

**‘THIS BATTLE WAS NOT OVER’:
PARADE’S END AS A TRANSITIONAL TEXT IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ‘DISENCHANTED’
FIRST WORLD WAR LITERATURE**

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Ford Madox Ford’s *Parade’s End* tetralogy belongs to a post-war discursive field in which wartime experiences were being explored and reviewed, in a process of transition towards a negative recasting of the conflict.¹ It introduces themes of time, memory, and psychology, which would later be more forcefully expressed in the better-known prose responses to the war such as Robert Graves’s *Goodbye to All That*, Richard Aldington’s *Death of a Hero*, and Frederic Manning’s *Her Privates We*. While *Parade’s End* is often discussed together with these, I argue that there is a traceable genealogy of the emergence of ‘disenchanted’ literature about the conflict. The pushing of what Hans Robert Jauss describes as the ‘horizon of expectations’ of the readership helped facilitate the positive popular reception of the more critical novels of 1929-30, and the acceptance of Ford’s tetralogy by a moderately-sized but influential literary audience helped create a literary climate in which later authors could produce their vitriolic criticism. These works were then published into an atmosphere of widespread social, cultural, and political unrest, the nineteen-twenties bringing frequent changes of government in the UK and the General Strike of 1926, the creation of the League of Nations and of the Turkish republic, the rise of Italian Fascism, and the threat of financial depression. Such factors helped create a readership increasingly willing to receive negative literature, particularly that which traced past events as influential in shaping, or even as responsible for, present poor conditions.

Ford was quick to see the start of the war as a critical point of rupture from the past. The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 ended a reign which, Christopher Clausen asserts, ‘had come to be associated with an unshakeable stability, if only because most of her subjects throughout the British Empire, then at its peak, could remember no

other monarch'. He goes on to suggest that her death created a 'sense of unease about the future'.² This tension becomes apparent as the start of the First World War approaches, and aspects of modernism and related movements show a desire for truly new forms of writing and expression.³ The first part of Ford's *The Good Soldier* was serialised in Wyndham Lewis's avant-garde journal *Blast* before the start of the war – perhaps a surprising inclusion in that most modern of periodicals. The novel's second part, though, immediately takes account of the starting date of the conflict; the 4th of August is mentioned five times in the first paragraph. John Dowell, the narrator, tells us following the death of his wife Florence, that:

[T]he thought that Mr Bagshawe would almost certainly reveal to me that he had caught her coming out of Jimmy's bedroom at five o'clock in the morning on the 4th of August, 1900 – that was the determining influence in her suicide. And no doubt the effect of the date was too much for her superstitious personality. She had been born on the 4th of August; she had started to go round the world on the 4th of August; she had become a low fellow's mistress on the 4th of August. On the same day of the year she had married me; on that 4th she had lost Edward's love, and Bagshawe had appeared like a sinister omen – like a grin on the face of Fate. It was the last straw.⁴

Florence's persistent adultery, under the smokescreen of supposed physical frailty, is the catalyst for the disintegration of the settled life of both the Dowells and the Ashburnhams, and this succession of significant events comes to an end with her suicide on 4 August 1913. Her death on this date eerily foreshadows the millions of deaths, and tens of millions of casualties, which would occur as a result of events which began on the same date a year later. Ford was one of the earliest writers to appreciate the likely effect of the conflict, and he also expressed in his writing the disjunction between wartime and pre-war values.

Following the conflict, there was a need for the reading public to see the war as a necessary, justifiable and honourable conflict. There was little appetite for works from writers who had come back from the war shell-shocked and disturbed by what they had seen and experienced. Popular works usually took the form of regimental histories and officers' reminiscences, which were necessarily sanitised as a result of their official nature. Novels in the immediate post-war years usually attempted a justification for the death in action of the youthful protagonist. Ernest Raymond's *Tell England* (1922) is ostensibly a tragic novel, as its hero Rupert Ray dies in the ill-

managed charge at Gallipoli, the only son of a widowed mother. Raymond presents the action, though, in a language which is informed by writing such as Henry Newbolt's pre-war novels and poetry embodying the 'public school spirit', and the post-war Bulldog Drummond stories by 'Sapper' (H. C. McNeile).⁵ Rupert Ray's military grandfather is held up as a hero, and Rupert's school experience consists of enduring what seems unfair treatment on the part of the school authorities. However, his fortitude creates an heroic image of him through bravery and sporting endeavour. His resolve is strengthened for the hardships he will endure in the army, and it builds in him 'the spirit that made England great!'⁶ The enemies are broadly sketched caricatures such as 'Johnny Turk' (308) and 'Asiatic Annie' (311). Rupert tells of 'a certain exaltation in me' (318) at the prospect of going over the top to take part in 'the glorious bombardment' (319), ahead of his death on the Turkish front. The narrator neatly summarises the spirit of these books in his closing chapter, commenting: 'I see a death in No Man's Land tomorrow as a wonderful thing' (319). This attitude is a hangover from previous conflicts before the advent of mechanised defensive war and the literature arising from these, when, as David Cannadine points out, 'death on the battlefield was seen as something noble, heroic, splendid, romantic – and *unlikely*'.⁷ Similar novels such as A. S. M. Hutchinson's *If Winter Comes* (1921) ran to as many as thirty editions in the first year. The need to memorialise was ongoing. It was emphasised by the erection of monuments in every town and village in the country, and this continual commemoration made justification of the deaths, represented in – often literally – concrete form, crucial to the bereaved families who made up a large part of the population.⁸

The Rise of Disenchantment

The publication of novels and other books criticising the war increased gradually throughout the course of the 1920s. Those highly critical novels and memoirs which are usually remembered from the 1929-30 'war books boom' could not have been published without a number of transitional texts appearing throughout the course of the preceding decade following the conflict. C. E. Montague's *Disenchantment* (1922) was an early work to provide a marked contrast to the saccharine sentimentalism of *Tell England* – the two were, in fact, published in the same month. It saw the start of a shift in attitude away from the spirit of heroic tragedy espoused by Raymond, to a more

sober consideration of the ‘realities of war’ (to borrow the title of Philip Gibbs’s 1919 account of his role in the conflict). Montague was influential as a noted *Guardian* journalist and leader writer, whose prose style was saluted by many of his peers; Shaw, Bennett, and Wells all wrote to congratulate Montague on his work in *Disenchantment*.⁹ The prolix, rather oblique nature of Montague’s prose limited the wider impact of the work, but facilitated the publication of a relatively critical message at a time when writing such as Raymond’s still dominated the mass market. Jauss, in his model of reception theory, suggests that:

a literary work with an unfamiliar aesthetic form can break through the expectations of its readers and at the same time confront them with a question, the solution to which remains lacking for them in the religiously or officially sanctioned morals.¹⁰

The ‘officially sanctioned morals’, steeped in religious narrative, of *Tell England* and other similar novels, are challenged in an unfamiliar aesthetic form on several fronts. Montague’s prose style is a factor, as is the unclear genre situation of the work. It is divided into chapters in the manner of an essay collection, though it follows a chronological progression; despite the chronological progression, there is no sense of ‘plot’; perhaps therefore best likened to memoir, *Disenchantment* is neither explicitly factual nor fictional. The wilful obscurity of this unfamiliar form facilitates the presentation of material which starts to pose a series of uncomfortable questions about wartime experience and conduct.

Montague’s initial description of disenchantment illustrates this dissonance between formal verbosity and uncertainty, and questioning subject matter, in a typically measured and elaborate passage from his first chapter, ‘The Vision’:

The higher the wall or the horse from which you have tumbled, the larger, under Nature’s iron law, are your bruises and consequent crossness likely to be. Before we try shaking or cuffing the disenraptured young Solomons in our magazines and our pits it would be humane to reflect that some five millions of these, in their turns, have fallen off an extremely high horse. Of course, we have all fallen off something since 1914.¹¹

The polysyllabic lyricism of this quotation provides a marked contrast to the stark prose on the war which would appear at the end of the decade, with which *Disenchantment* is usually inaccurately grouped. It

is based largely on leaders he wrote for the *Guardian* in the years following the war meaning that, already under a generous cloaking of stylistic obscurity, his point of view came into the public domain over a lengthy period. Montague was a much older man than all of the later writers; he had already finished his degree and established himself on the *Guardian* by the time Aldington, the youngest of the 1929-30 writers, was born.¹² Even Ford, old in terms of military service during the war, was over three years younger than Montague. They were both, though, part of the pre-war establishment, respected writers, critics, and thinkers before August 1914. This made it easier for them to find a market for their thoughts, but also as long-standing professional writers they were experienced enough to moderate their comments in order to achieve publication.

Ford in Transition

The immediate post-war period was a time of personal as well as literary transition for Ford. He found life particularly difficult following demobilization. His wartime experience had left him shell-shocked; he had been blown high in the air, which left him with 'a damaged mouth and loosened teeth.'¹³ As Max Saunders comments, 'so devastating and disrupting an experience takes time to assimilate, master, and reconstruct' (Saunders, Vol. 2, 196). Ford needed to write to be able to provide himself with an income, but the act of readjustment was problematic and left him in creative difficulty. This was exacerbated by the apparent lack of a market for his writings about the war, which would remain unpublished until the climate for their reception had become less hostile. He composed, or part-composed, several works about the war in the immediate post-war period. 'True Love & a G.C.M.' was started even before the war finished in September 1918, in response to a request from Martin Secker for a new novel; the completed section would remain unpublished until 1999.¹⁴ A novel, 'Mr. Croyd', was completed in 1920, probably offered to and rejected by John Lane at the time. Ford would also approach the Viking Press in the USA with the same material in the late 1920s, and he eventually obtained an advance for it from Stanley Unwin as he was dying in 1939.¹⁵ He persistently found it difficult to represent the war in a first-person autobiographical account. *Thus to Revisit* (1921) mentions the war, yet pointedly reveals nothing of Ford's own experience; of his later memoirs, *Return to Yesterday* (1931) closes with the news of war breaking out,

and *It Was the Nightingale* (1933) recommences the story with his leaving the army in 1919. Despite this, or perhaps because of the difficulties Ford had in making the transition back to life in peace time, there is a significant part of his oeuvre which discusses the impact of the war. The most personal of his war writings, *No Enemy*, was published only in the USA, where its appearance just three weeks after the Wall Street Crash of 1929 hindered its sales dramatically.¹⁶ Most importantly, though, the four novels which form the *Parade's End* tetralogy appeared between 1924 and 1928, appearing significantly early in the move towards a critical revisioning of the conflict.

No Enemy problematises this series of failed attempts at autobiography, as several sections are written in the first person. However, the reviewer for the *Boston Evening Transcript* attested to the 'difficulties in classifying it', noting that 'It is indeed a sort of autobiography ... But autobiography with such a difference . . . This long rambling, backwards and forwards essay on the war, at all times richly imaginative, at no time gross, is set in a framework of idyllic fantasy'.¹⁷ Paul Skinner adds to this ambivalent genre classification, suggesting in his introduction to the recent first UK edition (2002) that Ford 'was an inveterate autobiographer, and became more so, [though] his autobiographies have an unsettling way of reading like novels'.¹⁸ *No Enemy* does not fit even within this revised model of ambivalence towards truth in reminiscence; it is a descriptive, partially fictionalized, memoir of experience, with the two primary characters of Gringoire and the Compiler offering further distance from the material presented within their narrative. It explicitly sets its agenda as a story set 'just after... Armageddon', telling of 'the painful processes of Reconstruction' (*NE* 7), setting itself apart from the still very military fiction which was appearing post-armistice, such as trial by trench ordeal and goading of the protagonist of William J. Locke's *The Rough Road* (1919). Ford's 'tale of Reconstruction' takes a similar form to *Disenchantment*, retaining a consciously literary and poetic voice, and divided into short sections, also including a short essay in French to get away from 'the beastly colloquial English' (*NE* 144). The desire to move on swiftly from wartime experience is represented in an aesthetic drive behind the work, particularly manifested in the importance attached to the death of Gaudier-Brzeska who 'had genius, and [...] died a hero' (*NE* 105), which made Gringoire 'want to kill certain people [...] for the sake of Gaudier and those few who are like him' (*NE* 110). The setting down of *No Enemy* sees a return to this

sphere of the aesthetic from which Gaudier's death had divorced Gringoire. By contrast with later war novels, though, 'as far as the Army was concerned, Gringoire said he never had one single moment's cause for bitterness' (NE 34). The combination of the highly poetic and aestheticised form and the inclusion of a section in French provide an even more acutely unfamiliar form than that of *Disenchantment*, and similarly conceal the periodic cutting comment offered. In Ford's case, the obliquity of his observation was enough to prevent him finding a publisher for *No Enemy* until the war books boom was in full flight, riding on the crest of the successes of Remarque's *Im Westen Nichts Neues*, and Sherriff's *Journey's End*; his depiction of similar events in a more conventionally recognizable novel form would find much more success over the middle years of the decade.

Parade's End adapts a superficially typical and traditional Edwardian family saga form to a modernist style, dealing only with the protagonist's generation and demonstrating an engagement with the burgeoning field of psychology. Ford, for all his links with modernism, was a product of Victorian art and writing with well-known links to the pre-Raphaelites. He was first published in 1891, only a year after Montague joined the *Guardian* staff. A jobbing writer, in contrast to the security of Montague's staff position, Ford was more in touch with younger writers and gave many their first publication in the *English Review*. This exposure to new writing, and new forms of writing, sharpened his style from the historical romances of the *Fifth Queen* trilogy (1906-08), through the experimentation of *A Call* (1910), to the more succinct prose style of *The Good Soldier*. Arthur Mizener emphasises the break with previous forms and previous lives when he describes the plot of *Parade's End* as: 'The slow, tortured process by which Christopher becomes consciously aware that the conventional life of Edwardian society no longer embodies the principles that it professes and that he has tried with such heroic literalness to live by'.¹⁹ The composition of the Tietjens novels was inspired by the death of Proust on 18 November 1922, the day Ford and Stella Bowen were scheduled to meet him.²⁰ Ford's interest in Proust's writing meant that themes of memory, psychology, and time became the focal points of his writing, as in many of the later novels responding to the war.

The desire to recapture a previous halcyon age provides a counterpoint to the simultaneous need to escape the war and its

aftermath in *Parade's End*, and Tietjens repeatedly affirms his preference for the government, traditions, and morals of the eighteenth century. He asserts to General Champion his veneration of 'the eighteenth-century traditions for soldiers' (*MCSU* 667), and his politics are characterized as Tory, in contrast to Macmaster, 'a Whig by conviction, by nation, by temperament' (*SDN* 57). Pre-war existence is not automatically made nostalgic, and Edwardian society in fact provides a set of values against which characters react throughout the course of the tetralogy. We see Tietjens and Macmaster as the proponents of imperial values, their masculine power emphasized as two men of the 'English public official class' who 'administered the world' (*SDN* 3). Stereotypical ideals of peacetime Englishness such as the railways, the Times, and the Government are invoked, though they can never live up to the lost rural ideal of eighteenth-century life, for Tietjens the paradigm of England and Englishness at its best.

Christopher's position as an ideal Englishman is manifested in a profoundly religious way, with Sylvia accusing him of wanting 'to play the part of Jesus Christ' (*NMP* 379); he is even referred to as 'God-Tietjens' (*NMP* 356). Mark Tietjens recalls this view being reinforced by General Champion, Christopher's godfather and Commanding Officer:

[H]e believed – he positively believed, with shudders – that Christopher desired to live in the spirit of Christ [. . .] He doubted, however, whether Christ would have refused to manage Groby had it been his job. Christ was a sort of an Englishman and Englishmen did not as a rule refuse to do their jobs . . . They had not used to; now no doubt they did. (*LP* 741)

Tietjens certainly has strongly Christ-like characteristics, though there is no indication that it is his intention to provoke this comparison. More pertinently, both Christopher and Christ are posited as perfect Englishmen, the latter depiction of which is rooted in the ideals of Empire, and that of the Englishman as omnipotent. General Champion represents the conventional view that 'the prospect of widening the bounds of the British Empire could not be contemptuously dismissed at the price of rather sentimental dishonour' (*NMP* 466). These traditional values are gradually eroded over the course of the tetralogy, as Tietjens distances himself from the official Englishness of his previous Government role. His increasing isolation echoes that of the UK on the international stage, and also the gradual movement away from the ideals of Empire.²¹ Tietjens says, indeed, 'Damn the Empire!

It was England! [. . .] What did we want with an Empire!' (*MCSU* 591). His distaste for the Empire derives from the isolation of the returning combatants within England on their return, a feeling that the England they returned to was a lesser reality than the ideal for which they had fought. More particularly, the post-war reality was less than had been promised by Lloyd George in his famous 'country fit for heroes' speech.²² By the end of the *Parade's End* tetralogy, there is a marked contrast between the ideals of Tietjens and the degraded modern world in which established English families have to sell English antiques to the new world to earn a living, and American tenants occupy their residences.

The *Parade's End* tetralogy introduces themes of memory and psychology to the post-war discourse on the conflict. *Some Do Not . . .* demonstrates the importance of memory as both subject matter and method of transmission. The combatants need to remember their pre-war lives, conditions, and relationships to sustain their morale during the conflict. The image of the combatants in their pre-war state was maintained for their civilian relatives and correspondents as the realities of war were censored to minimise reporting of conditions in the front lines on the home front. Ford pursues the severity of the effect of wartime experiences on memory to its logical extreme. We are told initially that Christopher Tietjens is 'a perfect encyclopaedia of exact material knowledge' (*SDN* 5). His service in France leaves him shell-shocked, and his knowledge base is consequently eroded. Soon he is telling his wife Sylvia, during an argument, that 'I've got as far as K in my reading of the Encyclopaedia Britannica every afternoon at Mrs. Wannop's' (*SDN* 170). Although his mind is bereft of factual information, he retains his speed of thought, and we are told via Mrs Wannop that 'Once provided with facts his mind worked out sound Tory conclusions – of quite startling and attractive theories – with extreme rapidity' (*SDN* 241). He retains his innate intelligence; but Tietjens no longer 'knows' the world, and is having to re-establish his own knowledge, and adapt to his own changed position in the social world. Ford represents the recreation of memory as a physical action to show its importance to Tietjens; he demonstrates that innate intelligence cannot be dulled by lack of recalled detail. Tietjens explicitly states, when asked by Sylvia what exactly is wrong with his brain, that 'a great portion of it, in the shape of memory, has gone' (*SDN* 168). This reflects Ford's need to understand war as a break which had to be explained. The sudden loss of concrete knowledge

also chimes with developments which were being made in science at the time, with the whole structure of empirical knowledge and models of understanding for the universe destabilised as a result of the revolutionary theories and discoveries of scientists such as Rutherford and Einstein.²³

The growing inability of Tietjens to remember mirrors the distancing from the war which took place in the years following the conflict. The struggle to remember in the later parts of the tetralogy is rendered in terms of involuntary memory and connecting impressions. Tietjens' efforts to remember his pre-war affection for Valentine, even to remember her at all, are a disjointed series of images, or even a 'heap of broken images', as Eliot memorably put it.²⁴ In the face of the distractions of the war and leading his unit, his wife's machinations, his financial difficulties, and the growing mass of rumour building up against him, his memory of Valentine becomes increasingly remote. Early in *A Man Could Stand Up* – a semi-conscious reverie brings him a series of images of Whitehall: 'Nice girls with typewriters in well-ventilated offices. Did they still put paper cuffs on to keep their sleeves from ink? He would ask Valen . . . Valen . . . It was warm and still . . . On such a night . . .' (*MCSU* 563). Their importance to each other is clear, but it is hindered by the trauma of the war eroding his memory; shell-shock has led to his having only a vague consciousness of her place in his life. His attempt to remember the August evening before the world changed is disrupted by (perhaps hallucinatory) shouting in German. Tietjens's feelings are almost wholly internalised as a result of the stoicism in the face of danger required by the army, and Gene Moore has posited that 'the outward repression required by [military] regulations results in his becoming mentally more loquacious'.²⁵ The feverish workings of his mind show the depths of his war neurosis, which is exacerbated by the precarious nature of his social and domestic situation.

Objective quantifiable time is fractured in *Parade's End* by the phenomenological experience of constant brutality and horror. Notions of time became important in modernist literature, with *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses* notably taking on a Bergsonian sense of time; similarly, *Last Post* takes place over the course of one summer's afternoon whilst discussing the events of a large part of Mark Tietjens' lifetime. Bergson's philosophy was widely disseminated in English following the publication of translations of his work from 1910 to the beginning of the First World War. Sanford Schwartz suggests that 'his

influence extend[ed] far beyond philosophical circles to artists, scientists, theologians, and, at the peak of its fame, to educated society in general'.²⁶ T. E. Hulme was a significant figure in propagating Bergson's ideas throughout the modernist group, and Shiv Kumar suggests that 'through his various critical essays on Bergson's aesthetics and translation of *Introduction à la métaphysique*, [Hulme] enabled many contemporary poets and novelists to realize in Bergson an articulation of their own awareness of experience as flux'.²⁷ Saunders states that Ford was 'going to the philosopher T. E. Hulme's Tuesday evenings' in 1912-1913, and it is likely in view of these factors that he would have had a working knowledge of the significance of Bergson's work.²⁸ Bergson focuses on the 'complex multiplicities' of the now; the simultaneous multiplicity of duration experienced, and the notion that we can only ever truly experience the present. He writes:

What is duration within us? A qualitative multiplicity, with no likeness to number; an organic evolution which is yet not an increasing quantity; a pure heterogeneity within which there are no distinct qualities. In a word, the moments of inner duration are not external to one another.

What duration is there existing outside us? The present only, or, if we prefer the expression, simultaneity. No doubt external things change, but their moments do not *succeed* one another, if we retain the ordinary meaning of the word, except for a consciousness which keeps them in mind.²⁹

This conception of time contributes to the increasing barrier to the recollections of both Valentine and Christopher. She conceives the duration of the war from a Bergsonian perspective, in which time experienced is a mobile and febrile concept, often seeming far longer than any arbitrary measurement. As the Armistice approaches, Valentine struggles to remember the last time she saw Tietjens:

How many years ago? Two? Not so much! Eighteen months, then? Surely more! . . . surely, surely more! . . . When you thought of Time in those days your mind wavered impotently like eyes tired by reading too much small print. . . . He went out surely in the autumn of . . . No, it had been the first time he went that he went in the autumn. It was her brother's friend, Ted, that went in '16. Or the other . . . (*MCSU 517*)

The sense of the length of the war as an imponderable, with time becoming elongated due to sleep deprivation, exhaustion, and the repetitive nature of life in the trenches, is a key facet of many novels discussing the war, and it is placed in stark contrast to the initially

widely-held belief that the war would be short and violent, but just. The *durée* is an important concept in *Parade's End*, time being a shifting entity moulded by the duration of the war, but also by the influence of the protagonists. As the final hour counts down to the reported Armistice, Tietjens comments that:

The trouble was that *this* battle was not over. By no means over. There would be a hundred and eleven years, nine months, and twenty seven days of it still. . . . No, you could not get the effect of that endless monotony of effort by numbers. Nor yet by saying "Endless monotony of effort."³⁰

The monotony and futility of the conflict is emphasised repeatedly throughout the sequence. The period of time Ford suggests here would equate the First World War with the length of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), appropriately for the seeming length of the conflict. His invocation of this here also harks back to notions of chivalry and honour in warfare, where men fought bravely and heroes were truly heroic – unlike the enigmatic Tietjens, or the ironic hero of Aldington's *Death of a Hero*.

Reception in transition

The individual novels in the *Parade's End* tetralogy were published to a mixed reception, the audience seemingly unsure about the starkly realistic image of war and humanity presented by Ford. The initial notices in England of *Some Do Not . . .* were few, and mixed at best. The review in the *Nation & Athenaeum* described it as 'acutely observing even when grossly misunderstanding'; the reviewer for the *Daily Mail* called it 'one of his cleverest and grimmest studies of mankind'.³¹ Most reviews, however, drew attention to the perceived negative aspects of the novel. The *Daily Telegraph* suggested that it was 'marred by [its] coarseness' and the *Daily Express* reviewer asserted that it was 'unnecessarily full of crude profanity of the type loved by pseudo-realists'; although the *Times Literary Supplement* described it in summary as 'a novel of unusual power and art', the reviewer asserted that 'it is ingenious, but by no means easy for the reader'.³² The mixed response continued as the following volumes appeared. The *Guardian* review of *No More Parades* offers the first wholly positive response, stating that Ford 'justifies himself' in 'an amazingly good, an heroic book', though the *Observer* reviewer wrote that 'one lays down "No More Parades" not once, but many times in the course of reading – revolted, exhausted, sick, beaten'.³³ By the

time *Last Post* was published, Gerald Gould in the *Observer* was reconsidering the response to previous volumes of the tetralogy, and indeed criticizing the move away from the subject matter of war:

In preceding volumes of this series he gave us memorable glimpses of the nightmare quality of war. There, he was at his best. But in the new volume the war is left behind, and we are concerned with incidents essentially too commonplace to merit the treatment they receive. The escape from commonplace is not to the intense, but merely to the grotesque.³⁴

These responses demonstrate a diminishing resistance to the depictions of realism which would come to be the defining characteristic of the later novels about the war. Gould's comment on *Last Post* shows that this distaste for the realistic portrayal of warfare receded throughout the course of the decade, emphasizing the importance of Ford's position in the response to the conflict. Alan Judd points out a crucial difference between Ford and many of the later writers:

The canon of Great War literature [. . .] is deservedly appreciated now but most of it was written by men for whom the war was their first, great and sometimes only subject. Perhaps if Ford had had no reputation at all his war poetry and subsequent novels might have become as well known as others. It may have been that very reputation, the fact that he was a literary figure, not new and more than slightly soiled, that meant that people did not look for anything new in what he wrote.³⁵

The *Parade's End* novels received a strong reception from the literary audience, and particularly the early volumes. L. P. Hartley described *Some Do Not . . .* as 'moving and organic', and comments that 'We find it hard to believe that the War and the years before the War produced the colours and patterns Mr. Ford's kaleidoscope gives them; that they were as wicked or as witty or as wrong-headed'.³⁶ He later perceptively described *A Man Could Stand Up* – in terms of 'the discreteness of human consciousness', suggesting that 'applied to the war, it imparts the right febrile atmosphere'.³⁷ Hugh Walpole, also a hugely popular author at the time, described *No More Parades* as 'the most remarkable picture of our Army in France that fiction has yet given us'.³⁸ Other influential figures such as Cyril Connolly and Rachel Annand Taylor both praised the earlier volumes of the tetralogy and their 'magnificent war-passages' in the act of critically reviewing *Last Post*, Connolly asserting that it 'suffers from being so

hopelessly a sequel'.³⁹ Ford was also well known to other writers of the modernist circle such as Aldington, who had been his secretary around the beginning of the war; his extensive connections meant that his name and work were widely disseminated among the literary network.

The publication of the *Parade's End* tetralogy helps move the post-war discursive field towards a more critical standpoint, facilitating the later acceptance of more vitriolic criticism. It also introduces into the discourse of the First World War formal attributes which became recognised as a part of later, more popular, novels. The tetralogy is innovative both stylistically and in terms of content, following on from Montague thematically, but also taking formal ideas from Joyce, Proust, and Woolf. Although *Parade's End* was by no means a runaway success commercially, its reasonable sales figures over a period of around five years, and its influential readership, helped introduce the disenchantment of combatants to a wider audience.⁴⁰ Its more starkly realistic ideas about war, sex, and religion help to push back the 'horizon of expectations' of the reader, making Ford an important transitional figure in terms of writing the First World War.

NOTES

- 1 Quotations are from Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002. Page numbers are given in parentheses in the body of the text with the abbreviation for the volume title.
- 2 Both quotations from Christopher Clausen, 'The Great Queen Died', *The American Scholar*, 70:1 (Winter 2001), pp. 41-49, p. 42.
- 3 For more on Ford and modernism, see Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the Novel and the Great War*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002; and *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies, 2, ed. Max Saunders and Robert Hampson, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003.
- 4 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, ed. Martin Stannard, New York: Norton, 1995, p. 82. See also p. 57, the start of Part II.
- 5 See, for example, J. S. Bratton, 'Of England, home and duty: The Image of England in Victorian and Edwardian Juvenile Fiction', *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. John M. Mackenzie, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986, pp. 73-93 (pp. 73-75). Studies of the 'Public School Spirit' are available in works such as Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public-School Ethos*,

- London: Constable, 1987; J. R. de S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Public School*, London: Millington, 1977; and J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000.
- 6 Ernest Raymond, *Tell England: A Study in a Generation* (1922), London: Cassell, 1928, p. 267. Future references are given in parentheses within the body of the text.
 - 7 David Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. Joachim Whaley, London: Europa, 1981, pp. 187-242 (p. 196).
 - 8 Both Jay Winter and Dan Todman offer comprehensive analyses of the role of war memorials in shaping the response to the conflict in the 1920s. See Jay Winter, 'War memorials and the mourning process', *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 78-116; Dan Todman, 'Death', *The Great War: Myth and Memory*, London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005, pp. 43-72.
 - 9 See the letters received following the publication of *Disenchantment* held by the John Rylands University Library of Manchester in the C. E. Montague archive, CEM/2/2/2. Bennett, H. M. Tomlinson, Shaw, Henry Nevinson, Philip Gibbs, and H. G. Wells are among those who offer their congratulations and admiration. Though I use its modern-day title, the newspaper was at the time known as the *Manchester Guardian*.
 - 10 Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, Brighton: Harvester, 1982, p. 44.
 - 11 C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (1922), London: Chatto & Windus, 1924, p. 2. The title 'The Vision' echoes the title of the first chapter of Henri Barbusse's 1916 novel *Le Feu* (translated into English in 1917 as *Under Fire*), which was highly critical of the conflict even as it was taking place.
 - 12 See Oliver Elton, *C. E. Montague: A Memoir*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1929, for biographical details.
 - 13 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 2 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996 – henceforth 'Saunders'; Vol. 2, p. 2.
 - 14 Saunders, Vol. 2, 47. 'True Love & a G.C.M.' was published finally in *War Prose*, pp. 77-139.
 - 15 Saunders, Vol. 2, 96; Ford to Eric Pinker, 11 September 1929, *LF*, p. 188.
 - 16 Ford to Isidor Schneider, 14 September 1929, *LF*, p. 189. Isidor Schneider was the editor of Macaulay, who published *No Enemy*. References are to *No Enemy*, ed. Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet, 2002 – henceforth *NE*.
 - 17 Review of *NE*, *Boston Evening Transcript* (2 December 1929), 2. See David D. Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford: 1873-1939: A Bibliography of Works and Criticism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962 – henceforth 'Harvey'; p. 384.
 - 18 *NE* xi.
 - 19 Arthur C. Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford*, London: The Bodley Head, 1972, p. 499.
 - 20 Saunders, Vol. 2, 125-6.
 - 21 See Paul W. Doerr, *British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, p.6 on Britain's traditionally habitual avoidance of alliances.

- 22 Lloyd George's famous speech was given in Wolverhampton on 23 November 1918, and was reported in most newspapers one or two days later. See, for example, *The Times* of 25 November 1918.
- 23 See Michael Whitworth's *Einstein's Wake: Relativity, Metaphor, and Modernist Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, for a fascinating account of the influence of the impact of the changing world of science on literature of the period.
- 24 T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land, Collected Poems 1909-1962*, London: Faber and Faber, 1974, pp. 61-86, l. 22.
- 25 Gene M. Moore, 'The Tory in a Time of Change: Social Aspects of Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 28:1 (Spring 1982), pp. 49-69 (p. 59).
- 26 Sanford Schwartz, 'Bergson and the politics of vitalism', from *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, eds. Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 277-305 (p. 277).
- 27 Shiv K. Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (1963), Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979, p. 12.
- 28 Saunders, Vol. 2, 368.
- 29 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. F. L. Pogson (1910), Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001, p. 227. The italics are Bergson's.
- 30 MCSU 550. Dowell also mentions 'how the poor dressed in 1337' as a conversational topic for Florence in *The Good Soldier*, p. 20. Ford perhaps saw the Hundred Years War as an arduous clash of the English and French civilisations, whose writing styles he was considered to bridge.
- 31 Unsigned review, *Nation & Athenaeum* (24 May 1924), in *Ford Madox Ford: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Frank MacShane, London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 89; 'New Books', *Daily Mail* (25 April 1924), 5.
- 32 Unsigned review, 'New Novels', *Daily Telegraph* (29 April 1924), 4; unsigned review, 'Among the Books: Pseudo-Realism', *Daily Express* (3 May 1924), 5; unsigned review, *Times Literary Supplement* (24 April 1924), 252.
- 33 Unsigned review, 'New Novels: The Gentleman at War', *Manchester Guardian* (9 October 1925), 9; 'Books of the Day: Realism of the Spirit', *Observer* (11 October 1925), 4.
- 34 Gerald Gould, 'New Novels: Methods and Madness', *Observer* (5 February 1928), 8.
- 35 Alan Judd, *Ford Madox Ford*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990, p. 308.
- 36 L. P. Hartley, 'An Elusive Allegory', *Spectator*, 132 (3 May 1924), 720.
- 37 L. P. Hartley, Review of *A Man Could Stand Up--*, *Saturday Review*, 142 (13 November 1926), 592. See Harvey, p. 368.
- 38 Hugh Walpole, 'The Novels of 1925', *John O'London's Weekly* (5 Dec 1925), 373-374 (p. 374).
- 39 Rachel A. Taylor, Review of *Last Post*, *Spectator*, 140 (4 February 1928), 168; Cyril Connolly, Review of *Last Post*, *New Statesman*, 30 (4 February 1928), 533. See Harvey, p. 376.
- 40 For sales figures see, for example, Saunders, Vol. 2, 289.