

Teesside University, School of Arts and Media  
English Research Seminar

# “We must go methodically into this!”: *Parade’s End* and the Impossibility of Narrating War’

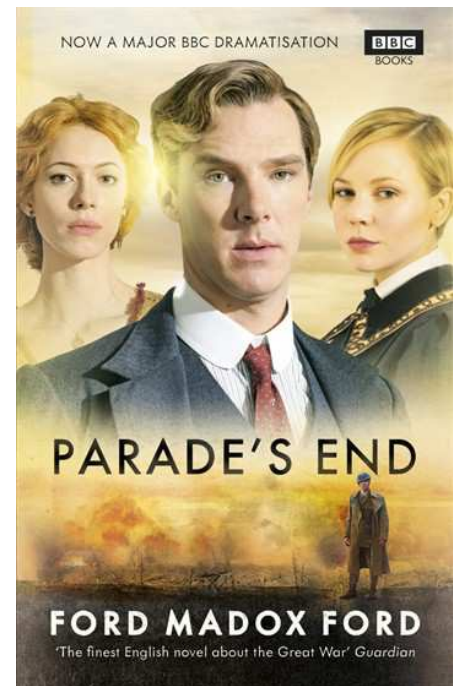
**Dr Rob Hawkes**

(Teesside University and Leeds Trinity University)

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

4.30-5.30pm (M5.03)

Ford Madox Ford’s tetralogy of First World War novels *Parade’s End* persistently addresses the problem of shaping the seemingly incomprehensible experience of the trenches into a coherent narrative. Indeed, as this paper will demonstrate, Ford’s novel sequence dramatises the narrative instability brought about by the war in and through a narrative which itself undergoes a process of destabilisation. Beginning within a conventionally omniscient perspective, the text gradually turns towards radically restricted subjective points of view. Meanwhile, war changes the protagonist Christopher Tietjens from an all-knowing Tory gentleman to an uncertain and shell-shocked soldier who can no longer maintain his capacity to narrate.



**Dr Rob Hawkes** is a Part-Time Lecturer in English Studies at Teesside University and a Visiting Lecturer in English at Leeds Trinity University. He is the author of *Ford Madox Ford and the Misfit Moderns: Edwardian Fiction and the First World War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and co-editor of *Ford Madox Ford: An Introduction* (Ashgate, forthcoming). Rob is a member of the Executive Committee of the Ford Madox Ford Society and is the Society’s Publicity Officer. In September 2012 he co-organised a major international conference on Ford’s *Parade’s End*, which has recently been republished in a four-volume critical edition by Carcanet Press and been adapted for television by Sir Tom Stoppard.