mark who has never moved or spoken since finding out after the Armistice that England did not intend to occupy Berlin. Caring for him, as he lies in a special shelter on the farm, is Marie-Léonie, formerly his mistress, now his wife. Most of the novel develops from the meditations of

this strangely determined man. His interior monologues appear at the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Informing the reader also, are the thoughts of Marie-Leonie, Sylvia, Valentine, Mrs. de Bray Pape, an American who has rented Groby from Sylvia, and Gunning, a hired hand. Sylvia's intrusion into the peaceful Sussex sanctuary provides the chief action of the book. Driven by the need to see Christopher, after she has committed the final outrage of instigating the destruction of Groby Great Tree, the Tietjens symbol for centuries, Sylvia meets Valentine instead. Realizing she is defeated, fearing lest she harm the unborn child, she withdraws, agreeing to get a divorce. As the novel ends, Christopher appears holding a piece of Groby Great Tree in his hand; the last tie with the past is gone, the new life can begin.

To recapitulate briefly, the primary event is the outbreak of World War I given in Some Do Not which, as the nemesis of the British public, parallels Tietjens's personal nemesis in the figure of his wife, Sylvia. As the form of public life in England moves ever further from the tried and true forms which distinguished life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so every semblance of valour disappears from the battle, leaving it a horror of misdirected, abortive maneuvers of spiritless millions in a sea of mud. Correspondingly, Sylvia, in her mad sex-jealousy, disregarding the gentlewoman's approach to a problem like hers, makes public to the world the actual state of her marriage. She takes more and more vulgar means to torture the one man who, in the midst of personal and public chaos, holds tenaciously to tenets which had given

strength to the wonderful, civilized, seventeenth-century way of life, and which, he believes, must form the basis of any civilized existence in the future. Out of public and personal trial, out of the physical and mental blood-bath, Tietjens emerges in The Last Post purged of all the shackles of a backward-looking philosophy; removed from the deceit, the falseness, the hypocrisy of current society, he is ready to begin anew the task of creating a life where a man could, indeed, stand up on a hill.

This compelling story, with its powerful indictment of war and of the social trends of the early twentieth century, has provided critics with much debate over its structure. Most critics hail it as a masterpiece of twentieth century fiction but opinions vary widely whether it should be considered a tetralogy, or whether it is, in fact, a trilogy with a sequel. Robie Macauley, in his Introduction to the 1950 edition of Parade's End, supports the position that the recapitulation and final statement of The Last Post is absolutely necessary. Richard Cassell in Ford Madox Ford, A Study of His Novels (1961) develops the thesis that Ford's characteristic treatment of action is to develop it within large blocks which, in Parade's End, correspond to the division of the four novels. In the 1963 Spring issue of Modern Fiction Studies, Marlene Griffith stresses the fact that the four volumes are one structural unit, emphasizing, in particular, the necessity of the last book by claiming that the work is an allegory of social decay, and therefore the climax must occur in The Last Post where Christopher, representing traditional virtues, makes his final withdrawal from

contemporary corruption. Support for seeing the four novels as a unit may be found in Ford's own epistolary dedications to the books. For instance, in the Dedication to No More Parades, he declares his structural intention by observing that in volume one he has shown Tietjens at home during wartime; in volume two he is seen going up the line; and adds that he proposes to show the same man in the line, and in the process of being re-constructed.

However, John A. Meixner, in his recently published critical study, puts the case strongly and convincingly that the four books cannot be considered a unit. He says: "... Between the first book and the end of the third there is a definite clear unity of subject ... Some Do Not begins symbolically in peacetime in a shinningly appointed railway car, and A Man Could Stand Up ends in a bare, stripped room on Armistice night among the damaged victims of the war. England itself has been stripped, and there will be no more parades. The overall conception of the three books is gaunt, stark and complete. After them the action of The Last Post can only be considered an addendum, a fact signaled by Ford's removal of his central character from any prominent role. Unlike the first three volumes, the last, as Ford saw, does not come meaningfully under the banner of Parade's End. To include it there is only to obscure the force and impact of the basic conception."<sup>53</sup> No doubt this is why Ford, years later, in It Was the Nightingale refers to the Tietjens books as a 'trilogy' and quotes as its closing lines, the lines which conclude A Man Could Stand Up. Furthermore, Mr. Meixner points out that the fundamental method of the

fourth volume is not consistent with that of the other three, for they are realistic, whereas the fourth is definitely symbolic, with the characters appearing 'like allegorical figures in a pageant'. Finally, Mr. Meixner concludes that the tension between Christopher's recognition of the harsh facts of reality and his wish for the restoration of a coherent civilization, which underlies the mood of the first three books, is swept away in The Last Post where the wish and the facts are made one. The Last Post becomes, in fact, a sentimental indulgence unrelated to Ford's alienated sense of the world - that attitude which has shaped the creed of almost all his novels.

Omitting, for the moment, further consideration of The Last Post, one cannot refrain from stating that the conception of the first three books is, indeed, splendid, but all three are not of equal merit. After Some Do Not there is a falling away of the artist's power - important characters gradually degenerate into stereotypes; excessive use of interior monologue depresses action; pointless repetitions of words mar effects. Illustrations of these points will be made later when the particular novels are examined. However, there can be no doubt that, in Some Do Not, Ford achieves a masterpiece which, in the range and richness of its world, in its strength and sentience, fully meets the multiple demands of the novel form and exemplifies the best of his own tenets.

Intensely interested in the novel of mass action offering a panoramic or spectacular view of society, yet needing a central figure to serve as a moral and psychological focus around which to

weave his plots, Ford produces a novel which by his art "breathes life into the ancient political truth that the state is the soul writ large and the self is the republic in microcosm".<sup>54</sup> Thus it is that Tietjens's trials and tribulations mirror the troubles besetting England's body politic and vice versa.

Some Do Not has the complex feel of English life. The class structure of its society, the nature of those who govern, the particular political climate, the prevalence of the Victorian moral code, a wide selection of typically English types representing the country squire and landowner, the military man, the banker, the politician, the industrialist, the leaders of society and the arts, the peasant game-keeper and hired hand, are amply developed by Ford to create a milieu all-enveloping and soon familiar to the reader.

But this world is in the process of radical change fomented by the great twentieth-century industrial movement. Evidence of ferment is apparent in the encroachment of the arriviste into the preserves of those of distinguished lineage, in the reform movements of the suffragettes, in the popularity of Marxist philosophy in Universities. To show the complex reactions occurring within English society, Ford presents his rich, vital characters, through whose careers we experience the entire change. By juxtaposing private lives, which also represent social attitudes, against the disruption of society culminating in its great Armageddon, Ford fuses themes and techniques in an impressive social profile.

The central design of the novel is that classic form likened by E.M. Forster to an hourglass. In the changing fortunes of

the love affair of Valentine and Christopher, versus that of Edith Ethel and Macmaster, the classic form is exemplified. The high-born Christopher, at the outset, is secure in his social niche while Macmaster, the outsider, longingly wishes for security. In the middle of the book, Christopher's fortunes have fallen and Macmaster's risen to the point where the lines of their relationship converge. At the end of the book, Macmaster celebrates a knighthood and announces his marriage to Edith Ethel, while Christopher, socially ostracized, financially ruined, and denying himself Valentine's love, faces trench-warfare and imminent death.

Realizing that no love story exists apart from the society in which it takes place, Ford achieves, with remarkable success the representation of the private worlds of both pairs of lovers, that are, nevertheless, created from the values, habits, and taboos of their larger social world. Christopher and Valentine are courageous, forthright, loyal and unselfish. Their love is distinguished by the honesty with which they review their relationship. Critical of their society, they can contemplate with equanimity the pursuit of a course not approved by that society. On the other hand, the Macmasters are prepared to adapt to the demands of a corrupt society, being completely engrossed in the selfish attempt to improve their status in it. Their relationship is marked by the hypocrisy of their whole approach to life. Their pretence of a higher, more delicate sensibility and morality, covers adultery and savage vulgarity. Significant of the social deterioration is the final deceit of Macmaster, who, claiming Christopher's brilliant



mathematical deduction as his own, receives one of society's highest awards.

In dramatizing the change of the Old Order for the New, Ford implements further the hourglass design by dividing the book into two practically equal parts, setting the first Part mainly in rural England at peace and the second Part in London at war. The old values of honour and uprightness give way to malicious gossip and selfish schemes. Parallel to this trend, as we have seen, the Macmasters grace the best drawing rooms while Christopher and Valentine are driven to a rural retreat. At the point of confluence in the design, Ford presents an exciting moment that symbolizes the essence of the theme. Christopher and Valentine in their horse-drawn dog-cart are struck by a motor-car. The horse is injured so badly that it will never draw passengers again. Symbol of the old rural way of life, the horse is thus supplanted by the motor-car, symbol of the new industrial life.

Having chosen the design with which to shape the tremendous complexities of a work that attempts to combine the novel of society with the novel of character, Ford carefully selects the point of view and dextrously manipulates time to produce a work that is at once both extensive and concentrated. Learning from Conrad's work in novels like Nostromo, Ford chooses the third-person point of view, expertly varying it to gain that flexibility necessary to bring the diverse elements of his tale into tight dramatic unity. Inseparable in this achievement is the use of the time-shift. Sometimes he writes as the 'omniscient' observer, sometimes as the detached

observer, sometimes from within a particular consciousness. Always he assumes the freedom to range over the affair he is recounting in the apparently disjointed manner of memories. The result is an often confusing but carefully patterned complexity which represents impressions of the immediate present, while simultaneously clarifying the meaning of the affair, and suggesting universal experience. Thus the book opens with the third person narrative description: "The two young men - they were of the English public official class - sat in the perfectly appointed railway carriage." This blends in the second paragraph, into the omniscient observation that - "Their class administered the world ---. If they saw policemen misbehave, railway porters lack civility, an insufficiency of street lamps, defects in public services or in foreign countries, they saw to it, either with nonchalant Balliol voices, or with letters to the Times asking in regretful indignation: 'Has the British This or That come to this!'" Only rarely does Ford enter a consciousness, but an illustration can be found in Ford's presentation of Christopher's thoughts as he walks with Valentine after the Duchemin breakfast. Most often the point of view is such that the objective event and the subjective reflection are given together. These variations of the third person point of view give an emotional depth and many-sidedness to Ford's people, making them, in a remarkable way, independently alive in a world that seems objectively actual.

The action of Some Do Not is concentrated into two brief periods. The First Part occurs within two days; the Second Part,

in three hours of an afternoon and a short period later that night. Yet, with the time-shift, Ford ranges far beyond the immediate present. His method, as in The Good Soldier, is to begin a chapter at some interesting action and then go back to fill in the background. Chapter one provides ample illustration. The opening scene presents Christopher and McMaster taking a train to Rye. McMaster is working over his monograph. But we are led successively to see McMaster at home in the drawing rooms of the Artists; with Christopher and his chief in their office; Christopher soliciting funds from his mother for McMaster's education; Christopher in McMaster's rooms cryptically discussing his marriage with his father; Christopher and McMaster in their rooms in Gray's Inn; Christopher and McMaster in a London hansom riding to the train. Then, we are returned to the train compartment to hear a discussion of the subject of McMaster's monograph. Interest in these flashbacks is held by the gradual illumination of obscurities they afford.

But more than that, interest is stimulated by Ford's dramatizing past events in the minds of characters, thereby creating the effect of present action. Two instances come to mind as illustrations. The first is during the opening trainride when the narrator comments upon Christopher's reticence about speaking of his separation from Sylvia; then follows a dialogue between Christopher and his father upon this very matter, that amusingly demonstrates the laconic nature of the Yorkshire breed. The second occurs in chapter three of the second half, where Mark is musing upon the nature of his brother. Various actions he has instigated are given in the present, serving to enliven the narrative and, at

the same time, reveal much about Mark, his life, and his associates. Furthermore, these backward and forward movements causing the gradual build-up of the whole picture, forcing the reader to work to understand the parts as they fit into place, produce in the reader a wonderfully life-like illusion - the 'vibrating reality' that Ford felt was so important in the novel.

Suspense, usually associated with a novel presented chronologically, is missing in Ford's presentation. Yet, he does capitalize upon psychological suspense, building up to peaks of emotional intensity. Backward turnings do not impede the relentless pressure of increasing conflict. Thus Christopher and Valentine in the mist scene move backward chronologically but move closer together emotionally. The events of their movement through the fog are intrinsically interesting, but the real drama is played out in Christopher's mind as he is torn between his increasing desire for Valentine and the stolid proprieties of a Yorkshireman. Another scene demonstrating Ford's masterly development of progression d'effet is the gradual growth of tension at the Duchemin breakfast. As this scene unfolds, Ford manipulates point of view, mood, method and intensity in a complex shifting pattern that vigorously affects the reader.

The scene is divided into four parts by the particular point of view adopted. The reader first objectively sees Valentine and Edith Ethel in a conversation which reveals much about their natures and attitudes. The second part presents the various guests as they arrange themselves about the table, the point of view moving

successively, from the omniscient narrator to Valentine's consciousness, to Christopher's consciousness, back to the narrator, then to Edith Ethel, briefly back to Christopher, and finally back to Edith Ethel. The third part is concentrated in Macmaster's consciousness, while the fourth part alternates the narrator's point of view with those of Edith Ethel and Macmaster.

The objective presentation of the two women's conversation opens the chapter with a chronological sequence which sets up a relaxed atmosphere. As the guests gather, their indefinite movements and their desultory conversation is accurately rendered through impressionistic techniques. Simultaneously the illusion of a quick lapse of time is produced. Then, entering the minds of the primary characters, Ford changes the method to objective realism again, slowing the tempo to the mind's pace. Even there, the tempo is altered according to the emotional state of the particular consciousness. But when Ford enters Edith Ethel's consciousness in the last half of the second movement, he reverts to the impressionistic method, giving full dramatic effect to her rising panic as she fears her new guests will discover her husband's mental condition. Shifting to Macmaster's calm, collected, rational mind in the third part, Ford changes the method of approach to realism again. Seeking to make his will dominate the demented mind of the Reverend Duchemin, Macmaster succeeds, for a few moments, by challenging the accuracy of Duchemin's Latin. The drama is intense, reaching a peak of excitement when Duchemin rises to his feet to shout obscenities and is only brought under control by a timely jab

to his kidney made by an attendant. Finally, in the peace following the clergyman's quiet exit, the budding romance between Macmaster and Edith Ethel is presented impressionistically to give the chapter a quiet close.

The art with which Ford develops his tale according to the progression d'effet extends far beyond the confines of a scene or chapter. By the juxtaposition of chapter with chapter as, for example, the placement of the realistic, chronological presentation of Sylvia in Chapter II, between the predominantly impressionistic, flashback presentation of Christopher and Macmaster as they go to Rye in Chapter I, and the omniscient continuation of their golfing weekend in Chapter III, Ford carries the reader along an inevitable current. For the insights gained about Sylvia in Chapter II reflect meaning upon the reactions of both men to Christopher's problem and, at the same time, increase the reader's apprehension, which, in turn, gives extra emotional depth to the reactions of all parties at the golf-course. Finally, the two halves of the book are divided according to the dictates of progression d'effet, for the first part is rural, peaceful, slow, while the second part is urban, agitated, fast.

Before the remarks upon Some Do Not are concluded, a consideration of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the other three volumes is valuable. No More Parades, set amidst the desperate situation of the Allies in France, presents with authentic power the weary life of the trench soldier. The opening paragraph vividly depicts Tietjens's hut where, in the dusty gloom

of a coke fire, a motley group of men huddle, buffeted by the sounds of bombardment in the night. Interminable moments when the only sound is a "crackling like that of flames among vast underwood"<sup>55</sup> are punctuated by explosions terrifying in their force and proximity. One explosion is described movingly by Ford thus: "An enormous crashing sound said things of an intolerable intimacy to each of those men, and to all of them as a body. After its mortal vomiting all the sounds appeared a rushing silence, painful to ears in which the blood audibly coursed."<sup>56</sup> Nerves are frayed to the breaking point; hope for an improvement in their situation has long disappeared.

As the novel proceeds, the various types of men gathered in the trenches are given form, each constantly burdened with worries from home. To Christopher's private worries are added the worries of all those men who seemed to stretch in endless brown lines to the peak of heaven. Enveloping all these worries is the crushing suspicion of ineptitude and downright treachery on the part of the government in directing the war. This fear has demoralized the men, and it emphasizes to Tietjens the horrible futility of all their suffering.

Symbol of this futility in Tietjens's mind is the death of O Nine Morgan who, stepping stiffly into Tietjens's tent, says woodenly: "'Ere's another bloomin' casualty." and falls dead in a pool of blood on the floor. Half his face has been shot away. Tietjens lifts the body off another soldier's legs, getting his hands covered with blood as he does so. In the lurid light of

the coke stove, the scene is set indelibly in Tietjens's mind and it haunts him throughout the novel. The power with which Ford presents this scene is unforgettable.

Unforgettable, too, is the scene in Rouen where Sylvia awaits Christopher in the crowded hotel ballroom. The confusion within, the bombing without, the highly emotional state of Sylvia's mind as she bargains in prayer to the martyred Father Consett, then gives herself up to her strong sexual desire for Christopher, the completely distracted state of Christopher's mind as he tries to cope with the shock of Sylvia's presence at the camp, all are rendered with nightmarish effect.

A Man Could Stand Up presents Christopher at the front awaiting the great 'strafe'. Again the atmosphere is that of anxious, endless waiting for something to happen in a landscape vague and undefined by the mist, or stark and grey under gloomy winter skies. Ford describes the scene as Christopher stares:

At that, with dreadful reluctance his eyes went back to the spectral mists over the photographic shadows. He forced himself to put his glasses on the mists. They mopped and mowed, fantastically; grey with black shadows; dropping like the dishevelled veils of murdered bodies. They were engaged in fantastic and horrifying laying out of corpses of vast dimensions; in silence but in accord they performed unthinkable tasks. They were the Germans. This was fear.<sup>57</sup>

From the ghostly forms his fearful imagination gives to the distant landscape, Christopher's view comes to rest upon a nearer scene. He contemplates, in the mass of tangled wire left behind in their retreat, three frost-covered erections looking like fairy sheds.



And, suspended in them, as there would have to be, three bundles of rags and what appeared to be a very large, squashed crow. How the devil had that fellow managed to get smashed into that shape? It was improbable. There was also suspended, too, a tall melodramatic object, the head cast back to the sky, one arm raised in the attitude of say, a Walter Scott Highland officer waving his men on. Waving a sword that wasn't there....<sup>58</sup>

The obvious restraint, the understatement, the impersonal query, serve, however, to emphasize that state in which, having experienced too much, the mind builds a wall about itself to deflect further shock. Christopher and his men have reached that state.

The musing contemplative atmosphere that exemplifies almost the whole of the novel is only rarely disturbed by passages of dramatic description. One passage of expert craftsmanship occurs as Christopher, under heavy bombardment, fearing a rush of Huns into the trench, nevertheless finds himself steadily loading and firing his horse-pistol in fairly monotonous regularity. The whole effect of the sounds of battle remind him of a great orchestra's crescendo. Then:

The Hero arrived. Naturally he was a Hun. He came over, all legs and arms going, like a catapult; struck the face of the parados, fell into the trench on the dead body, with his hands to his eyes, sprang up again and danced. With heavy deliberation Tietjens drew his great trench-knife rather than his revolver. Why? The butcher-instinct? Or trying to think himself with the Exmoor stag-hounds. The man's shoulders had come heavily on him as he had rebounded from the parados-face. He felt outraged. Watching that performing Hun he held the knife pointed and tried to think of the German for Hands Up. He imagined it to be Hoch die Haende! He looked for a nice place in the Hun's side.

His excursion into a foreign tongue proved supererogatory. The German threw his arms abroad, his - considerably mashed! - face to the sky.

Always dramatic, Cousin Fritz! Too dramatic, really.

He fell, crumbling, into his untidy boot. Nasty boots, all crumpled too, up the calves! But he didn't say Hoch der Kaiser, or Deutschland über alles, or anything valedictory.<sup>59</sup>

In the Last Post the scene is radically changed, from the strange ambivalence of life at the battle-front and from the wild enthusiasm of London on Armistice Day, to a pleasant afternoon on a Sussex farm, where everyone is engrossed in their daily chores, except the paralysed Mark, who lies reflecting upon the homely aspects of his domicile. Through Mark's reflections, and those of Marie-Léonie and Gunning, Ford gives warm, pleasant expression to his love of the pastoral life. We see the typical grey stone farmhouse set amidst its fields of hay-grass and raspberry canes, hedged round with quickset, and sheltered by apple trees. The hedge-sparrows and tomtits busily flit about, the sounds of ducks come on the air, and children climb the pathway behind the house. Inside, all is rich with the glow of hardwoods polished with beeswax and shaped in the elegant designs of years past. The low-windowed rooms with broad-beamed ceilings, the large, comfortable fire-place hung with great, smoked hams, complete the picture of rural England.

Set in this background, the portraits of Gunning and, in particular, Marie-Léonie radiate a warmth and charm that give distinction to the novel. Gunning is an attractive, appealing characterization of the efficient English handy-man, with his tight cord breeches, unbuttoned waistcoat, and square, high hat of black felt, with his amusing colloquialisms, tasting cider and pronouncing

with authority: "Ard! Thet cider was arder than a miser's art  
or'n ole maid's tongue. Body it ad. Strength it ad. Stans  
to reason. Ten year cider. Not a drop was drunk in Lordship's  
ouse under ten years in cask."<sup>60</sup>

Marie-Léonie impresses the reader with her luxurious blond hair, her sturdy body, her pleasing white arms; with her deep voice and volubility, expressing decided opinions on every conceivable subject; with her cleanliness and frugality; her great love of France, and her awe of the god-like creature who has chosen her to live by his side away from fortune's slings and arrows.

The strengths of the three volumes following Some Do Not vary as the selected examples suggest. But generally they share the same faults. Ford's increasing use of the interior monologue, which in Some Do Not rarely appears, has the effect of depressing action, for a character's thoughts are used to fill in background to the extent that the character loses his own vitality and becomes merely an expository machine. The impression is given, then, that the last three novels are extremely long. They tend to drag. Furthermore, Ford often places the same thoughts phrased in the same words in the minds of different characters without varying the tone from one character to the other. The sameness tends to dull the vital impression made when the characters were first met in Some Do Not.

Other flaws include the extension of scenes in disproportion to their importance, such as the long scene with Tietjens and Colonel Levin (pp. 236-256 of No More Parades), and inefficiencies of style, such as the very bad sentence: The telephone, for some

ingeniously torturing reason, was in a corner of the great school-room without any protection and called imperatively, at a moment of considerable suspense, out of the asphalt playground where, under her command ranks of girls had stood electrically only just within the margin of control, Valentine with the receiver at her ear was plunged immediately into incomprehensible news uttered by a voice that she seemed half to remember."<sup>61</sup> Pointless repetitions of words detract from the power of Ford's prose as for example, the monotonous repetition of the words and phrases of the sentence - 'It was not right to keep men hanging about like that.' - that mars the third paragraph of No More Parades. It is obvious that Ford did not exert, in the creation of these books, the same artistry that distinguishes The Good Soldier or Some Do Not.

Seen against the background of the later three novels in the Tietjens series, Some Do Not stands out as a masterpiece which, to a great extent, achieves the aim of Ford's conception of the entire series. Had Ford created the four books with the craftsmanship he expended on the first volume, the work would, no doubt, stand as one of the greatest in twentieth-century fiction. Nevertheless, Some Do Not is not flawless. The faulty sentence - "So that when by any chance at dusk, Mr. Duchemin, who himself was of exceptional stature, and his three assistants went together along a road the hearts of any malefactors whom in the mist they chanced to encounter went pit-a pat."<sup>62</sup> - mars the famous breakfast scene. There are slight inconsistencies in names and dates of occurrences, as, for example, when Valentine's brother's name changes from Edward

to Gilbert; and, over the course of Part Two, Friday becomes Monday. A greater flaw is the rather unbelievable nature of the dishonouring of Christopher's cheque which also takes place in Part Two.

However, these artistic failures cannot seriously affect the reader's final conception of Some Do Not. The tremendous success Ford achieves in enveloping the reader in a world thick with the texture of life, and peopled with characters whose vitality cannot be questioned, assures the novel a place among the best writings of this century. Lacking the tight construction of The Good Soldier, incorporating the dry humour characteristic of English life, the novel tempers the tragedy of its theme without detracting from its power. In a more spacious, leisurely book, Ford uses, to the fullest extent, his tenets of the time-shift, the point of view, justification, juxtaposition, progression d'effet, to give a reality to the experience of entering his fictive world that with chaotic immediacy leaves an indelible impression.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, The Good Soldier, A Tale of Passion, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>See list, back cover, The Good Soldier, New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>Ford, The Good Soldier, A Tale of Passion, Knopf, 1951, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., see Part I, Ch. II, pp. 12-13; Part III, Ch. II, pp. 127-128.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., see p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>See p. 111.

<sup>16</sup>Ford, The Good Soldier, A Tale of Passion, Knopf, 1951, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 71.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 76.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., she is mentioned for the first time in Part I, Ch. III, p. 28.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 97.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 128.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 201.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 234.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 237.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 239.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 256.
- <sup>33</sup>Gose, Elliott B., Jr., "The Strange Irregular Rhythm: An Analysis of The Good Soldier", PMLA, LXXVII (June, 1957), pp. 494-495.
- <sup>34</sup>Cassell, Ford Madox Ford, A Study of His Novels, p. 168.
- <sup>35</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, pp. 159-161.
- <sup>36</sup>Ford, The Good Soldier, A Tale of Passion, Knopf, 1951, p. 61.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 21.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 21.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 5.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 91.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 240.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 240.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 121.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 124.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 124.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 125.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 125.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 254.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 164.
- <sup>53</sup>Meixner, Ford Madox Ford's Novels, pp. 218-219.
- <sup>54</sup>Walter, E.V., "The Political Sense of Ford Madox Ford", The New Republic, CXXXIV (March 26, 1956), p. 17.
- <sup>55</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, No More Parades, New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1925, p. 2.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>57</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, A Man Could Stand Up, New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1926, p. 103.
- <sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 107.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 121.
- <sup>60</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Last Post, London: Duckworth, 1928, p. 11.
- <sup>61</sup>Ford, A Man Could Stand Up, p. 11.
- <sup>62</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Some Do Not, New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1927, p. 97.



## Chapter IV

### FACILE FLUIDITY - FORD'S LATER PERIOD

After the Tietjens saga, Ford wrote five novels: A Little Less Than Gods (1928), When The Wicked Man (1931), The Rash Act (1933), Henry for Hugh (1934) and Vive Le Roy (1936). All of these books exhibit a definite decline in artistic power. But before an account of these books is given some comment is required upon The Marsden Case (1923), a novel published between the development of Ford's two masterpieces, and No Enemy (1929), a strange amalgam of biographical data and reminiscences published the year after The Last Post appeared.

The Marsden Case, the only novel Ford wrote between The Good Soldier and Some Do Not, falls short of the standard of excellence set by these works. An examination of the novel reveals that in some ways it is a rehearsal for the Tietjens series. In assessing its failures, one can more fully appreciate the greater accomplishment of the tetralogy; its strengths foreshadow Ford's later triumph.

The novel is set in England covering a period roughly the same as Some Do Not. Using the first-person narrator and the time-shift method perfected in The Good Soldier, but broadening the scope of the book to include a large group of characters, Ford exhibits a controlling power that enabled him in the following year to manipulate dextrously the immense mass of material that makes up the Tietjens books.

Ernest Jessop, a novelist, narrates the extremely involved tale of the aesthetic George Heimann and his sister. These two are the unacknowledged children of the disgraced Earl of Marsden who has exiled himself to Germany. Unaware of their parentage, the young people move in a circle of advanced Socialists repudiating class distinction. They discover the true facts of their birth in the critical days of imminent war and the girl immediately attempts to gain public recognition. Hurrying to Germany to ascertain his father's safety, George arrives too late, for his father, in despair over the Anglo-German situation, has hanged himself. The German authorities imprison George, but after seven months he is permitted to return to England, where he is denounced as a German spy. The knowledge of his birth, the death of his father, the pressure brought to bear by his sister's frantic desire to be recognized, financial difficulties, official harassment, all combine to drive George to an emotionally fatigued state in which he attempts to die as his father did. The attempt does not succeed; the heritage is established; George accepts the Earldom and marries his love, Clarice Honeywill; while the Armistice brings peace to the nation.

As the complexities of the tale unfold, there is revealed the moving plight of the narrator himself. Harried by difficulties encountered in publishing his novels in pre-war days, suffering tremendous strain as an army officer during the war, tormented by a sense of alienation, an intolerable loneliness in post-war days, Jessop is an appealing figure. Greatly sympathetic to young

George Heimann's troubles, he has to stand aside during the war while the younger man claims the girl Jessop loves deeply. Burdened, wise, possessing strength and a tolerance of the ironic twists of life, Jessop is neither like the spineless characters of the earlier books nor like the suffering Christ type of the Tietjens books; he does not win, but his loss is not ignoble. In many ways he is unique in Ford's fiction.

Divided into two parts, the novel covers, in Part One, the crowded events of one of Jessop's most harried pre-war days; in Part Two, it covers the years of the war and a post-war meeting of the principle characters in Geneva. Skilfully, in the first part, Ford maneuvers scenes in a dramatic presentation which carries the reader from a publisher's office in London, to a London street, to a ladies' afternoon literary lecture, to Clarice Honeywill's apartment, then to a basement cabaret. But in the second part Ford presents the events mostly through Jessop's reminiscences. As a result the novel is marred by a decline in tension which hitherto had steadily mounted.

Since Ford dispenses with the narrator and uses the multiple point of view in the Tietjens books, it is obvious that in developing The Marsden Case he discovered the impracticality of the single point of view for presenting a large cast of varied characters. As the second half of the novel shows, the representation of the tangled skeins of many lives requires more than the confines of the narrator's viewpoint. The result is that the narrator becomes successively more remote while the events themselves

cease to have any immediacy.

It is obvious, also, that the uninvolved narrator does not sustain the interest in himself that his prominent position as narrator demands. Yet, in The Good Soldier the feat is admirably achieved. There the narrator is uninvolved in the dramatic events which occur because he is unaware. But the shock of sudden knowledge under which the narrator reels gives an emotional effect which permeates the book; it supplements and intensifies the tension, and keeps the narrator vividly before the reader, while giving ironic overtones to all he reports. Within the compact organization of the 'closed circle' presented in The Good Soldier, the effect is overwhelming. In The Marsden Case the narrator is also uninvolved in the events he relates but not unaware. There is none of the tension which distinguishes The Good Soldier, for Jessop narrates as an observer removed from the tensions of the related events. Jessop's memories tend to sound like Ford's own reminiscences; he ceases to be an individual. As the previous chapter has shown, in Tietjens Ford vastly improved upon Jessop. He created a character who is involved in every action in the novel, who is aware of all that is taking place, whose sufferings are made vital and impressive through the many facets reflected from the multiple point of view, whose growth through suffering resolves the central conflict of the story. Ford had learned much from his experiment in The Marsden Case.

Not a novel at all, No Enemy accentuates a flaw of The Marsden Case; it begins with the device of a narrator but drops the

narrator altogether in the second part. Ford, in the character of Gringoire, a small farmer, presents the reader with his own rambling memories of the war in France and Flanders. The autobiographical note is strong in The Marsden Case as well. Beside elements of the character of Jessop, there are references to a hillside farm similar to one which provided a retreat for Ford at one time. The persecution of George Heimann as a German spy parallels the anti-German feeling which plagued Ford for a time in England. Then, the scene in which Jessop is to perform a shadow play in a basement club is similar to an actual incident in Ford's life.

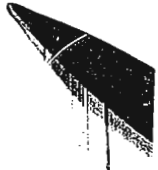
The desire to write his own memoirs became stronger in Ford as the years passed. Many details of the Tietjens books will appear familiar to one who has read a biography of Ford. Yet, there, the autobiographical note does not intrude into the reader's consciousness, but is artistically woven into the fabric of the work. After the Tietjens saga, Ford expended his greatest efforts in the production of Return to Yesterday, It Was the Nightingale, Portraits From Life, Great Trade Route, Provence, and The March of Literature from Confucius to Modern Times. These memoirs (in particular the first two) written with all the artistry at his command, expose the weaknesses of the novels written throughout the same period. Since they lack literary importance, the five novels written between 1928 and 1935 will be summarily treated here.

Set in the time of Napoleon's exile on Elba, A Little Less Than Gods features as its central character, George Fielding, the young, well-born, impetuous English officer who is passionately in

love with a lady-in-waiting of Napoleon's court and embroiled in the intrigue of Napoleon's march on Paris. After Bonaparte's final defeat, he faces the charge of treason to England. Completely disillusioned about Napoleon's career and about the part played by the very wealthy, influential English milor, Assheton Smith, Fielding suffers the cruellest blow of all in the discovery that his beloved Hélène de Frejus is, in fact, his half-sister. A broken, disgraced man, he sets out for America, hopefully attended by a young, wealthy American girl.

As in The Marsden Case and No Enemy, Ford changes method part way through the book. The first third of the book is presented in straightforward narrative while the rest of the book develops according to the time-shift method. The first part tends to be an undistinguished presentation of stock characters and speeches while the remainder manages to be exciting, believable, and moving. The poignancy of the one impossible love and the self-sacrifice of the erstwhile cynical Baron de Frejus, who dies that Marshal Ney may go free, make the closing chapters affecting. However, characterization merely has a surface glitter without the depths one expects from the creator of Dowell and Christopher Tietjens. Neither is there taken that care in presenting detail to create an authentic milieu that distinguishes Ford's other historical novels. Obviously Ford's mind was only partially engaged in writing this novel.

Ford sets his next work, When the Wicked Man, amidst the confusion and strain of the post-war American business world.



Caught in the frantic life of the business magnate who tries to increase his volume of trade in spite of keen competition, the central figure, Joseph Notterdam, is jaded physically by the pace he is forced to sustain, and fatigued spiritually, by the endless compromise that is part of the life. Through Notterdam's awareness, Ford renders successfully the impression of the inner ravages besetting this man, whose spirit longs to slough off the shoddiness overwhelming it.

Nevertheless, we find the respected head of an old publishing firm successively involved in a breach of contract with a young writer, who commits suicide because of it; in pretending the suicide was an accident; in looking after the shrewish widow, who is believed by Notterdam's wife to be his mistress; in a love affair with a young secretary in his office; in a brawl with the widow's gangster-lover, whom Notterdam shoots in self-defence. Notterdam's wife, loving his partner Bill Kratch, but unwilling to give Notterdam a divorce because of her hatred for the writer's widow, simply leaves him and goes to Kratch, taking the adopted Notterdam children, who are really Kratch's by another woman. In spite of the sordiness of the circumstances of his life, Notterdam is lauded in public as a hero and his business increases steadily. Privately he lives in torment, bereft of home and wife, yet not free to go to his love, whom, in a drunken state, he had seduced. However, as the novel ends, Notterdam decides that the pattern of his life is set; he hasn't the strength to change it. It is easier to flow with the tide.

Beyond a certain success in achieving the atmosphere of the twenties, there is not much to distinguish the book. Notter-dam does not win sympathy; his relations with his wife, Elspeth, with the shrewish Lola Porter, with the innocent Henrietta, weakly reflect something of the situation of Edward Ashburnham in The Good Soldier; the action drags; the prose is marred by American slang which does not ring true; altogether the novel is unattractive.

The Rash Act, with its sequel Henry for Hugh, is another fantastic story, rendering the social and moral decay of the twenties and the depression years. The exaggerated intricacies of the plot turn upon the double identity of an American named Henry Martin Aluin Smith, and an Englishman named Hugh Monckton Allard Smith. Both come from wealthy families, both attended Oxford, served in the same British regiment, had statuesque Nordic mistresses who had deserted them, and, as the story opens, are planning to commit suicide on the same day. Their chief difference lies in the circumstances which have driven them to contemplate suicide. The Englishman, mourning over the loss of his mistress, made impotent by war wounds which also cause blinding headaches, yet heir to the leading automobile industry in England which is still sound after the stock market crash, feels no desire to live. The American mourns no-one, although his marriage had failed, but is depressed chiefly because of a series of financial reverses and the inability to gain backing from his obdurate father. Left penniless in a small French Mediterranean port, he feels suicide



is the only escape. The Englishman shoots himself on a hillside overlooking the harbour in which the American unsuccessfully tries to drown himself. In a series of artificially contrived circumstances, the American assumes the identity of the dead man. He acquires, with the name, the dead man's French mistress. From his suicide attempt, he fears he has been made impotent and he develops blinding headaches. In a rather strange and frightening way he seems, to himself, to have become the Englishman. Added to these problems is his troubled love for the French New Yorker, Eudoxie, who peddles adulterated cocaine in her beauty shop in the little resort town, and who is the only person knowing his real identity. Accepted by the Englishman's relatives, he eventually discovers that he and the Englishman had the same great-grandfather and that he is, in fact, the direct heir to the motor company. As the second novel ends, the American can reclaim his own identity and still retain his shares in the great English motor industry.

With its events unbelievable, its characters merely surfaces without psychological depth, lacking any possible symbolic unity, the novel is meaningless. Again, as in When the Wicked Man, the prose is marred by slangy, dated words and phrases such as "funk", "caboodle", "lech", and "you're sure a swell kid." Its rhythms are choppy. The time-shift becomes merely a trick; the interior-monologues become endless exposition. In particular, the second book produces a trancelike effect unrelated artistically to the events portrayed. There, Ford's 'vernacular of an extreme quietness' is merely enervating.

In the year before Ford wrote his last novel, he spent a considerable amount of time revising Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, written in 1911. The revised edition has much in common with the novels discussed above. Its chief character, after a strange time-shift to the fourteenth-century, looks upon all aspects of the twentieth-century with distaste. This has already been pointed out in Chapter II. However, Ford's new conclusion does not permit Mr. Sorrell to retreat from the present as in the 1911 version. Instead, he must confront his own century with the insights gained from the fourteenth-century and attempt a new approach to his old way of life. In terms of Ford's lifelong plea to preserve the old values without which no society can maintain a satisfactory civilization, the revised conclusion of Ladies Whose Bright Eyes is much more adequate, in comparison, than the conclusion of When the Wicked Man.

Attempting to correct a slowness in tempo which mars the original version, Ford moves toward the staccato rhythms which characterize the Smith duo. For example, a few sentences from the 1911 version read:

He was always very dizzy and stupid upon awakening, so that when he was gently shaken he had not the least idea where he was. Then he saw the dirty face of the beggar peering at him through the bushes, whilst an old man in priest's robes was gently shaking his shoulder and trying to remove from his finger the ring of the Egerton cross.<sup>1</sup>

The 1935 version reads:

He was gently shaken. He did not know where he was. A dirty face was peering down on him; an old man in priest's robes was trying to remove from his finger the ring of the Egerton cross.<sup>2</sup>

The effect in eliminating detail and explanatory connectives may be to quicken the prose, but it also destroys that certain charm one associates with the romantic setting of the tale. A harshness is substituted that links the work to his other novels of the thirties, but removes it far from Ford's approach of 1911.

Ford's last novel, Vive Le Roy, like The Rash Act and its sequel, centers around a case of double identity. It combines elements of the detective story with a political allegory. The central figure, Walter Leroy, a young American doctor of no particular political affiliation, sails to Paris to continue research yet carries \$20,000, hidden in a book, for the French Communist Party. Revolution and counter revolution have beset France as first the Republicans, then the Royalists, gain power from the Communists. The Royalists set the young Duke of Orléans upon the throne of France, but twenty-four hours later it is rumoured that he has been assassinated while walking in the streets. Walter, who strikingly resembles the young king, disappears shortly after arriving in Paris; at the same time, rumours of the king's death are denied. Apparently, spirited away by M. de la Penthievre, chief of the Royalist advisers, Walter has agreed to carry on the pose of king, for the sake of setting up in France that feudal state of small producers where the ideal of a simple life under a benevolent monarch can be realized.

What actually happened is withheld from the reader until the very last chapter. As Walter's love, Cassandra Mathers, determinedly presses nearer to the truth, aided by the ex-Scotland Yard

inspector, Penkethman, who is actually Walter's father, Ford, exerting a control over all the forces of the progression d'effet, builds up an exciting sequence quite in the spirit of the detective story. But one of the greatest flaws in the book is the fact that the culmination of the progression d'effet - the meeting between Cassandra and Walter - is swiftly passed over, being neither reported, nor rendered.

The harsh tone of the later novels is absent from the prose of Vive Le Roy but it is marred, as are the others, by the inclusion of such jarring slang as: "And I've got to get the hang of here if I'm not to go clean cuckoo." Otherwise, the novel is attractively written. Characters such as the bulky, sentimental, but extremely alert Penkethman; the talented, intelligent, determined Cassandra; the courtley, single-minded Penthievre, obsessed with his dream of a benevolent monarchy, but shrewd and quick of action; all are personalities of worth. Appealing, also, is Ford's longing for the simple life of the self-sufficient farmer, which permeates the closing pages of the book.

Taken as a group, Ford's last novels show flashes of the creativity and artistry which qualified the novelist at his best. But mere flashes of art cannot distinguish books that Ford, with his facile fluidity of words, hurriedly wrote between larger works which occupied the greater part of his attention.

### Conclusion

In this study, Ford's development as a novelist has been traced; his literary heritage and important contemporary influences assessed; his theory and productions examined in detail. It is obvious, from the exposition of his theory in Chapter One, that Ford set an extremely high standard of achievement and aimed at the attainment of goals involving almost unbelievable difficulty. Through the succeeding chapters, we have considered the early novels, written as he evolved his theory; the novels of his middle period, written with the full implementation of the methods his theory implied; and the later novels, written when the application of particular methods had become automatic to a mind engrossed with other work. We are now in a position to draw some conclusions about Ford's work.

The critic who would evaluate Ford as a novelist must consider whether Ford has produced any work of intrinsic merit, whether his theory of fiction aided him to achieve a work of worth or shackled his efforts, and whether his creditable performance compares favourably with that of other novelists. It is obvious from the analysis of The Good Soldier and Some Do Not of the Tietjens series, that Ford has produced not just one work of intrinsic merit, but two. The slice of life objectively rendered in The Good Soldier held up a mirror to the people of the early twentieth century. With its careful adjustment of parts and fine balance of tensions, it has the power of poetry to pierce the heart of any age; it has the piercing power of tragedy in its portrayal of the

human situation in which all the lines of communication have broken down and experience becomes incomprehensible. Vindicated are the time-shift, the point of view, the mot juste, the progression d'effet, which brilliantly used, made the feat possible. Without a doubt The Good Soldier is Ford's greatest work. In its perfection it offers the aspiring novelist much fruitful research.

For the critic who feels that the very perfection of craft coupled with the mordancy of subject, makes the novel unduly oppressive, there is the spacious, more leisurely and more persuasive expression of Ford's stoical doctrine in Parade's End. There his indictment of a morally bankrupt ruling class is given fullest development. Again the skilled application of his several techniques enables Ford to give a panoramic impression of lives streaming forward, while allowing the emergence from the stream of Tietjens whose experiences mirror, in larger than life-size, what is happening in the stream. The contrast drawn, between unprincipled action and the energetic integrity which will not move on moral issues, has as much point today as it had for Ford's day. Perhaps the suggestion of hope which comes at the end of the third book makes the Tietjens series more appealing than the hopeless perseverance with which The Good Soldier ends. But, unquestionably, both The Good Soldier and Some Do Not have a degree of life that involves the reader in a unique reading experience, through which the point of these novels makes impact.

And it is that uniqueness in Ford which assures him of a place in our literary pantheon. Surely, it is not bulk which

brings credit, but quality. There can be no doubt that in comparison with the masters he recognized, Flaubert, James and Conrad, he did not produce a quantity of distinguished works. In fact, as this study has shown, much that he wrote fell far short of his own high aims for the novel. Biographical data can supply some explanation for the depressing waste of great talent. His complex personal life, the many imbroglios in which he entangled himself, the pressing need to write for money, took heavy toll. His self-doubt and indolence made the application of his techniques a rigorous trial to him many times. Then from his background and temperament, he had not that broad interest that would equip him to be a penetrating historian of his times, as Flaubert so eminently was. Ford dwelt among the literati and was partly removed from the general affairs of the world. There is a coldness about his early social satires that emphasizes his aloofness. Yet fundamental insights into his time can be found in his accounts of 'small circles'. The chaotic pre-war period, and his experiences in wartime, certainly served to stimulate his awareness, as The Good Soldier and Parade's End prove.

In comparison with James and Conrad, at least in his two best works, Ford is superior. James is matchless as artist of the novel. But in the emotional involvement of the reader, James fails to reach the depths. The terror and anguish of the Ashburnhams and the Dowells, of Sylvia and Christopher are not to be matched anywhere in James's works. Although Conrad is a very moving novelist, his power affecting the reader poetically through

symbol and scene, as well as situation, of none of his works can it be said that the artistic performance is flawless, as it can be said of The Good Soldier.

If bulk does not matter, if quality counts most, then Ford's stature as a novelist can be measured by The Good Soldier and Some Do Not. Not original in his theory, Ford implements his techniques with superb artistry, which, fused with a depth of emotion and psychological insight, makes his statement with unique power and truth. These novels, in particular The Good Soldier, give Ford the right to be included among the major novelists of this century.



## NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes: A Romance,  
London: Constable, 1911, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Ford, Ford Madox, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes: A Romance,  
Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1935, p. 70.

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