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Identity, Knowledge, and Power: Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier and Parade's End*

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IDENTITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND POWER: FORD MADOX FORD'S *THE GOOD SOLDIER*
AND *PARADE'S END*

by

DIANNE DAVIS BERGER

Under the Direction of Randy Malamud, PhD

ABSTRACT

Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* revolve around men and women about whom Ford challenges readers to draw inferences about national and personal identities. Employing Ford's texts, I explore the anxiety associated with changing gender roles in England from the end of the Victorian Era through World War I. In both works, Ford's male characters cling to the gender roles with which they are familiar, but the women seek to define new gender roles or, sadly, choose not to exist in a world where this seems to be an impossibility. I argue that what Judith Butler calls an undoing of stable, normative gender roles and what Michel Foucault calls the emergence of sexuality collided in this period to make the search for intelligibility not only an elusive quest but also a quest that differs for Ford's male and female characters.

INDEX WORDS: Ford Madox Ford, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Edwardian Era, Gender,
Parade's End, *The Good Soldier*

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DIANNE DAVIS BERGER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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AND PARADE'S END

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my grandfather, Edward E. Skelton, (1889-1975) who fought with the 331st Infantry in the battles of Saint-Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne in 1918.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a non-traditional student (four decades older than my peers), I am enormously grateful to the faculty at Georgia State University who have all taken my aspirations seriously, guided me through my educational journey, and supported me every step of the way. Due to my sheer good fortune, Dr. Leeanne Richardson taught my first undergraduate composition class. She then spent four years demanding that my writing be rooted in reason and less reliant on my love of rhetoric. She also introduced me to the compelling literature of World War I, including that of Ford Madox Ford. In my first graduate class, Dr. Randy Malamud provided an opportunity for further study on Ford's works and broadened my outlook to include other modern literature. He also urged his students to find a thesis topic they loved and search for ways to incorporate everything that they then learned into developing their topic. His advice was excellent and made my life as a graduate student much easier and more fruitful. Dr. Marilyn Richtarik's classes in Irish Literature presented an opportunity to expand my horizons and to appreciate the modern period from a larger historical context. She has made me understand that history is made up of many narrative voices. Having Dr. Malamud, Dr. Richardson, and Dr. Richtarik on my thesis committee has been a gift. The greatest part of this gift is their ability to convey both their passion for literature and their commitment to teaching.

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LIST OF SHORT TITLES

- LP* Ford, Ford Madox. *Last Post: A Novel*. Edited by Paul Skinner, vol. IV of *Parade's End*, Carcanet, 2011.
- MCSU* Ford, Ford Madox. *A Man Could Stand Up —: A Novel*. Edited by Sarah Haslam, vol. III of *Parade's End*, Carcanet, 2011.
- NMP* Ford, Ford Madox. *No More Parades: A Novel*. Edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth, vol. II of *Parade's End*, Carcanet, 2011.
- Reader* Ford, Ford Madox. *The Ford Madox Ford Reader*. Edited by Sondra J. Stang, Ecco, 1986.
- SDN* Ford, Ford Madox. *Some Do Not . . . : A Novel*. Edited by Max Saunders, vol. I of *Parade's End*, Carcanet, 2010.
- Spirit* Ford, Ford Madox. "The Spirit of the People: An Analysis of the English Mind." *Ford Madox Ford: England and the English*. Edited by Sara Haslam, Carcanet Limited, 2003, pp. 228-326.
- TGS* Ford, Ford Madox. *The Good Soldier: Authoritative Text, Textual Appendices, Contemporary Reviews, Literary Impressionism, Biographical and Critical Commentary*. Edited by Martin Stannard, 2nd ed., Norton, 2012.

1 INTRODUCTION

Ford Madox Ford¹ (1873-1939) wrote prolifically from 1892 until his death in 1939. His *oeuvre* includes fairy tales, poetry, novels, biographies, reminiscences, essays, literary criticism, wartime propaganda, and histories. He was a friend of Henry James, a collaborator with Joseph Conrad, and a mentor to Ernest Hemingway. Along with many of his contemporaries, he sought to change the theory and practice of literature. Ford's *The Good Soldier* (*TGS*), published in 1915, received mixed reviews. In London, the *Times Literary Supplement* called Ford "terribly long-winded and prosy"; the *Morning Post* deemed the book "a challenge, in matter and method alike"; *Athenæum* called it "unpleasant"; *Outlook* judged it "unsavory" and found it "inconceivable" that an Englishman would behave as described in the book. A common criticism was that the book "failed the requirements of realism" (Ford, *TGS* 233-50). However, by the mid-twentieth century, opinion had radically shifted and many considered the book a masterpiece of modernism, or, at least, a masterpiece that bridged the gap between realism and modernism. The critical reception for *Some Do Not . . .*, the first book in the 1920's tetralogy *Parade's End*, was far more enthusiastic. There were Victorian concerns that the book "points no noteworthy moral," that the title has no "poetical quotation to explain it," and that the work often shocks by its "strong language" (Saunders, introduction lx). Yet in 1924, most critics were prepared to embrace modern fiction as "something big and startling and new" (lix) with, as Louis Bromfield wrote, an "inherent glamour that is quite beyond such labels as realism or

¹ The author know as Ford Madox Ford was born Ford Hermann Hueffer, son of German émigré Francis Hueffer and Catherine Brown Hueffer (daughter of artist Ford Madox Brown). After his father's death in 1889, Ford changed his name to Ford Madox Hueffer and finally, in 1919, to Ford Madox Ford. *The Good Soldier* (and all preceding works) were published under the name Ford Madox Hueffer. Each volume of *Parade's End* was published under the names Ford Madox Ford (Ford Madox Hueffer). All later editions of these books have been published as Ford Madox Ford.

romanticism" (qtd. in Saunders, introduction lxii). The modern novel had become a *tour de force*.

Ford welcomed this shift. He was intent upon re-conceptualizing realism and bringing to literature the "sense of the complexity, the tantalization, the shimmering, the haze, that life is" (Ford, *Reader* 221). He was equally intent upon portraying the manner in which people both create and react to the values of their age. Although a lover of traditional values, he understood that men and women must live in their own time and live with values to which they are often ill-disposed. Thus, Ford became a pioneer in moving literature from what was viewed as the relative complacency of the Edwardian Era to the dynamic complexity of the Modern Era. In addition, Ford fervently believed that the novelist must be the historian of his own time. Consequently, his literature encompassing the dynamic period 1892-1918 both reflects the history of his time and challenges his readers to make sense of themselves and their rapidly changing world.

While the nostalgic view of the Edwardian Era (1901-1914) is that it was a time of peace, prosperity, and endless summer days, it was also a time for searching the soul. In 1902, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* challenged readers to look into England's imperialistic heart and view the horror. In 1908, H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay* satirized an English society fallen prey to greed and acquisition. Cabinet minister C. F. G. Masterman, in 1909's *The Condition of England*, warned that modern society "carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction" (289). Even in 1911's imperialistic *The School History of England*, C. R. L. Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling reminded readers of the lesson to be learned from the fate of the Roman Empire that had slowly died "at the heart, [died] of too much power, too much prosperity, too much luxury" (22). The reality was far worse than prophesized, and the era ended in the death and destruction of the Great War. Ford chronicles the Edwardian era in *The Good Soldier* and the

Great War and its aftermath in *Parade's End*. Each is a story of Victorian social conventions at war with twentieth-century sexuality, impressions in conflict with reality, and traditional gender roles clashing with new models of knowledge and power. Aptly, as the era began in doubt and ended in destruction, the novels offer different stories, conveyed in different ways. Yet in each, Ford weaves a tapestry using similar threads—hidden threads that create an image rather than simply tell a story. Ford skillfully uses narrative style, irony, and the instability of thoughts, words, and ideas—even the instability of time itself—to convey the early era's sense of alienation, despair, malaise, and hopelessness and the later sense of complete catastrophe, with just a glimmer of hope.

Although Ford sought to be his age's historian and extend the literary tradition, early scholarship on Ford's novels was heavily biographical. Because Ford led a complex, chaotic life, scholars even into the 1980s could not resist the trap Ford laid with his personal life. This emphasis on Ford the man was often at the expense of Ford the artist, historian, and social critic. However, twenty-first century scholars see a wider range of critical possibilities. *The Good Soldier* has long provided a rich terrain for studies on masculinity and identity, even exploring the homoerotic desires and Oedipal fantasies suffusing the novel.² Max Saunders and Sara Haslam's 2015 collection of centenary essays on *The Good Soldier* deals with the book as a forerunner to modernism, Ford's relation to other writers, but also with more topical themes: the body, illness, and eugenics. For *Parade's End*, Englishness is a popular research topic. However,

² See Bassoff, Bruce. "Oedipal Fantasy and Arrested Development in *The Good Soldier*." *Twentieth Century Literature: A Scholarly and Critical Journal*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1988, pp. 40-47. *MLA International Bibliography*, 2016. See De Angelis, Rose. "Narrative Triangulations: Truth, Identity, and Desire in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*." *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol. 88, no.4, 2007, pp. 425-46. *MLA International Bibliography*.

Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes's 2014 collection of essays on *Parade's End* explores novel topics, such as the psycho-geography of war.³ For both works, studies on the gender identity of individual characters are common, and I will later cite Karen Hoffman's research on masculinity and the Empire and Isabelle Brasme's research on femininity in *Parade's End*. Still, I find that the anxiety associated with changing gender roles during this turbulent period has not been fully explored. This is a particularly fertile topic because, in both works, Ford's male characters cling to the gender roles with which they are familiar, but the women seek to define new gender roles or, sadly, choose not to exist in a world where this seems to be an impossibility. There is also an opportunity to compare gender anxiety in both *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, since the post-war prospects for creating a livable life seem more hopeful.

In my thesis, I will examine *The Good Soldier*, a pre-World War I novel (just barely) completed before outbreak of the war in August 1914,⁴ and the four volumes of *Parade's End*, all post-World War I novels published in the 1920s: *Some Do Not . . . (SDN)*,⁵ *No More Parades (NMP)*,⁶ *A Man Could Stand Up— (MCSU)*,⁷ and *Last Post (LP)*.⁸ At the core of each of these

³ See Charlesworth, Michael. "Panorama, the Map, and the Divided Self: *No Enemy, No More Parades*, and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*." *Ford Madox Ford's "Parade's End": The First World War, Culture, and Modernity*, edited by Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes, Rodopi, 2014.

⁴ Ford always said that he began writing *TGS* on 17 December 1913 and finished the novel before 4 August 1914. In his textual notes (188-93), Martin Stannard discusses the uncertainty that surrounds these dates and the likelihood that the dates will remain uncertain. The first English and American editions were published on 17 March 1915.

⁵ In his textual notes for *SDN* (lvi-lxi), Max Saunders estimates the dates of composition as late December 1922 to 22 September 1923. The UK edition was published on 23 April 1924 and the American edition a month later.

⁶ In his textual notes for *NMP* (xlvi-xlvi), Joseph Wiesenfarth estimates dates of composition from October 1924 to 25 March 1925. The UK edition was published in late September 1925 and the American edition in November 1925.

⁷ In her textual notes for *MCSU* (xxviii-xxix), Sara Haslam estimates dates of completion between January 1926 and mid-May 1926. The UK edition was published in mid-October 1926; the American edition followed within a week.

⁸ In his textual notes for *LP* (xlvi-xlvi), Paul Skinner writes that Ford began *LP* in the summer of 1927 and completed it in November 1927. Both the UK and American editions were published in January 1928.

novels is a struggle to search for, create, or maintain identity in a rapidly changing world. This is especially true of gender identity. My argument is that what Michel Foucault calls the "deployment of sexuality" in the twentieth century was as powerful a contributing factor to gender dis-ease as the war and other forms of social disintegration. In addition, I will explore Ford's use of impressions—rather than facts—to reinforce the disparity between appearance and reality and challenges readers to reflect on both the causes and effects of social change.

I will begin with a brief synopsis of both works, highlighting the characters on which I will focus. Next, I will provide a historical and social context for both works. Since Ford sent *The Good Soldier* to his publisher in August 1914, it is a fascinating snapshot of Englishness in the Edwardian Era just prior to World War I. Soon after the war, Ford wrote *Parade's End*, which is one of the first English novels to deal with the war's aftermath.⁹ I will then deal separately with *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. The post-1914 era was so catastrophically different from what had come before that Ford tells the stories in a different manner. John Dowell, the profoundly unreliable narrator of *The Good Soldier*, weaves a story and compels readers to contemplate the issues facing modern humans. As readers have access only to the words of Dowell and no access to the thoughts of any of the other characters or to an impartial observation of their actions, the novel is a work about Dowell's reflections that begs readers also to reflect. In contrast, *Parade's End* introduces readers to a large group of characters but focuses on only a few. For these few characters, Ford gives readers entree to their words as well as their

⁹ Most of the work of the war poets (Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon, Ivor Gurney, and others) was written and published during the war (1914-1918) or immediately thereafter. The four volumes of *Parade's End* were published from 1924 to 1928. The most famous war memoirs were published after *Parade's End*: Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War* (1928), Rupert Graves's *Goodbye to All That* (1929), Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930). The war novels, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928-9) and Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero* (1929), also followed *Parade's End*.

thoughts. While *The Good Soldier* entreats readers to make sense of their world, *Parade's End* additionally asks readers how to align thoughts, feelings, and actions in a changed world. In both works, Ford employs his characters to represent aspects of the era. At the heart of each work is conflict: the conflict between societal expectations and individual needs. For the male characters in both works, I will explore the construct of Englishness and the *Englishman* (my emphasis) along with Judith Butler's theory of performativity. For the female characters, I will delve into Foucault's "deployment of sexuality."

2 SYNOPSIS OF *THE GOOD SOLDIER* AND *PARADE'S END*

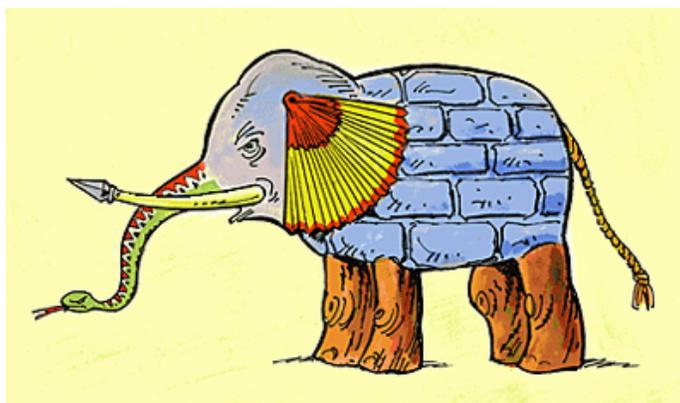


Figure 1 The Elephant as Perceived by the Blind Men
 Courtesy of John Robertson, Word Info image © All Rights Reserved

In both *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, Ford employs his preferred method, creating a small group of characters from whom readers can extrapolate conclusions, with implications, about the society at large. *The Good Soldier*¹⁰ tells the story of two wealthy couples, Americans

¹⁰ Ford's original title for the novel was *The Saddest Story*. This title was used in June 1914 when Ford published an installment of the novel in Wyndham Lewis's magazine *Blast*. The title of the 1915 publication of the complete novel was *The Good Soldier*. In a dedicatory letter from Ford to Stella Ford for a 1927 edition, Ford writes that his publisher asked him to change the title prior to the novel first being published in 1915. The war was raging, and the publisher felt that *The Saddest Story* was an inappropriate title. Stella "Ford" was the painter, Stella Bowen, with

John and Florence Dowell and the British Edward and Leonora Ashburnham, along with Leonora's ward Nancy Rufford. Critic Mark Schorer argues forcefully that it is a great work of "comic irony" (321). John A. Meixner argues equally forcefully that it is a work of "intensely tragic power" (335). Eugene Goodheart suggests that it is possibly a work of post-modern fiction rather than modern (382). Like the elephant encountered by the blind men, one bases one's perception about Ford's novel on where one's focus lies. Frank Kermode states this in a more scholarly manner when he writes that not only are "plural readings" of *The Good Soldier* possible, a "single right reading" is impossible (353). *The Good Soldier* is the scholar's delight.

The events in *The Good Soldier* take place from August 1899 until late 1915 or early 1916. (Since Ford wrote the novel in 1914, he leaves the ending date unclear.) John Dowell narrates, and readers learn of characters' actions, thoughts, and words only through Dowell's perception. The unreliable Dowell tells the story with stops and starts, regression and digression, obtuseness and vision, revelation and revision. He clings to his belief that he is telling the story of "quite good people" even when the characters have proved themselves to be something far less admirable (*TGS* 10). The thrust of the story is that for the nine years of the Dowell/Ashburnham friendship, Edward Ashburnham (a serial philanderer) and Florence Dowell (an accomplished adulteress) have had an affair. Edward's propensity for philandering has led Leonora to procure for Edward women she deems least likely to cause moral or financial turmoil. Leonora's final selection for Edward is her ward, Nancy Rufford. At the end of Dowell's tale, Edward and Florence have committed suicide, Nancy is insane, Dowell is Nancy's caretaker, and Leonora is remarried with a child on the way. Dowell views this state as "a happy ending with wedding

whom Ford lived from 1919 to 1927. See Martin Stannard's textual notes in *The Good Soldier* for a more detailed account.

bells and all" (*TGS* 166). Most readers find it difficult to pinpoint exactly where the happiness lies.

The Good Soldier is a story of the past. In contrast, *Parade's End* is a story both of the present and, more important, of the future. *The Good Soldier* challenges readers to ponder how people can find meaning in a world where the signified and the signifier have lost their bond—but it offers no solutions. *Parade's End* suggests that people must find their own solutions. *The Good Soldier* portrays wealthy, cosmopolitan Europeans and Americans in a pre-war world. *Parade's End* introduces an array of British characters from the crumbling upper class, the rising middle class, and the genteel poor. The central characters from *Parade's End* are Christopher Tietjens, self-described remnant of the eighteenth century; his disloyal wife Sylvia, with whom (due to his eighteenth-century sense of decency) he is indissolubly wed; the young suffragette Valentine Wannop, the only person with whom Christopher can completely connect; and the scheming upstarts, Vincent and Edith Macmaster. The Great War¹¹ provides the backdrop for the first three volumes of *Parade's End*, but the war only exacerbates personal dilemmas that had been present since the end of the Victorian Era.

The theme of the first volume, *Some Do Not . . .*, is the dichotomy between the principles of an earlier age and modern reality. Throughout the novel are paths that honorable people

¹¹ Shortly after *The Good Soldier* was published in 1915, Ford (although in his 40s) volunteered for active duty in World War I. By 1916, Ford was forwarding his impressions of the war to his friend Joseph Conrad because he did not think he would live to use them himself. Many of these impressions appear in *Parade's End*. At this time, Ford also began to consider how his deceased, Tory friend, Arthur Marwood, would view the war. In many ways, Marwood is the prototype for Christopher Tietjens. From the end of the war in 1918 until *Some Do Not . . .* was finished in 1923, Ford attempted to write his reminiscences of the war, but these books were left unfinished, unpublished, or published years later. *The Marsden Case* (1923), Ford's only post-war novel published before *Some Do Not . . .*, has a pre-war first half and a post-war second half but omits the war years. Max Saunders provides a complete account of this period in his introduction to *Some Do Not . . .*

traditionally do not take; however, in this modern world, some people do take these paths and reap the rewards. The second novel, *No More Parades*, acknowledges, bemoans, and celebrates the fact that the values of an earlier age will never again be ostentatiously exhibited. Since the words used to describe English values have lost their meaning, the pomp and ceremony used to commemorate them are meaningless. The third volume, *A Man Could Stand Up*—, offers the hope that man can survive the war physically and mentally, that perhaps there is a place for moral principles in the new age, and, most important, that mankind has a future. The action in *Last Post*, the fourth volume of *Parade's End*, takes place on a June afternoon of some indeterminate year after the Great War—possibly as late as 1927. In his introduction to the novel, Paul Skinner documents the history of *Last Post* and the reasoning behind whether or not to publish *Last Post* as a part of the *Parade's End* novels. Skinner elects to include *Last Post* in *Parade's End* due to the continuity among the four volumes; other editors have made a different choice (xxxiii). Ford was often ambivalent about its inclusion in the series. It is decidedly a post-war novel concerned with reconstruction rather than a war novel concerned with survival. Yet it does, as Ford states in the novel's dedicatory letter, offer a means to find out "what became" of the characters (*LP* 3). For this reason, I will include *Last Post* in my analysis because it ties up loose ends, even though my interest is chiefly in the extended Edwardian Era from 1901-1918.

The four novels chronicle the lives of Christopher, Sylvia, Valentine, and the Macmasters over more than a decade, yet their events take place only during parts of ten specific days. The action in *Some Do Not . . .* encompasses three days in June 1912 and one day in August 1917. *No More Parades* details three days in January 1917. *A Man Could Stand Up*— depicts Christopher in one of the war's last battles, when he is near death but comes to realize that he can survive both physically and emotionally. This volume also portrays Valentine and Christopher for only a

few hours on Armistice Day 1918 as they commit to building a life together. *Last Post* focuses on a single afternoon some years after the war. Ford delivers a complete picture of the entire period by allowing access to the thoughts and feelings of the major characters as they attempt to make sense of their present by invoking their past.

3 THE EDWARDIAN ERA

I don't really deal in facts; I have for facts a most profound contempt. I try to give you what I see to be the spirit of an age, of a town, of a movement. This cannot be done with facts.

FORD MADOX FORD, *Ancient Lights* (1911)

Ford was, at least somewhat, on the right track. While facts remain a vital element in interpreting history, history is a narrative construction that, at its best, incorporates a plurality of voices. History, as a multifaceted collection of narratives, depends to a lesser degree on the recitation of important dates and facts and to a greater degree on an intricate pattern of causes and effects that defies a straight-line narrative. History, like literature, demands interpretation. Historian Robert W. Strayer recommends beginning this interpretation by examining political, social, technological, and economic changes; next, comparing how these changes impact specific groups of people; finally, focusing on the processes and outcomes of interaction among groups (xliii-xlvii). This provides a model for studying the issues of identity and relationships in the Edwardian Era. The death of Queen Victoria in January 1901 necessitated that one era must end and another begin. King Edward VII died in 1910, officially ending the era bearing his name, but the era is often extended to include the pre-war years until 1914. The backdrop for the Edwardian era, however, is the previous century.

What historians globally call the long nineteenth century (1750-1914) was a time of scientific, technological, industrial, and political revolutions. It was a period of constant and monumental change, a time of doubt rather than certainty, and an era of cross-cultural encounters never before imagined. This era of Atlantic revolutions, Napoleonic conquests, and Europe's modern transformation generated transformative ideas about social, political, racial, and gender equality. It also enabled modern societies to exercise enormous power and influence over less-advanced nations by means of empire building, economic penetration, and military intervention. These transformations stimulated the desire for nations to create and espouse nationalism and foster the idea of a national identity. The *nation* was a construct that drew heavily on historical experiences and traditional cultural materials. When effectively executed, nationalism becomes the predominant culture, with an ideology, a language, symbolism, beliefs, and social consciousness. At its best, nationalism can create a sense of solidarity and belonging; at its worst, it can be divisive and oppressive. In the long nineteenth century, it proved to be an enormously powerful idea. European national loyalties fueled the competitive drive for colonies and generated the sacrifices necessary in World War I.

The creation of nationalism required a process of enculturation. For enculturation to be effective, those enculturated must see the process as a natural experience. Anthropologist Jack David Eller agrees with Antonio Gramsci that education is the most important process "to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, to the interests of the ruling class" (179). Eller also cites Steven Likes in determining that this method of soft coercion is the most powerful in influencing "people's very thoughts and wishes, their values and preferences, leading them to misunderstand their own interests" (179). The combination and mutual reinforcement of the education system and a state religion is a twofold process of

reinforcement. The result is an almost unassailable desire to accept the existence of a national identity. Such was the condition of England in the nineteenth century. Anglicanism was not only the predominant religion; it was the religion of the state. Elementary schools taught Anglican values. The children of the English upper classes and—after the Education Act of 1870—all children were not only literate but "vigorously literary" in the Arthurian adventures, the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, the *World's Classics*, and the *Oxford Book of English Verse* (Fussell 170). Consequently, values were stable, and the meanings of glory, decency, courage, sacrifice, and honor were reliable.

The twentieth century, however, saw a weakening of traditional values. Although the British Empire continued to grow, late-nineteenth-century improvements in communication brought news of the harsh realities of imperialism: famine in India due to poor organization and strategy, the cruelties of forced labor, the concentration camps of the Boer War. Closer to home, there was near-rebellion over the Irish demand for home rule. As the Empire was attempting to both contain and control definitions of culture abroad, it was losing control at home due to industrial strikes and militant activities for women's suffrage. Even the Church of England faced assault from Catholicism and the Anglican High-Church faction. Traditional values weakened, and there was a sense of social disintegration. Yet the era did not merely end in disillusionment; it ended abruptly on 4 August 1914 with the start of one of the greatest catastrophes that the modern world has wreaked upon itself.

The Good Soldier and *Parade's End* revolve around men and women about whom Ford challenges readers to draw inferences about national and personal identities. There are gender relationships gone askew and power relationships gone mad. The men strive—and fail—to measure up to the masculine ideals of the previous age. The women—with varying degrees of

success and failure—search for the means either to have sovereignty over their bodies and their economic lives or to maintain the stability of a woman's role from the previous age. Both men and women struggle to "persevere in a livable life" in a world where stable social norms seem to have disappeared (Butler 1). As Ford delves into the dichotomy between appearance and reality, he reveals the evolution of the social system in modern England, particularly the anxieties surrounding both the essentialism of gender and the search for knowledge and power. I argue that the weakening of a stable, enculturated notion of gender roles and what Michel Foucault calls the emergence of sexuality collided in this period to make the search for intelligibility not only an elusive quest but also a quest that differs for Ford's male and female characters.

The male characters in both *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* begin the Edwardian Era certain that the values that define their masculinity are stable in a secure world. They end the era by questioning the stability of both these values and their world. Conversely, the female characters begin the era by perceiving new possibilities—and sometimes threats—in their quest to acquire knowledge and power. Each group is simultaneously both privileged and oppressed, but by different systems of power. Therefore, both works provide an opportunity to explore gender identity using different lenses for the male and female characters to account for the unique historical position of each group. The males are privileged in terms of gender and class: they are the ideal subject produced by patriarchal nationalism. At the same time, they are shaped by the need to perform their maleness in an idealized manner. As the values inherent in English maleness come into question, the male characters confront a crisis of identity. In contrast, the females are oppressed by gender but privileged by class. They are also both privileged and oppressed as the emergence of sexuality opens up new avenues toward knowledge and power but fails to provide a roadmap to traverse this new territory. Ford captures the emotional upheaval of

early twentieth-century relationships and selfhood as nineteenth-century rules gradually cease to apply.

4 MALE IDENTITY

*Never was an age more sentimental, more devoid of real feeling,
more exaggerated in false feeling, than our own.*

D. H. LAWRENCE, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

In his 1906 non-fiction work *The Spirit of the People*, Ford—with tongue decidedly in cheek—presents Englishness as a national manifestation: Englishness is idealized, produced, and regulated by England. The Englishman, according to Ford, is a poet "who acts as far as in him may be in accord with a certain high and aloof standard of morals. He views life, not as it is, but as it should be . . . in some golden age If he idealises himself it is because he has ideals, it is because he sees himself, to the bitter and disillusioning end, as a hero" (*Spirit* 318). Above all, the Englishman is "trustworthy, socially [correct], truthful, sober, . . . sane and generous" (321). He is a good soldier whose major shortcoming is that "he is intellectually lost [when] an accepted belief is destroyed" (324). As John Attridge submits, his defining trait is taciturnity (26). Although English taciturnity was not a new concept, the Victorians "indissociably welded [it] to the idealized social category of the gentleman" as a means to "connote racial superiority and buttress the ideology of imperialism" (27). Ford proposes that this taciturnity is simply playing the game of "delicacy" to the bitter end (*Spirit* 312-13). While Ford writes entertainingly, he does so to expose the myth behind the concept of the Englishman.

Ford's view of gender identity for the Englishman is remarkably consistent with Michel Foucault and Judith Butler's view of gender as a social process, as expressed by both Foucault and Butler decades later. Ford also presents identity not as a fixed essence but as performance—

performance that is scripted and regulated by society, performance that has been enculturated to seem natural, performance that works "blindly but surely for the preservation of the normal type" (TGS 158). In *Undoing Gender*, Butler hearkens back to Foucauldian scholarship in describing gender regulation as a "power" acting "upon a preexisting subject" to shape and form the subject but also to produce the subject (41). She adds that, in becoming "subject to regulation," the subject also becomes "subjectivated by it" (41). Butler asserts that gender thus "requires and institutes its own regulatory and disciplinary regime" in the form of norms that govern cultural "intelligibility" (41-42). She contends that the viability of one's "personhood is fundamentally dependent on these social norms" (2). Yet Butler also proposes that gender can become "undone in both good and bad ways" (1). She submits that—in a bad way—gender norms can "undo one's personhood" and that—in a good way—the undoing of restrictive gender norms can give one a life of "greater livability" (1). Butler's line of reasoning opens up an additional possibility. If restrictive gender norms become undone, can one's life become—as Ford suggests—less rather than more livable? The "undoing" of a stable, normative maleness is a theme that Ford explores in *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. He also delves into the psychological price paid when the national persona of the *Englishman* is at odds with the realities of the modern world.

4.1 Male Identity in *The Good Soldier*

*Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,*

.....

*Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.*

T. S. ELIOT, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917)

The two main male characters in *The Good Soldier* are Edward Ashburnham and John Dowell. While there is a wealth of scholarship about John Dowell, both as the story's narrator and for his personal identity crisis, I will deal with Dowell only as narrator and self-proclaimed arbiter of Englishness. Ford offers readers this option since he distances Dowell from the crisis of English maleness by writing him as an American, an Anglophile, and, surely, the most unmanly male of his time. Dowell is certainly one of literature's most unreliable narrators, and it is highly unlikely that any reader can untangle his narrative to arrive at any incontrovertible truth. As Martin Stannard notes, Dowell is a modern narrator who is "no longer a wiser personality standing outside the recorded events and putting them into moral order; he . . . is deeply implicated in a narrative present in which there is no moral order and authority itself is an illusion" ("*The Good Soldier*" 81). Dowell is bewildered by the disconnects between performativity and essence, appearance and reality, actions and values. The instability of meaning in words and concepts that have always seemed so secure baffles him. Although Dowell appears to search for the truth, it is readers who must decipher the significance of the many questions Dowell asks and formulate their own answers to some of modern life's complex questions. Ford's irony in providing readers with no one other than Dowell—obtuse, lacking insight, or, perhaps, a master dissembler—as guide on a quest for truth alerts us that truth is most often elusive and sometimes beyond our grasp.

Dowell and his wife, Florence, have known Edward and Leonora Ashburnham for nine years, "as well as it was possible to know anybody," and yet Dowell finds that, in reality, he knew "nothing at all about" the Ashburnhams or his wife Florence (*TGS* 9). After

nine years, Dowell learns that Florence and Edward engaged in an affair for almost the entire time of their acquaintance and that Florence's recent death was actually a suicide (75-7). Dowell had neither known nor suspected either of these facts. In addition, Dowell learns that Edward conducted many other affairs during the nine-year Dowell/Ashburnham friendship, and, once more, Dowell claims to have had no way of knowing. Dowell simply believed that Edward was as he appeared to be—the person Dowell expected him to be: a good soldier, a man of "courage, loyalty, honour, constancy" (25). In Dowell's view, Edward "had, in fact, all the virtues that are usually accounted English" (105). Edward was "just exactly the sort of chap that you could have trusted your wife with" (14). Yet Dowell trusted Edward with his wife "and it was madness," for Edward was, in fact, a serial adulterer (14). Edward was also a man who gambled away his fortune in order to possess a woman who sold herself to the highest bidder and then left it to his wife to pick up the pieces of his life.

While these may appear to be conflicting images of the ideal, Edwardian Englishman, Karen Hoffman convincingly argues that Edward's actions symbolize the "mutually reinforcing relationship between imperialism and patriarchy" (30). Indeed, Hoffman states that, in *The Good Soldier*, Ford "presents the operative definition of [imperialist,] patriarchal masculinity" (30). Undoubtedly, Edward views his role with women as "the model of humanity, the hero, the athlete, the father of his country, the law-giver," and it is vitally important to his self-image that women view him as such (*TGS* 81). Yet, like the empire he reflects, Edward transgresses the boundaries of decency, honor, duty, friendship, and marriage in his scramble for women to possess. Dowell may not consciously connect Edward's masculinity to imperial power, yet, as he ponders Edward's relationships with women, he observes that "With each new woman that a man is attracted to there

appears to come a broadening of the outlook, or, if you like, an acquiring of new territory" (82). Unfortunately for Edward, his conquering of new territory brings him nothing but sorrow.

To the end, Dowell praises Edward as the epitome of the "English gentleman" (169). Edward's public performance of the role is compelling. Indeed, Dowell suspects that Edward had his "black smoking jacket thickened a little over the shoulder-blades so as to give himself the air of the slightest possible stoop" (24). Yet the unconditional rules of masculinity and conquest that Edward has relied on seem to be disappearing. Edward finds himself unable to perform his masculinity in the only manner sanctioned in his age, and he is thereby destroyed. His financial affairs are in "such a frightful state and he lied so about them" that he has had no choice but to turn all his property over to his wife (44). The sexual liaisons that Edward feels are his due all end badly. By following his "natural but ill-timed inclinations" and kissing a servant girl, Edward tarnishes his reputation and almost spends years in "Winchester Gaol" (41-2). His "perfectly commonplace affair" with an adventuress costs him almost his entire fortune (45). The husband of one mistress blackmails Edward; one mistress dies of a broken heart; one mistress kills herself; Edward loses his last love by actions that "were perfectly—were monstrously, were cruelly—correct" (163). Edward's distaste for life results from finding that he can no longer find salvation in "true love and the feudal system" because the women around him refuse to be the objects of his control (111-2). Accordingly, while Edward is an English gentleman whose bedroom contains "book-cases that contained not books but guns with gleaming brown barrels," he kills himself with "a little neat pen-knife—quite a small pen-knife" (142, 169). Edward symbolizes the Empire run amok. His version of masculinity with stable values and the virtues that Englishmen

hold fast in theory and appearance but transgress in reality seems to have no place in the modern world.

4.2 Male Identity in *Parade's End*

*Since when we stand side by side
 Only hands may meet,
 Better half this weary world
 Lay between us, sweet!
 Better far tho' hearts may break
 Bid farewell for aye!
 Lest thy sad eyes, meeting mine,
 Tempt my soul away!
 Better far though hearts may break,
 Since we dare not love,
 Part till we once more may meet
 In a heaven above.*

E. B. WILLIAMS, "Better Far" (1883)

The Good Soldier's Edward Ashburnham and *Parade's End's* Christopher Tietjens offer a fascinating study in comparison and contrast. Both come from wealthy, landowning families and feel an affinity for and responsibility to a feudal way of life. Both are, as Christopher describes it, the adult version of "the English public schoolboy . . . an eighteenth-century product"—men inculcated in the importance of courage, decency, and honor (*NMP* 236). They are both saddled with the *Englishman's* sense of duty, complicated by the imperialistic notions that men take what they want and should repress any display of emotion. Christopher sums this up when he maintains, "I stand for monogamy and chastity. And for no talking about it. Of course, if a man who's a man wants to have a woman, he has her. And again, no talking about it" (*SDN* 24). Both Christopher and Edward subscribe to the taciturnity redolent of the Victorian gentleman.

In addition, Christopher, like Edward, has the "disadvantage of being English of a certain station" (74). Neither he nor any of *Parade's End's* other characters easily exchange confidences or talk about the state of their feelings. As Ford writes in *The Spirit of the People*, there are many "things" that must not be discussed; "they include, in fact, religious topics, questions of the relations of the sexes, the conditions of poverty-stricken districts— every subject from which one can digress into anything moving" (312). Ford continues that this leaves the impression of "a whole nation bearing every appearance of being extraordinarily tongue-tied" (313). In *Parade's End*, "words pass," but the intent and the sentiment are most often missing. *Talking* becomes the mantra that *knowing* was in *The Good Soldier*. Ford adeptly creates dialogue between his characters that promotes the readers' ability to see what is missing. While Dowell's thoughts fade into ellipses to convey his doubts and implore readers to become engaged in questions of moral values, conversations in *Parade's End* are rife with ellipses to convey suppression, repression, insecurity, obliqueness, anticipation, hesitation, and, most important, the inability to convey thoughts by using words. A striking example is, when after five years of being in love, Christopher asks Valentine to be his mistress. The ellipses are Ford's:

She had answered:

'Yes! Be at such and such a studio just before twelve . . . I have to see my brother home . . . He will be drunk . . . ' She meant to say: 'Oh, my darling, I have wanted you so much . . . '

She said instead:

'I have arranged the cushions . . . '

She said to herself: 'Now whatever made me say that? It's as if I had said: "You'll find the ham in the larder under a plate . . ." No tenderness about it . . . ' (SDN 338)

Readers are privy to Valentine's words, thoughts, and feelings. It is Christopher who must read between the lines. However, for Christopher, repression goes even deeper. For, "As Christopher saw the world, you didn't 'talk'. Perhaps you didn't even think about how you felt" (8). Thinking about one's feelings might open the door to questioning one's values.

Yet, despite their similarities, Edward and Christopher are vastly different men from different generations. In judging their ages following textual hints, Edward would have been born around 1870 and Christopher closer to 1890. While Edward has taken the more traditional military route, Christopher works in London as a government statistician. While Edward wonders if "having too much in one's head would really interfere with one's quickness in polo" (*TGS* 34) and Christopher recognizes that "It was not English to be intellectually adroit" (*NMP* 59), Christopher is a brilliant man whose self-image depends upon his encyclopedic knowledge and recall. Thus, after losing his memory due to shell shock, he daily reads the encyclopedia to restock his mind. A fundamental difference between Edward and Christopher is that Edward's public performance is designed merely to convey the image of decency, duty, and honor that should define the *Englishman*, while Christopher genuinely embraces these values and, in both his public and private performance, adheres to them. He refuses to divorce the unfaithful Sylvia, not because his manliness could be questioned, but because of his chivalrous belief that "no man one could speak to would ever think of divorcing any woman. If he could not defend the sanctity of his hearth he must lump it unless the woman wanted to divorce" (125). Christopher is intelligent, stolid, stoic, conventional, clumsy, socially awkward, and principled. He is noble in his own fashion—the last bastion of Englishness. Although Christopher's public and private performances mirror his ethical perspective, he is considered "as conceited as a hog . . . as

obstinate as a bullock" (226). Christopher is respected by most, feared by some, and loved by few.

As Butler theorizes in *Undoing Gender*, Christopher has fully embraced the regulatory and disciplinary regime that his nation attributes to the *Englishman*. Ford demonstrates through Christopher how the undoing of these norms also undoes his sense of self. Christopher's adversaries are the disintegration of English values as embodied in his adulterous wife Sylvia, the catastrophic war as embodied in his godfather General Campion, and the treacherous new governing class of England as embodied in the social-climbing couple Edith and Vincent Macmaster. The first three volumes of *Parade's End* are about war—the Great War, the collision between traditional moral values and modern reality, the impact on human consciousness and communication of uncertainty and chaos. While *The Good Soldier's* Edward is able to conform to only one acceptable model of masculinity and must die when that model ceases to be viable, Christopher finally realizes that he desires life rather than death. He also realizes that in order to live he must reconcile his eighteenth-century values with the realities of the twentieth-century world. Amazingly, Christopher, who thus far has shown disdain for feeling and talking about feelings, now finds that what gives meaning to his life is talking with Valentine Wannop. He realizes: "You seduced a young woman in order to be able to finish your talks with her. You could not do that without living with her. You could not live with her without seducing her; but that was the by-product. The point is that you can't otherwise . . . [achieve] the intimate conversation that means the final communion of your souls" (*MCSU* 165). He is astounded to realize that he is in love, an emotion that heretofore he believed was not "capable of existing within him" (166). This is understandable, since all of Christopher's emotions are buried deep within.

While Christopher struggles to exist in a world where traditions he had assumed to be fixed are being swept aside in a modern world that values change, Vincent Macmaster is a beneficiary of the changes. At first, Vincent benefits simply due to his friendship with Christopher. Vincent attended Cambridge with Christopher, but he was able to do so only because Christopher's mother provided Vincent "a little money to get [him] through the University" (*SDN* 8). Like Christopher, Vincent is a civil servant in the Imperial Department of Statistics, where Christopher's father had recommended him. This help from Christopher's parents has put Vincent on the "long and careful road to a career in a first-class Government office" so that he is now welcomed in the drawing rooms of the "dear ladies who gave At Homes" (6). Vincent is Scottish by birth and "properly reticent as to his ancestry," which is lower-middle class (7). Vincent is the antithesis of Christopher, and in ways that go beyond wealth and social position.

Vincent, unlike Christopher, is ambitious, not simply for wealth, but also for status. The status for which Vincent longs cannot be achieved by diligence and well-placed connections: he covets the standing that Christopher has by virtue of his upper-class birth and ancestral fortune. Therefore, he capitalizes on the gender norms that constitute the *Englishman* of a "certain station," and he renders, for himself, the persona of the English gentleman. Vincent is not held subject by the regulatory power of these norms. Instead, he exploits them for his own benefit; he is intent upon "Keeping up the appearances of an English gentleman" (16). For Vincent, the upper-class *Englishman* is entirely a performance, with no intrinsic principles. To achieve his ends, he constantly schemes, and he often acts unscrupulously. Although genuinely fond of Christopher, Vincent appropriates Christopher's statistical calculations as his own to prepare a report that wins him "the honour of a

knighthood" (310). He allows his wife Edith to convince him that it is not necessary to repay the money Christopher regularly lends him so that Vincent can keep up the appearance of being an English gentleman. To avoid being caught in a compromising situation prior to his marriage, Vincent recruits Christopher to escort Edith to London, thereby providing fodder to the rumor that Christopher is an adulterer rather than Vincent himself.

For all Vincent's (and his wife Edith's) unprincipled machinations to achieve self-aggrandizement, they scrupulously work to portray themselves as "good people." As Isabelle Brasme notes, this "involves above all an ostentatious respect for tradition" ("Parade's" 137). This pretense leads Valentine Wannop to describe the Macmasters' actions as "a sort of parade of circumspection and rightness" (*SDN* 293). Yet Christopher laments the fact that parades designed to provide the pomp and circumstance to glorify values that have lost their meaning are mere caricatures. Although Christopher refuses to acknowledge Vincent's duplicity, Vincent has become what Christopher most despises, one of "the most cynically carefree intriguers in long corridors who made plots that harrowed the hearts of the world" (*NMP* 16). However, since Ford writes a modern novel, good does not triumph over evil. *Parade's End* chronicles the rise of the Macmasters and the fall of Christopher, as he loses the world's respect but finds a way to reconcile his values with those of the modern world.

Ford creates yet one more bond among Edward, Christopher, and Vincent. *Some Do Not . . .* opens with Christopher and Vincent discussing Sylvia's adulterous ways (22). Suddenly, Vincent derails this discussion and engages Christopher in an intellectual

discussion of the poem "Better Far," the epigraph for this section.¹² The poem becomes a leitmotif throughout *Some Do Not . . .* to evoke the myriad feelings and actions proscribed to "good" people who "dare not love." The poem suggests that there is no resolution on earth but only in "a Heaven above." Martin Stannard's notes in *The Good Soldier* make a connection to the poem in this work, as well. After receiving from Nancy Rufford a telegram that brings a sense of finality to their unseemly attachment, Dowell states that Edward "just looked up to the roof of the stable, as if he were looking to Heaven, and whispered something that I did not catch" (*TGS* 169). Stannard points out that in both the first manuscript and the printer's copy of *The Good Soldier*, Dowell recounts that Edward "just looked up to the roof of the stable, as if he were looking to Heaven and remarks: 'Girl, I will wait for you there'" (169 n.3). Edward sees hope of love only in heaven; Christopher ultimately dares to contemplate earthly love.

5 FEMALE IDENTITY

*you may have a thousand loves
and not one Lover;
you may have a thousand wars

and not one Victory;*

H. D., *Helen in Egypt* (1961)

Unlike the men in Ford's novels who cling to the national persona of the *Englishman*, the women provide disparate models of femininity. While Hoffman asserts that *The Good*

¹² Vincent ascribes the poem to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti, about whom Ford wrote a monograph, was Ford's relative by marriage. E. B. Williams, rather than Rossetti, wrote "Better Far"; Frederic Hymen Cowan set it to music.

Soldier participates in patriarchal and imperialist discourses that "assume the utter dependence of women," I counter that the female characters display varying degrees of dependence (39). In *Parade's End*, the women continue this variation and also display much less male-dependency. All face a twentieth-century transformation in sexuality. In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault writes that, after "a certain frankness" about sex in the early seventeenth century, sexual discourse moved toward becoming an "integral part of the bourgeois order" (3-5). By the eighteenth century, sexuality was supposed to be confined to the "legitimate and procreative couple" who "laid down the law . . . imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy" (3). This construct of sexuality supported capitalism's goal of the accumulation of wealth because the exploited labor force was discouraged from dissipating "itself in pleasurable pursuits" other than to "reproduce itself" (6). The construct also supported the transfer of wealth.

Foucault refers to this type of sexual discourse as a "deployment of alliance"—a system of rules and sanctions regarding marriage and kinship ties and the transmission of possessions—to ensure economic continuity (106). Foucault notes that a by-product of sexual discourse as a deployment of alliance was that sex became a matter for regulation. Sexual practices were deemed licit or illicit. Sex became a matter of public policy, and, by the eighteenth century, data was collected and analyzed on birth rates, illegitimacy, and contraception. The deployment of alliance, centrally important for the wealthy family, led to the creation of and reliance on the model of an "idle" woman charged with "conjugal and parental obligations" and a man who must maintain "intellectual capacity, his moral fiber, and . . . a healthy line of descent for his family and his social class" (121). In the nineteenth century, peripheral sexualities—zooerasts, sexoesthetic inverts (homosexuals), mixoscopophiles (those gaining pleasure from looking at

sexual organs or the sex act)—became "a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood" as the medical and psychiatric professions entered the fray (43). Medicine isolated a "sexual instinct" and "assigned a role of normalization and pathologization with respect to all [sexual] behavior" (105). In addition, modern psychiatry analyzed the feminine body and found it "thoroughly saturated with [pathological] sexuality" (104). By-products of this research were the creation of pathological identities: the nervous, frigid, or licentious woman; the sadistic, impotent, or perverse man; the hysterical or neurasthenic girl. The deployment of alliance was based on power, with its loci of knowledge and power invested in the state and the family.

The expected result of the deployment of alliance based on the power of law was the creation of a subject who is "subjected" and obeys (85). Yet Foucault finds that "Where there is power, there is resistance" (95). As the bourgeois family learned the "dreadful secret" that the family was the "germ of all the misfortunes of sex," they fought back. If sex was so important, its secrets must be discovered at all costs (121). This led to a new construct of knowledge and power, the "deployment of sexuality," which works both with and against, both affirms and denies, the "deployment of alliance" (106-7). The "deployment of sexuality" is an affirmation of self. It affirms the right to one's body, to the satisfaction of one's needs, "to discover what one is and all that one can be" (145). The locus of knowledge and power in the deployment of sexuality is the individual.

5.1 Female Identity in *The Good Soldier*

Heartbreak House was far too lazy and shallow to extricate itself from this palace of evil enchantment. It rhapsodized about love; but it believed in cruelty. It was afraid of the cruel people; and it saw that cruelty was at least effective.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, preface to *Heartbreak House* (1919)

The subtitle of *The Good Soldier* is *A Tale of Passion*. In this story of marriages, infidelities, and liaisons, one would expect the passion to be love or sexual desire. Instead, the passions in *The Good Soldier* are sufferings "of the heart": rage, agony, jealousy, torment, and madness. Sigmund Freud, writing fifteen years later in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, would have seen this not as irony but as an affirmation of his view that "the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness" (Freud 131). Freud believed that civilization is built upon a "renunciation of instinct" (75), with human instinct being to exploit another person, "to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to torture and kill him" (94-5).¹³ Thus, Florence humiliates her husband by sleeping behind a door that is locked to him but open to her lovers; Edward enrages Leonora by choosing Florence, a woman Leonora despises, for one of his infidelities; Leonora torments Edward to suicide and Nancy to madness. Even Dowell torments "poor" Florence by holding her hostage on the Continent and away from England, "the main idea . . . of her heart" (*TGS* 67). Ford presents readers with people who are not—just as Freud says humans are not—"gentle creatures" (Freud 94). Freud instead contends that humans can be revealed as "savage beasts" (95). Even Dowell is insightful enough to see this.

In *The Good Soldier*, each of Ford's female characters struggles to maintain the appearance of society's conventions, which are in opposition to her instincts. In an attempt to satisfy her needs, each struggles with the acquisition of knowledge and power in her own way and faces the results of her struggle in a unique fashion. Dowell's wife Florence seems to be completely undeterred by patriarchy. She comes from a well-to-do Connecticut family and is a

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, in the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), makes similar observations that predate *The Good Soldier*.

Vassar graduate. Prior to her marriage, Florence lived with her two elderly aunts and her equally elderly Uncle John. Dowell assumes that the aunts, and especially Uncle John, "had a great deal of influence in forming the character of [his] poor dear wife" (*TGS* 19). One way in which Uncle John formed Florence's character was by taking the young Florence on a world tour and allowing Jimmy, Uncle John's young male attendant, to escort her around Europe's cities. While on the tour, Florence and Jimmy began an affair that lasted almost four years, well into the Dowells' marriage. Florence's affair with Jimmy ends only when the Dowells and Ashburnhams meet and she begins her nine-year affair with Edward. Incredibly, Dowell tells us that his twelve-year marriage to Florence was never consummated, since he was told that "if she became excited over anything or if her emotions were really stirred her little heart might cease to beat" (18). Even more incredibly, Dowell disavows any knowledge of Florence's sexual exploits; he doesn't "believe that for one minute she was out of my sight, except when she was safely tucked up in bed" (12). Florence exploits patriarchal structures to achieve her own ends: first by marrying Dowell in order to have sexual freedom and next by feigning a heart condition to escape her marital duties.

Florence is intelligent, educated, and wealthy, a bright "dancing reflection" of a woman (17). Accordingly, she attempts to take patriarchal structures and turn them back upon themselves. Since Florence has adequate income of her own and stands to inherit a great deal more if she can maintain some semblance of virtue, she does not need marriage for financial security. She understands that marriage—to just the right type of person—allows her to escape from the (not very effective) watchful eyes of her family. She "coldly and calmly" calculates what she wants: "to marry a gentleman of leisure; . . . [have] a European establishment . . . [have a husband with] an English accent, an income of fifty thousand dollars . . . [and have little]

physical passion in" this marriage of convenience (60). Physical passion is something Florence can arrange for herself on her own terms. As she escapes patriarchal bonds by marrying Dowell, she defies social conventions by maintaining control of her sexuality. Yet for all her ostensible success in maintaining her subjectivity, Florence is not completely in control of her life. Dowell sees her as a "rare and fragile *object* . . . [a] trophy" (68 my italics). Even though Dowell protests that he has no idea about Florence's sexual transgressions, he uses Florence's own terms to deny her what she really desires—to be the lady of an English manor. As Florence has argued that their initial voyage to Europe has been so disastrous to her "heart" that she can now stand no physical passion, Dowell thereafter insists upon "imprisonment" on the Continent, with no hope of venturing into England (10). Moreover, Florence "could not announce herself as cured, since that would have put an end to the locked bedroom arrangements" (67). Florence has sensed some measure of power in sexuality, reached for it, and attained a certain degree of autonomy. However, in the end, Florence kills herself. One possible reading is that her suicide is an act of concession to the patriarchal power that she cannot overcome. However, Rose de Angelis argues that suicide is simply her last act of resistance (441). I find this argument convincing in light of Foucault's assertion that "death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it" (Foucault 138). Florence preserves her autonomy by exercising the ultimate power—the power over life.

Florence elects suicide when Edward, her lover and the possible instrument of her becoming the lady of an English manor, becomes infatuated with Nancy Ruffin. Nancy is a candidate for the Victorian "Angel in the House." A ward of Edward and Leonora, Nancy is raised in a convent where her innocence of sexuality—indeed of life—is scrupulously maintained. Although she is in her twenties by the novel's end, Dowell constantly refers to Nancy as "the girl," the object, the one acted upon. She has gained her knowledge of love from

romantic novels and Church doctrine. She remembers hearing that love "was a flame, a thirst, a withering up of the vitals—though she did not know what the vitals were" (*TGS* 149). She has been taught that marriages are sacraments; marriages are indissoluble; that "you were married or not married as you are alive or dead" (147). For Nancy, her father-figure Edward was "the Cid; he was Lohengrin; he was the Chevalier Bayard" (151). When emotionally battered into believing that to save Edward she must belong to him, Nancy does not "in the least know what it meant—to belong to a man" (161). Yet she clearly perceives that her role in any relationship is to be the one who belongs to someone else. Society's conventions and the Church's tutelage have subtly established their power. Nancy is aware that power is everywhere—except within herself.

Leonora disabuses Nancy of her powerlessness when she tells Nancy that she must save Edward, who is "dying for love of you" (144). Leonora pronounces that, although this will be adultery, it is "the price that the girl must pay for the sin of having made Edward love her, for the sin of loving [Leonora's] husband" (154). Thus, Nancy acknowledges both her power and her powerlessness when she tells Edward, "I can never love you now I know the kind of man you are. I will belong to you to save your life. But I can never love you" (161). To prevent her from making this sacrifice, Edward sends Nancy away, and later kills himself. The power struggle surrounding Nancy—a struggle in which she lacks potent weapons—leaves Nancy mad.

Thereafter, she exists motionless and utterly silent, except for the occasional utterance of "*Credo in unum Deum omnipotentem*"¹⁴ or "shuttlecocks"—fittingly, the feathered object hit back and forth in badminton (156, 167). Yet even in her catatonic madness, Dowell assures readers that one part of Nancy's enculturation is inviolate: Nancy remains utterly well-behaved.

Leonora, like Nancy, is Catholic and convent-raised, and she has "been taught all her life that the first duty of a woman is to obey" (99). She begins her adulthood in an arranged marriage

¹⁴ "I believe in one omnipotent God . . ." from the Nicene Creed.

of convenience with Edward, in which neither really knew "how children are produced" (103). Leonora, unlike Nancy, has had two decades to gain knowledge, to understand how power works, and to learn how to harness power to her own ends. Leonora, unlike Florence, does not covet autonomy; she covets economic security. A few short years after her marriage, when Edward has brought them to financial ruin with his sexual peccadilloes, Leonora gets "lessons in the art of business" from her attorney, draws up a plan, and, playing on his guilt and remorse, forces Edward to "settle all his property on her" (46). In a few years, Leonora has managed to recoup all of Edward's financial losses. What Leonora cannot initially control is Edward's propensity for infidelity. However, Leonora finds that she can control with whom Edward has affairs. Thus, she identifies likely, non-threatening victims for Edward's attentions and ensures that he has unfettered access to these women. Dowell sums this up nicely when he says, "Leonora was pimping for Edward," though Dowell sees this not as a power play but as an administrative duty to preserve her marriage, "the cross that she had to take up during her long Calvary of a life" (54). In this way, Leonora can minimize the social damage produced by Edward's affairs and ensure her economic security.

Dowell initially describes Leonora as the feminine ideal: truthful, clean of mind, trustworthy and dedicated to duty (99). However, one wifely "duty" that Leonora renounces is having sex with her husband. Leonora sees "life as a perpetual sex-battle between husbands who desire to be unfaithful to their wives, and wives who desire to recapture their husbands in the end" (126). Until Edward is prepared to be faithful to Leonora, she withholds sex, because her fundamental desire is the "desire for mastery" (99). Managing to unsex herself, she learns to rule men with a "rod of iron" (104). In this "saddest story," only Leonora survives unscathed (1). What Dowell calls the "happy ending with wedding bells

and all" is left for Leonora when, after Edward's suicide, she becomes the "happy wife of a perfectly normal, virtuous and slightly-deceitful husband . . . [and] will shortly become a mother of a perfectly normal, virtuous and slightly-deceitful son or daughter" (166-67). I contend that, rather than learning deceit, Leonora has learned about power and how to use it to get what she wants—and Leonora is passionate about what she wants.

In typical Dowell fashion, he extols Leonora's virtues while, at the same time, remarking that the world has made her "a mad woman; . . . very wicked . . . the villain of the piece" (159). He often remarks on Leonora's intense emotions, once stating that "Leonora adored [Edward] with a passion that was like an agony, and hated him with an agony that was as bitter as the sea" (25). Dowell questions how Edward could rouse such sentiments in Leonora. This is not an unexpected question from Dowell, as he appears to have neither understanding of nor appreciation for passion. What Dowell recognizes in Leonora, as well as in Nancy and Florence, is a non-civilized and non-civilizing force. Civilization, according to Freud, is "built upon the renunciation of instinct" (75). The desires of the individual must submit to the "regulations which adjust the mutual relationships of human beings" (57). For women in the Edwardian era, this meant submission to the male head of the family. Freud warns that people sometimes cannot "tolerate the amount of frustration" imposed by society in the "service of its cultural ideals" (59). One manifestation of this frustration can be the regression of the civilized person to a less-civilized state.

Ford certainly presents readers with women who are not gentle creatures. Indeed, Dowell often reveals them to be "cruel and predatory beasts" (*TGS* 152). As Nancy and Leonora face off over Edward, Dowell describes them as being "like beasts about to spring" (153) and "like a couple of Sioux who had got hold of an Apache and had [Edward] well tied

to a stake" (159). Dowell also refers throughout his story to the impulses that the women appear to have. He begins by references to nebulous "instincts." He progresses to describe women's instinct as "an immense and automatically working instinct that attaches them to the interest of womanhood" and an "instinctive feeling for suffering femininity" (162). He ultimately concludes, in a manner akin to Freud, that women's instinct is simply a "sex instinct that makes women be intolerably cruel" (162). However, Foucault argues that sexuality is not an instinct but "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power" (103). He also contends that in the twentieth century there was an "inflexion in the curve" in the history of sexuality when "the mechanisms of repression were . . . beginning to loosen their grip" (115). The women characters in *The Good Soldier* seem poised on the cusp of this transition. This is a subtlety that Dowell would miss.

Despite Dowell's problematic narration, he tells a fascinating story. He calls it the "saddest story I have ever heard," for, although Dowell is a participant in the drama, he bases most of his story on what he has been told by others (*TGS* 9). He acknowledges that there is much that he does not know and much that he "cannot well make out" in his story of the falling apart of a small group of people (98). It is up to readers to judge his veracity as a narrator and to determine Dowell's purpose in narrating. However, Ford does a masterful job of showing us the story as he allows Dowell to think through life's mysteries like any of us would—with stops and starts, with digressions, by questioning, by theorizing. Ford weaves a picture of the falling apart of an age—an age when "good people" find it impossible to persevere in a livable life as cultural norms rapidly change.

Accordingly, Dowell begins his story by mourning the loss of "permanence" and "stability" (11). He yearns for a life that he likens to a "minuet," a life where rules were

implicit and inviolate (11). Yet the "minuet" described by Dowell embodies little virtue and much deceit. The Dowells and Ashburnhams "in every possible circumstance . . . knew where to go, where to sit," how to keep up appearances (11). However, appearances can deceive. Dowell is unable to see the horror of his story because he cannot distinguish between appearance and reality. He surmises that "conventions and traditions . . . work blindly" to preserve society, but belief in the conventions of goodness—Englishness—have blinded Dowell to the truth (158). Dowell can only muse that "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?" (12). He is unable to recognize the truth. The truth is that—like apples—people and societies have a core, which, though hidden, is bound to emerge. The men in Dowell's story cling to the "truth" of gender essentialism as tenaciously as they cling to Englishness. The women have begun to perceive that many of society's conventions are merely methods to exclude them from knowledge and power.

5.2 Female Identity in *Parade's End*

*"But I always want to know the things one shouldn't do."
 "So as to do them?" asked her aunt.
 "So as to choose," said Isabel.*

HENRY JAMES, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

Ford completed *Some Do Not . . .* (the first volume of *Parade's End*) in 1924, just ten years after he finished *The Good Soldier*. Although the Great War intervened in the decade between the two novels, *Parade's End's* Christopher Tietjens continues to grapple with the soul of the Englishman, as did *The Good Soldier's* Edward Ashburnham. However, the women of *Parade's End* have evolved beyond Florence, Nancy, and Leonora in forming

their version of womanhood. Brasme views Edith Duchemin Macmaster, Valentine Wannop, and Sylvia Tietjens as each embodying a specific ideology of femininity present in post-war English society. She characterizes Edith as "the frozen ideal of conservative femininity," Valentine as "a fluctuating opposition to order," and Sylvia as the "new woman" ("Articulations" 173-84). These characterizations incorporate each woman's views on sexuality. Indeed, Graham Greene declared in his 1963 foreword to *Parade's End* that the novels are "almost the only adult novels dealing with the sexual life that have been written in English" (qtd. in Stang 110). Yet Ford neither depicts nor describes sexual contact in either *The Good Soldier* or *Parade's End*. Instead, there is much thought and a significant amount of discussion about sexuality. As Foucault argued, "sex" is functional; the deployment of sexuality provides access to one's intelligibility and identity (151-57). It is the spiritual rather than the corporeal self that the women of *Parade's End* strive to make whole.

Edith Duchemin is a passionate woman married to a much older, wealthy man who is certifiably insane. She passionately desires to maintain the facade of being the dignified wife of a very wealthy clergyman. When Valentine sympathizes with her about the reality of her situation and introduces the possibility of Edith's taking a lover, Edith demurs that "There's something beautiful, there's something thrilling about chastity. I'm not narrow-minded. Censorious! I don't condemn! But to preserve in word, thought and action a lifelong fidelity . . . It's no mean achievement . . ." (*SDN* 107). However, within hours of making this pronouncement, Edith's overriding passion compels her to embark on an affair with the up-and-coming Vincent Macmaster. No doubt the passion is to some extent sexual, but her true passion is to become Macmaster's "Egeria," the water-nymph who was the

consort and counselor of the legendary second king of Rome (198). Edith accomplishes this by cultivating the era's geniuses and "then, every now and then, she slips in something she wants Macmaster to have" (198). Shortly after consummating her affair with Vincent, Edith puts her husband into an asylum and reveals that she has "a power of attorney" over his estate (233). However, since Edith is passionate about her financial security, it is Christopher who loans Vincent the funds to establish Vincent (and, secretly, Edith) in London, conduct their "famous Friday parties" for the well-placed, and provide "loans to geniuses" who can pave the path of Vincent's career (233-34). Because Edith is equally passionate about her reputation, she enlists Valentine Wannop to be present at each of the Friday parties and act as chaperone.

The Duchemin/Macmaster affair lasts for more than four years, until Edith's husband dies. Edith and Vincent are married the day after his death, but, for the sake of propriety, they keep their marriage a secret for six months until Vincent is knighted. The four years have not been without passion. Early in their relationship, Edith becomes pregnant. She sends for Valentine, who finds Edith "like a mad block of marble, with staring, dark eyes and mad hair. She had exclaimed in a voice as hard as a machine's: 'How do you get rid of a baby?'" (279). Edith responds quite passionately to the pregnancy, and it appears as if "she stored somewhere, a character of an extreme harshness and great vulgarity of language. She raged up and down in the candlelight, before the dark oak panelling, screaming coarse phrases of the deepest hatred for her lover. Didn't the oaf know his business better than to . . . ? The dirty little Port of Leith fish-handler . . ." (280). Valentine never knows what happens to Mrs. Duchemin's baby, since the "Next day Mrs. Duchemin had been as suave,

as circumspect, and as collected as ever" (321). Edith Duchemin Macmaster is a complex woman with many driving passions.

When seen through the lens that Brasme applies, Edith appears to be the frozen ideal of conservative femininity. As Brasme notes, Ford pictures her in a way that leads readers and her contemporaries in the novels to envision her as the artists' model, Jane Morris, who was said to embody the pre-Raphaelite ideal of classical beauty. Certainly, Edith publically champions the conventions and attitudes of an earlier time. However, like an artist's model, Edith builds and maintains an identity that is but a performance. In reality, Edith's goal (much like *The Good Soldier's* Leonora's) is to maintain appearances and minimize social fallout. At her core are passions that drive her unrelentingly to acquire and cling to power.

In many ways, Valentine Wannop is the antithesis of Edith Duchemin Macmaster. Her old and prestigious family fell to ruin when her brilliant but impractical father died penniless. Valentine's Victorian view of the world is that "it was a place of renunciations, of high endeavour, and sacrifice" (279). Although trained by her father in Latin since she was a small child, Valentine must leave school when her father dies. Her mother sits for the nine months after Mr. Wannop's death with her hands "folded before her," unable to take any constructive steps to support herself and her children. As a result, the seventeen-year-old Valentine must hire herself out as a "slavey," or maid who does general housework, for nine months (86). When Christopher Tietjens's father learns of the plight of his old friend's family, he provides the patronage—both financial and professional—to enable Mrs. Wannop to support her family by writing novels. This means that Valentine can give up her job as a slavey and act as her mother's housekeeper and secretary. In her newly freed time, Valentine becomes a suffragette.

Valentine's brand of activism is, to some extent, of the militant variety. In *Some Do Not . . .*, Valentine and a fellow suffragette invade a golf course to confront a golf-playing cabinet minister over his reluctance to tackle the voting-rights issue. Today this might seem a tame endeavor, but, in Valentine's 1912 world, it results in two male golfers chasing the two girls with the rallying cry, "Strip the bitch stark naked" (86). A policeman responding to this melee chases the girls as culprits and ignores the vicious men. Christopher, coming to the aid of the two girls, is threatened with "obstructing the course of justice" (88). This is the kind of justice that Valentine later rails against as "constituted Authority" (*MCSU* 18). At first glance, Valentine appears to be a member of the iconoclastic group of middle- and upper-class, twentieth-century young women willing to accept martyrdom to promote social change. However, as Brasme points out, Valentine's views of feminine emancipation are decidedly eighteenth-century ("Articulations" 176-77). She aspires to the physical and intellectual education of women "reminiscent of Mary Wollstonecraft's precepts" (177). Her primary concern is for working-class women, as she states, "'Women have a rotten time.' . . . 'Poor women do!' she said, 'little insignificant creatures. We've got to change the divorce laws. We've got to get better conditions. You couldn't stand it if you knew what I know'" (*SDN* 144). What does Valentine know?

Valentine, twenty-two years old as *Some Do Not . . .* begins, is in the process of learning. Doubtless, her experience of "sleeping under the stairs, in an Ealing household with a drunken cook, an invalid mistress, and three over-fed men, . . . [had helped her acquire] a considerable knowledge of the sexual necessities and excesses of humanity" (281). She becomes a suffragette in large part because of this experience. Yet Valentine is aware of her limitations as a suffragette; she acknowledges, "I dread prison: I hate rows. I'm

thankful to goodness that it's my duty to stop and housemaid-typewrite for mother, so that I can't really do things . . ." (105). In addition, she has learned to pay lip service to modern ideas about sexuality. She recognizes that "Brought up amongst rather 'advanced' young people, had she been publicly challenged to pronounce her views she would probably, out of loyalty to her comrades, have declared that neither morality nor any ethical aspects were concerned in the matter. . . . she would have stated herself to advocate an – of course, enlightened! – promiscuity" (319). It is, after all, Valentine who suggests the possibility of Edith taking a lover. However, Valentine actually believes that "sexual incontinence was extremely ugly and chastity to be prized" (319). Herein lies Valentine's "sexual turmoil" (321). It is a turmoil based in part on Valentine's view of males.

In addition to being a suffragette, Valentine is a pacifist. Part of her aversion to war is her "*automatic* feeling that all manly men were lust-filled devils, desiring nothing better than to stride over battlefields, stabbing the wounded with long daggers in frenzies of sadism" (284 my italics). She begins to fall in love with Christopher when she is "astonished not to find him so loathsome" (284). Christopher is an excellent choice for Valentine, in part because, as he muses, "He himself must be a — eunuch. By temperament" (*NMP* 31). After years of mulling over the advisability of having an affair, since marriage is not possible, Valentine and Christopher live together and have a child. As Valentine struggles to explain to her mother why she must take this route, the quotation that comes to her mind is "Like a victim upon the altar. I am afraid; but I consent!" (*MCSU* 195). Valentine has made her decision but continues to think of her life as "living in open sin" (*LP* 182). Still, it is a very conventional type of open sin, since the conclusion of *Parade's End* finds her awaiting the birth of the baby who, Valentine is certain, will be a son and must be named after his father.

She is also castigating Christopher for his fecklessness as a provider, asking, "How are we ever to live?" (203). This is reminiscent of her mother's inability to act after the death of Valentine's father.

Valentine has gone from trying to embrace the role of a modern woman to embracing the fears and conventions of women in the patriarchal mode. As Brasme observes, it is difficult to find in Valentine remnants of the assertive, independent young woman of *Some Do Not . . .* by the tetralogy's end. Foucault might have found this retransformation unsurprising. The deployment of alliance and deployment of sexuality exist together in society. Valentine begins her young adulthood resisting patriarchal authority, aligning herself with young women of the modern age, trying to find out who she is and become all that she can be. What Valentine *knows*, her *automatic feelings*, drive her toward the deployment of alliance rather than that of sexuality.

On the surface, Sylvia, Christopher's wife, is everything Valentine is not. Sondra J. Stang observes that Sylvia is often "taken to be the embodiment of evil, . . . and one of the great *femme fatales* in literature" (108). Ford portrays Sylvia as a snake, a danger more seductive and stealthy than the savage female beasts of *The Good Soldier*. Sylvia coils her hair, she coils her legs, she erects "her body above her skirts on the sofa, stiffened like a snake's neck above its coils" (*SDN* 54). Likewise, Christopher imagines Sylvia "coiled up on a convent bed . . . Hating Hating . . . Slowly and coldly . . . Like the head of a snake when you examined it . . . Eyes motionless: mouth closed tight . . . Looking away into the distance and hating . . ." (*NMP* 67). Yet Christopher concedes that "[Valentine] and Sylvia were the only two human beings he had met for years whom he could respect: . . . If you wanted something killed you'd go to Sylvia Tietjens in the sure faith that she would kill

it; emotion: hope: ideal: kill it quick and sure. If you wanted something kept alive you'd go to Valentine: she'd find something to do for it . . . The two types of mind: remorseless enemy: sure screen: dagger . . . sheath!" (*SDN* 160). Sylvia's own mother calls her "a wicked devil" (34). Richard A. Cassell describes Sylvia as a "bitch" (259). Sylvia herself accepts this as a fitting epithet, and, in *Last Post*, Christopher's brother Mark and his wife leave off referring to Sylvia by name but only as "the bitch." General Campion, Valentine, and Michael Mark, son of Christopher and Sylvia, pronounce Sylvia "splendid." Who is Sylvia?

Sylvia is beautiful, "like a picture of Our Lady by Fra Angelico" (38). As a schoolgirl, Sylvia learns the power that her beauty and guise of self-possession have over men. She admits that she was never a "pure young girl" (44). In her twenties, she has an affair with a married man, and, fearing that she might be pregnant, seduces Christopher into marriage. Sylvia finds both marriage and Christopher boring—her harshest criticism—so, after marriage, she continues her life of promiscuity. Slowly, however, Sylvia comes to see in Christopher an intelligent and principled man who has "spoilt her for [any] other man" (*NMP* 122). Yet her unbridled frustration in being unable to manipulate him drives her to destructive behavior. In an act of caprice and violent, joyful "sexual hatred," Sylvia goes away with the insufferable oaf Perowne, because the "most humiliating thing" she can do to Christopher is to throw him over "for a man of hardly any intelligence at all" (122-23). Christopher's code of honor demands that he protect his wife's reputation at the expense of his own, and it dictates that "No one but a blackguard would ever submit a woman to the ordeal of divorce" (*SDN* 8). Therefore, when Sylvia tires of Perowne, Christopher takes her back, and they resume their marital facade. Sylvia makes a peculiar choice after returning to Christopher: she resolves thereafter to live a life of chastity. She now cherishes "her

personal chastity . . . as she cherished her personal cleanliness" and physical fitness, and "the two sides of life were, in her mind, intimately connected: she kept herself attractive by her skillfully selected exercises and cleanlinesses: and the same fatigues, healthful as they were, kept her in the mood for chastity of life" (186). At an early age, Sylvia has learned the power that both conveying and withholding sexual favors has over men—except for Christopher.

Christopher is the most chivalrous of husbands. Christopher would never make scenes in society or before the servants. Christopher never makes scenes at all. As Cassell concludes, Christopher "never removes his mask"; he admires Sylvia's beauty and intelligence but "his emotions were never deeply involved" (219-20). This makes it easy for Christopher to forgive Sylvia. When Sylvia (unlike Christopher) finally does remove her mask, the pain is undeniable. She tells Christopher, "If [. . .] you had once in our lives said to me: 'You whore! You bitch! [. . .] May you rot in hell for it . . . If you'd only once said something like it . . . about the child! About Perowne! . . . you might have done something to bring us together . . .'" (*SDN* 213). Rather than rail at Sylvia, Christopher forgives, but for her this is worse than remaining unforgiven. She asks, "how could any woman live beside you . . . and be for ever forgiven? Or no: not forgiven: ignored! . . ." (213). Later, in *No More Parades*, she makes an even more impassioned statement of what forgiveness without feeling means. The newly-promoted Second Lieutenant Cowley, singing the praises of his beloved Captain Christopher Tietjens, jokes to Sylvia that had it not been for Christopher he would have spent his celebratory night "up in a cold camp" (*NMP* 138). Sylvia tearfully responds, "I'm glad the captain, as you call him, did not leave you in the cold camp . . . There are others he does leave . . . up in . . . the cold camp . . . For

punishment, you know" (138). Sylvia is fully aware of how cold Christopher's saintliness can feel.

In contrast, Sylvia's passions are ferocity, viciousness, cruelty, and, chiefly, frustration. Frustrated in her desire to possess Christopher, she plots to torment and humiliate him. Typically, her reckless plots leave Christopher unfazed and herself discredited. Ultimately, Sylvia can only wonder, "What was she given beauty for – the dangerous remains of beauty! – if not to impress it on the unimpressible!" (*LP* 168).

Valentine is the only person who, at the end, finds in Sylvia "something timid. And noble" (193). Sylvia has finally learned that Christopher is beyond her grasp. She also learns that at least one reprehensible act, bringing harm to Valentine and Christopher's unborn child, is beyond even her capacity for vindictiveness. Since girlhood, Sylvia has wielded power to control others, but her methods are often self-destructive, and she ends up harming herself. It is only at the end of the novels that readers see a glimmer of hope that Sylvia has learned to use both judgment and power.

Valentine asks herself, "What on earth did she want, unknown to herself?" —a question that Sylvia or Edith could also have posed (*MCSU* 49). Valentine attributes her quandary to the "brilliant Victorians [who] talked all the time through their hats" and established a code of "Middle Class Morality" that the "pretty gory carnival" of the Great War proved to be a farce (49). Edith clings to the appearance of these traditional values, but, in her quest for knowledge and power, she furtively breaks the societal rules that these values support. Her well-being remains precariously dependent on her ability to manipulate and control, and on her skill in reading political and social situations and the people who inhabit them. Sylvia begins by creating and flaunting new, egocentric rules of behavior but

ultimately realizes that she is a social being and cannot create a meaningful existence completely outside society's purview. Her one positive step forward at the end provides a glimmer of hope that she can use her substantial intellect to make her life more livable. Valentine typifies Foucault's premise that a system of alliance, dictating what is forbidden and permitted, coexists with a system of sexuality, based on a quest for the knowledge and power needed to fully form one's identity. While she dabbles in rebellion against middle class morality, this morality is embedded in her identity so powerfully that she cannot completely break free. None of these three women reaches their personal Utopia, but neither do they succumb to suicide or insanity.

6 CONCLUSION

on or about December, 1910, human character changed

VIRGINIA WOOLF, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924)

From a historical perspective, a study of *The Good Soldier* is extraordinarily alluring. Although the action of the story takes place from 1899 until some unspecified time around 1916, Ford began writing the novel in late 1913 and sent it to his publisher in August 1914. He had no idea upon finishing this novel that its completion would coincide with the catastrophe of civilization we now call World War I. Consequently, Ford's work provides an almost unparalleled snapshot into the brief period that we now call the Edwardian Era. In *The Good Soldier*, Ford paints a picture of Edwardian cosmopolitanism and, in *Parade's End*, he presents a world gone awry. *Parade's End* has equal historical appeal. One of the first post-war novels, it also provides a myopic retrospective on the Edwardian Era and a bird's-eye view of England at war.

In both works, as in *The Spirit of the People*, Ford attempted to "produce an image of the world he has lived in," which he hoped would lead to "the awakening of thought, the promotion of discussion" (*Spirit* 232-33). In both works, he reveals his concerns about a male identity predicated on the model of patriarchal imperialism—a model Ford viewed as unsustainable. Much later, Butler and others developed a theory to explain why this model was so successful in gendering the Englishman and to imagine the impact of its unsustainability. Ford was far more tentative in diagnosing and rendering a prognosis on women's issues. However, he anticipates Foucault's theory of the emergence of sexuality by portraying women grasping and avoiding, succeeding and failing in their quest for knowledge and power. At least Ford allows Christopher to envision the possibility that women can build a sustainable model: "Perhaps the future of the world then was to women? Why not?" (*SDN* 160). Ford also provides a more optimistic view of humanity's prospects in *Parade's End* than he offered in *The Good Soldier*, since far fewer of *Parade's End's* characters must face their destiny alone. This more positive outlook is surprising, given how closely *Parade's End* followed the Great War.

The impact of this first "world" war cannot be overstated. The Great War changed everything. The era left the novelist—indeed all of civilization—unable "to rely upon truth as viewed in terms of the conventions and assumptions of a stable civilization" (Baugh 1550). The Great War changed how people viewed progress; it changed language, as people struggled to speak of the unspeakable; it changed the arts, as artists, novelists, playwrights, and poets fought to imagine the unimaginable. English people who were impacted by the war—that is, all English people—thereafter spoke of their world as one of before-the-war and after-the-war. Yet, in retrospect, we can recognize that most of the "profound, rapid, and bewildering" changes of the

early twentieth century were well under way before the first shots of the war were fired (Hawkes 42). Technology changed how people communicated, moved from place to place, and performed their daily tasks. Class boundaries and gender roles were "precariously poised on the edge of irrevocable change" (44). The idealistic, fixed values and conventions of the Victorian world were being swept aside by those that were pliable and pragmatic. It is no wonder that it appeared that human character was changing.

How perceptive of Virginia Woolf to recognize that change was taking place even before the Great War. How brave of her to make the "sweeping" assertion that the change took place "on or about December, 1910" (4). How wise of her to realize that the change resulted in a shift in "all human relations" (5). In *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, Ford helps readers to identify the chaotic changes of the extended Edwardian era and observe characters trying to make sense of the changes and incorporate them into their lives. In Ford's novels, human character remains the same. His characters do what humans have always done. They struggle to evolve and either fail or succeed in building a life that incorporates the reality they face.

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