

Andrew Frayn

14 Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End* (tetralogy, 1924–1928)

Abstract: A key figure in the modernist network, Ford published new writers as the editor of two important journals, *The English Review* (1908–1910) and the *transatlantic review* (1924) (Wulfman 2009; Gasiorek 2012). Older than the modernist “jeunes,” who both appreciated him and held him in mostly good-natured contempt, Ford’s writing is on the cusp of the Victorian and the modern. His great post-war novel tetralogy *Parade's End* (1924–1928) combines the historical sweep of the then-fashionable family saga with modernist narrative techniques. The four volumes are *Some Do Not...* (1924), which takes us from 1912 to war’s midst; *No More Parades* (1925), which deals with front line experience; *A Man Could Stand Up-* (1926), which culminates in the Armistice; and *Last Post* (1928), which looks to the future. The tetralogy follows several narrators, but the most prominent of these is Christopher Tietjens, the youngest son of an aristocratic Yorkshire family who tries to resist the depredations of the modern world by a masochistic devotion to his eighteenth-century moral code (Haslam 2014; Radford 2002). The importance of revitalising hierarchical and leadership structures is present in romantic relationships with his wife, Sylvia, a modern society woman who is beautiful but malicious and cruel, and Valentine Wannop, the daughter of a declined county family who is athletic, politically progressive, and by the end of the tetralogy is Tietjens’s partner and carrying his child.

Key Terms: Class, family saga, bureaucracy, gender, relationships

1 Context

Ford (1873–1939) had written about social and political issues before the First World War. In the *England and the English* trilogy (1905–1907), an internationalist assessment of his country, its people, and its position in the modern world, Ford imagines an Englishman wrestling with the history of invasion and foreign rule: “he will say: ‘All these fellows are “ourselves.” We, being English, have swallowed them up. We have digested them. It is, as it were, true that they conquered us; but they conquered us not because they were foreigners, but because they were pre-destined to become Englishmen”’ (Ford 1907, 32). The mental gymnastics used to justify imperialism are remarkable. Ford’s first major creative success was *The Fifth Queen* trilogy (1906–1908). A highly fictionalised account of the tumultuous marriage between King Henry VIII of England and Catherine Howard, the novel also addresses contemporary issues via the distancing mechanism of history. Ford returned to these themes after the war.

Ford was conscious of the need to participate in the war effort because of his Anglo-German ancestry (Berberich 2015, 177). Born Ford Hermann Hueffer, but writing as Ford Madox Hueffer from 1900 in appreciation of his maternal grandfather, the painter Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893), he retained his Germanic surname until June 1919. Ford wrote to several friends giving the official date of the change as 28 June 1919; the chance to align his change of identity with the signing of the peace treaty, another legal form of closure, was too good to resist (Saunders 1996, I, 1–4; Ludwig 1965, 93). Ford enjoyed telling tall tales, and never let the facts get in the way of a good story.

The importance of the war was quickly evident to Ford, and 4 August became totemic for him. The composition and publication of *The Good Soldier* (1915), his novel of two marriages connected by infidelity and narrated by the self-consciously unreliable John Dowell, straddled the beginning of the war. The first part appeared in the Vorticist journal *Blast!* in June 1914. In the second part, 4 August becomes pivotal. On that date Florence Dowell is born, sets out to travel, twice commits adultery, marries, and commits suicide. Critics differ on whether the use of this date was deliberate, but the coincidence seems unlikely (Gordon 1964; Preece 2015). The date remained significant in Ford's later work: it is a plot catalyst in *The Marsden Case* (1923), the end point of the memoir *Return to Yesterday* (1931), and linked with the death of Christianity in the cultural criticism of *Providence: From Minstrels to the Machine* (2009 [1935], 297). Ford also linked Germany with recovery from his 1904 nervous breakdown, which heightened his sense of the political tension.

Ford's most significant wartime creative work was his poem "Antwerp" (1915). It was praised by T.S. Eliot as "the only good poem I have met with on the subject of the war" (1917, 151; Chantler 2010), and collected in *On Heaven: Poems Written on Active Service* (1918), with a characteristically engaging authorial preface. He also wrote several interesting wartime short stories, notably the blackly satirical "The Scaremonger," inspired by Ford's conflict with the patriotic Edward Heron-Allen over his German ancestry (Secor and Secor 1983, 24; Saunders 1996, I, 473–474). The volume of *War Prose* (1999) is invaluable, and includes short stories and previously unpublished texts that are still to receive extensive comment.

Before the first year of the war was over Ford was writing propaganda; his earlier view of "those licensed murderers that are soldiery" no longer seemed tenable (Ford 1907, 3). His friend C.F.G. Masterman was in charge of Wellington House, the location of the unit formed to deal with this newly-systematised form of warfare. *Between St Dennis and St George* and *When Blood is Their Argument* (both 1915) take their titles from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, famous for its rousing scenes at Agincourt but also the tale of a beleaguered and disease-ridden army in France. Ford ensures that his own German ancestry is less culpable: having outlined his "deep hatred of Prussianism," Ford saw that his "father's South German Catholic origin left me in a position [...] of being able to regard at any rate South Germans as ordinary human beings" (Ford 1915, vii–viii). Ford's propaganda shares many characteristics with his other literary writing (Wollaeger 2006; Haslam 2007). He observed

war's impact on civilians in his collaborative volume with his partner Violet Hunt, *Zeppelin Nights* (1916; Cheng 1989), and wrote wartime journalism (Tomlinson and Green, 1989/90).

Ford enlisted at the end of July 1915 (Saunders 1996, I, 479–484), reaching the front a year later during the Somme campaign. Despite being a mile or two behind the front with the battalion transport, Ford was shell shocked barely a fortnight after arriving in France. His resulting amnesia informed Tietjens's memory loss in *Parade's End* (Saunders 1996, II, 2–3). Wartime impacted on Ford's physical and mental health and relationships: as the war ended, so did his relationship with Hunt, another with the young Australian artist Stella Bowen beginning (Saunders 1996, II, 38–41, 46–51). Becoming Ford Madox Ford drew a line under his war service and, for the moment, his habitual mess of relationships (Flanagan 2000–2001).

Recuperation was hard for Ford. He struggled to settle into civilian life, and moved with Bowen to a smallholding in the Sussex countryside. A trail of unpublished manuscripts in the immediate post-war period attests to his difficulties in recovering physically and creatively, a problem for a professional writer (Frayn 2014, 177). One novel manuscript, *True Love and a G[eneral]. C[ourt]. M[atrial].*, abandoned before the named elements were developed, gives a clue to Ford's mental state: the protagonist Gabriel Morton is isolated and returned to a childhood dread by his shell shock (Saunders 1996, II, 5–6, 8–14; Ford 1999, 77–139). It was not until four years after the Armistice that Ford was again ready to write fiction.

2 Basic Coordinates

Arriving in Paris on 17 November 1922, the next day Ford had an appointment to meet Marcel Proust. He was just too late: Proust died earlier that day (Saunders 1996, II, 125–126; Coyle 2007). Ford claimed that he vowed to write a worthy successor to *À la recherche du temps perdu*, and thus begin the *Parade's End* novels. Tietjens is less demonstrably autobiographical than Proust's Marcel, and Ford distanced himself in a prefatory letter: “All novels are historical, but all novels do not deal with such events as get on to the pages of history. This *No More Parades* does. It becomes, therefore, necessary to delimit what, in it, is offered as, on the author's responsibility, observed event” (*NMP*, 3).¹ This stance also points to the profound lack of agency felt by men serving in the First World War.

The enduring power of social class in the novel is evident from the first appearance of Tietjens and Macmaster in a luxurious train carriage:

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, page references in brackets with the abbreviations *SDN*, *NMP*, *AMCSP*, and *LP* refer to the single-volume Carcanet editions of the four *Parade's End* novels: *Some Do Not...*, ed. by Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet, 2010); *No More Parades*, ed. by Joseph Wiesenfarth (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011); *A Man Could Stand Up—*, ed. by Sara Haslam (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011); *Last Post*, ed. by Paul Skinner (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011).

Their class administered the world, not merely the newly created Imperial Department of Statistics under Sir Reginald Ingleby. If they saw policemen misbehave, railway porters lack civility, an insufficiency of street lamps, defects in public services or in foreign countries, they saw to it, either with nonchalant Balliol voices, or with letters to the *Times*, asking in regretful indignation: “Has the British This or That come to *this!*” (*SDN*, 4)

The link between structural control and personal acts is made clear. Local hierarchies remain solid, with Oxford accents and prissy appeals to the then newspaper of record apparently sufficient policing; Macmaster’s relationship to this class is quickly rendered less certain (O’Malley 2014). The British Empire is quietly pervasive in the tetralogy. Tietjens’s two unseen brothers, later reported killed in the war, are part of colonial regiments (*SDN*, 158), while General Campion cut his teeth in late nineteenth-century colonial conquests. Tietjens is sent to fight alongside colonial troops as a “punishment” in his turbulent military career: “An extremely age-faded and unmilitary officer [...] was requesting his superior to observe that these Colonial troops were without any instincts of discipline” (*NMP*, 38–39). The creeping cultural imperialism of the USA appears in *Last Post*, the rich and garrulous Mrs de Bray Pape revisiting years of domination on the colonial power; Ford was a regular visitor to and writer about America (1927; Haslam and O’Malley 2012).

The series suggests that the ruling classes must learn from the working class. Valentine has maintained the cultural capital of her ancient family, but penury leads her to spend “nine months as an ash-cat at Ealing, with three men in the house, an invalid wife and a drunken cook [...]. I wore a cap and apron and sniffled ‘M’m’ to the mistress and slept under the stairs, too.” (*SDN*, 103–104). She is as a result inspired to political activism in the suffrage movement. By contrast, Macmaster lets a variety of biographical information circulate:

as to his exact origins, there was a certain blank in Tietjens’s knowledge. Macmaster was obviously Scotch by birth, and you accepted him as what was called a son of the manse. No doubt he was really the son of a grocer in Cupar or a railway porter in Edinburgh. It does not matter with the Scotch, and [...] he was very properly reticent as to his ancestry (*SDN*, 7)

Macmaster’s Scottishness means that his class status is not so easily established according to English values. He confesses finally in an intimate moment that he is from a working-class dock area on the coast north of Edinburgh (*SDN*, 69). Tietjens does not discover that “the elder Macmaster [...] [was] a small grocer in the Port of Leith in Scotland” until he encounters Macmaster’s nephew, the shell-shocked McKechnie (*NMP*, 95). Tietjens’s intuition is almost correct, and Macmaster benefits from his patronage.

The bureaucrat protagonist was a recent fictional development: masculinity starts to become dissociated from physical labour, despite Tietjens’s formidable size. His masculinity is threatened

throughout the novel, but is more authentic than others' voluble performances of it. The sight of young women agitating for their rights arouses violent and primal urges, to Tietjens's disgust:

“Strip the bitch naked! ...Ugh ... Strip the bitch stark naked!” [...] He cannoned into Tietjens, who roared at the top of his voice:

“You infernal swine. I'll knock your head off if you move!” [...]

Tietjens kept his eye upon the city man. His jaw had fallen down, his eyes stared! It was as if the bottom of his assured world, where all men desire in their hearts to bash women, had fallen out. He panted:

“Ergle! Ergle!” (*SDN*, 86–87)

Violent misogyny is here unmasculine, animalistic and incoherent, although Tietjens hardly embraces feminism: “Another scream [...] caused in Tietjens a feeling of intense weariness. What did beastly women want to scream for?” (*SDN*, 87) His principles do not necessarily coincide with his enthusiasms, yet he is willing to sacrifice his own reputation. This, and his unconventional masculinity, mean that he is suspected of being cuckolded by Sylvia. Doing nothing to deflect the accusations, it seems, reflects worse on him than her.

Bureaucracy remains essential in wartime and unrecognised as a propaganda tool. Mark Tietjens, Christopher's elder half-brother, works in “Whitehall, where he was said to be indispensable” (*SDN*, 159). Ethical issues are revealed by administrative problems when lives are at stake. These range from nagging intransigence, such as the comedic encounter in which General Champion must discipline Tietjens for not having the correct fire extinguishers, despite the impossibility of obtaining them (*NMP*, 185–186), to the performance of authority, servility and venality by which Macmaster rises through the ranks. Tietjens is culpable as part of the Imperial Department of Statistics (Mathes McCarthy 2009, 179), but sees a problem with the calculations for war damages, a matter of principle which leads him to resign. Macmaster offers a confused General Champion a précis: “It amounts to this. Chrissie was asked by the Government—by Sir Reginald Ingleby—to work out what 3 x 3 comes to: it was that sort of thing in principle. He said that the only figure that would not ruin the country was nine times nine ...” (*SDN*, 78). Macmaster prefers to obey orders rather than raise ethical questions – his lack of conscience is made clear when he submits as his own these same calculations, which result in his knighthood Tietjens finds out only at the party at which the honour is announced, which concludes the first volume of the tetralogy; Macmaster has the minimal decency to be ashamed, while Tietjens affectionately allows him his moment of triumph (*SDN*, 348).

Wartime intensifies the relationships between Tietjens, Sylvia and Valentine; gender remains an under discussed aspect of the tetralogy (see, however, Brasme 2014; Haslam 2015). Sylvia is the quintessential society belle, image-conscious and keen to appear in the society pages. She finds

Tietjens's performance of rectitude both repellent and, occasionally (presumably originally) attractive, but their relationship is emotionally sado-masochistic: Sylvia's passion is a mixture of lust, love and cruelty. Sara Haslam suggests that "It is hard to imagine a more sexually active woman in fiction than Sylvia Tietjens: sadist, serial adulteress, voyeur" (2002, 50; Saunders 2015). It is only after a moment of divine intervention from her late former confessor Father Consett that Sylvia determines to allow Christopher a life beyond and without her (*LP*, 167–169).

Despite the problems in his marriage, Tietjens is unfailingly proper in his slow pursuit of Valentine Wannop, disrupted by years of warfare. There is a question mark over whether they are blood relations: the reason for her patronage by the Tietjenses is thought to be that she is the illegitimate daughter of his father (*SDN*, 259). This is a more subtle version of the enduring trope in which a sibling proves to have been adopted, enabling the protagonists to marry. While Sylvia functions in the modern world by any means possible, Valentine retains her principles, shaped by her experience of poverty which, along with her athleticism, make her ideal to revitalise declining aristocratic blood. Femininity is needed to revitalise the Tietjenses, both in terms of the practicality of childbearing and the development of values, and Valentine shows the possibilities of judicious engagement with the modern world when combined with a knowledge of older cultural formations.

Like Ford, Christopher Tietjens's shell shock makes him amnesiac. Shell shock is a failure of masculinity (Haslam 2002, 99–102), and there were few fictional antecedents as Ford wrote. He had already written about mental health in the compelling essays "Arms and the Mind" and "War and the Mind," which were only published posthumously: they describe war's psychological pain, and situate war as a consequence of modernity. Important documents for situating Ford's work on the war, they represent powerfully the fractured battlefield (Deer 2009, 15–19) and are an early example of the trope of describing war as incommunicable (Larabee 2011, 40; Hammond 2014, 135–136), most famously espoused by Walter Benjamin in the essay "The Storyteller" (1999). The cloak of fiction allowed Ford greater freedom of expression. The failure of Tietjens's memory realises one of his greatest dreads, but is initially disbelieved by Sylvia and other civilians. From mentally tabulating the errors in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (*SDN*, 13), he is reduced by shell shock to reading it to restore his memory (*SDN*, 210). The traumatic disruption of memory is the destabilising of clock time and narrative, as Tietjens is haunted: "His nerves had been put in a bad way by that rotten *strafe* that had been just for fun. He knew his nerves were in a bad way because he had a ghostly visit from 09 Morgan, a fellow whose head had been smashed, as it were, on his, Tietjens', own hands" (*AMCSU*, 82). The psychological nature of the wound offers the possibility of Freudian readings of the text (Bonikowski 2013; Steffens 2015).

The Armistice reverberates through the final two volumes. We experience it through Valentine, who is taken away from the celebrations by an unexpected phone call, an invention that disrupts time and space (McLoughlin 2013; Horne 2003). She recognises that the Armistice will change society, even at the level of language: "She had been about to say 'Oh, *Hell!*' but the sudden

recollection that the War had been over a quarter of an hour made her leave it at ‘*Oh!*’ You would have to drop war-time phraseology. You became again a Young Lady” (*AMCSU*, 26). She recognises wartime as exceptional, bringing possibilities for transgression as well as horrors; the end of exceptionality portends further social and political change. Her fellow schoolmistresses experience: “A quite definite fear. If, at this parting of the ways, at this crack across the table of History, the School—the World, the future mothers of Europe—got out of hand, would they ever come back?” (*AMCSU*, 17–18). Valentine moves from the personal to the wider context, the febrile political situation evident. For James Longenbach, “Ford felt that the reconstruction of history in his writing was a necessary step towards understanding his place in the world after the war” (1984, 162). The description is later echoed in Tietjens’s description of his shell shock: “It might mean that there was a crack in his, Tietjens’, brain. A lesion! If that was to go on ...” (*AMCSU*, 228–229). Here, as in his visitation by 09 Morgan, he is so disorientated that the pronoun is not enough: he needs to reassert his sense of self by stating his own name. This is also the post-war reassertion of the family name as the eldest brother is unable to do so. Mark is driven to silence and paralysis by the news of the terms of the Armistice (*LP*, 26–27), although it is never quite certain whether this is illness or a willed protest (Saunders 1996, II, 251; Sorum 2007).

The children that Tietjens fathers by both Sylvia and Valentine allow the tetralogy to look forward. Ford’s depiction of the reconstruction of the world after the war is unusual. His child born before the war, by Sylvia, has an uncertain status. Mark junior is only perhaps Christopher’s child: it is suspected he is the progeny of one of Sylvia’s affairs. Tietjens, however, resolutely treats the son as his own, passing on his features and mannerisms: “The boy, swallowing visibly in his throat, fixed his slightly protruding eyes on his uncle’s face. He was about to speak, but he remained for a long time silent and goggling. That was a Christopher Tietjens trick—not a Tietjens family trick” (*LP*, 73). Tietjens is Mark’s half-brother, which adds a layer of ambiguity. This is furthered by the child that will come from Valentine’s pregnancy. The paternity is certain, but the child will be born out of wedlock; the role of heredity is no longer certain as Americans take over English stately homes, and aristocratic families like the Tietjenses must work for a living. The future is uncertain, but within that unsettled world lies the chance of something better. The empathy, morality and willingness to dissent of Christopher and Valentine offer the possibility of an alternative to Sylvia’s sadism and Macmaster’s servility. By 1929, however, Ford was struggling to believe that writing about the First World War had done enough to forestall the possibility of another conflict. In his introduction to the Canadian officer Peregrine Acland’s *All Else Is Folly*, he wrote: “those sufferings have never been sufficiently brought home to the public as a whole, and that that is why the late war has not aroused half the horror of war as a whole that it should have aroused” (Ford 1929, vii).

3 Aesthetics

The distinguishing aesthetic feature of *Parade's End* is its treatment of time, linked in the series to Tietjens's shell shock. There is a kinship with the stream of consciousness, a recent development: May Sinclair first used the term in describing Dorothy Richardson's first *Pilgrimage* novel *Pointed Roofs* (1915), which Ford regretted had been "drowned under by the reverberations of the late war" (1939, 774). The *Parade's End* novels cannot quite be described as such, in that they shift primarily between the four main characters, Tietjens, Sylvia, Valentine and Mark, and occasionally other minor characters. The links are driven by association and memory, and chronology is difficult to grasp at times. Arthur Mizener provides a chronological account (1977, 132–137); Wyatt Bonikowski suggests that this negates "the productive confusion of the impressionistic presentation" (2013, 72).

The novels are insistently focused on the present. Ford was most likely aware of the French philosopher Henri Bergson's work on simultaneity (Kumar 1963). His attempt to render the immediacy of experience is exemplified by Tietjens's behaviour:

"Are you deaf?" the general asked. "I'm sure I speak plain enough. You've just said there are no horses attached to this camp. I asked you if there is not a horse for the colonel commanding the depot. ... A German horse, I understand!"

Tietjens said to himself:

"Great heavens! I've been talking to him. What in the world about?" It was as if his mind were falling off a hillside. (*NMP*, 230)

Ford represents a sort of human auto-pilot, which also speaks to the mechanisation of industrial warfare. Tietjens's abstraction might also be considered in the light of his amnesia. The novel also explores the relationship between time and new technologies such as the telephone.

The uncertainties of the narrative structure operate within a characteristic Fordian literary impressionism (Saunders 2008; Chantler 2009). This is represented typographically in the use of ellipsis. Ford describes the French landscape in a letter of February 1917 to F. S. Flint:

this is the bare, cold & trampled North, with nothing but khaki for miles & miles ... Bare downs ... & tents ... & wet valleys ... & tents ... & AAC guns ... & mud ... & bare downs ... & huts ... & bare downs ... & RFC ... & mud ... & motor lorries .. & mud ... & bare downs. (Ludwig 1965, 83)

The trailings-off illustrate the difficulties of forming a coherent narrative of experience in such conditions. The vocabulary also emphasises the repetitive nature of modern warfare, a war of numbers and attrition. As O'Malley points out, "Ford literally (and obsessively) uses ellipses—three or four dots—to narrate, to signal to the reader what is left out" (2015, 22). A similar device is also evident in

the short story “Pon... ti... pri... ith” (Ford 1999, 30–35), and it reaches its apogee in the *Parade’s End* novels.

The ends of the titles of the first and third volumes of the tetralogy use elliptical formulations. However, a paradigmatic example of Ford’s use of ellipsis occurs in the discussion of the title of the second, *No More Parades*. Tietjens recounts to Captain Mackenzie a visit to War Office, early in the conflict:

You can’t say we were not prepared in one matter at least. ... Well, the end of the show was to be: the adjutant would stand the battalion at ease: the band would play *Land of Hope and Glory*, and then the adjutant would say: *There will be no more parades*. ... Don’t you see how symbolical it was: the band playing *Land of Hope and Glory*, and then the adjutant saying *There will be no more parades!* ... For there won’t. There won’t, there damn well won’t. ... No more Hope, no more Glory, no more parades for you and me any more. Nor for the country ... Nor for the world, I dare say ... None ... Gone ... Na poo, finny! No ... more ... parades! (*NMP*, 27)

The possibility of the end of the war cannot be expressed without ellipsis, the pregnant silence suggesting interruption or a failure of the imagination. The effect is heightened by Tietjens’s taciturnity, an extreme version of the British stiff upper lip; his reticence also points to wartime limits of expression. Absence and silence are in themselves forms of narration, ways of articulating something that cannot be verbalised, or drawing a reader in deictically by suggesting shared knowledge.

The novel series is itself a contemporary form. The major works using the stream of consciousness form tended to be lengthy: Proust wrote seven volumes of his sequence, while Richardson wrote thirteen of hers. Ford was also writing in the context of the success of works such as Galsworthy’s *Forsyte Saga*, although he did not relish the comparison (Ford 2002, 33–36; *SDN*, lxxii); a protégé of Galsworthy’s, R. H. Mottram, was publishing *The Spanish Farm Trilogy* (1924–1927) almost exactly contemporaneously with the appearance of the *Parade’s End* novels. The form allows Ford to address the world before, during and after the war: Richard Aldington’s *Death of a Hero* (1929) does so very differently within a single volume (↗ 8 Richard Aldington), while Siegfried Sassoon’s *Sherston trilogy* (1928–1936) is a prominent canonical example of the impact of the war on the certainties of life for those with existing social and cultural capital (↗ 26 Siegfried Sassoon).

4 Reception

In writing about the great topic of the day, Ford reached a wider public than before. His review reception was mixed, although as a writers' writer it was rather better than his sales. The *Daily Mail* offered a backhanded compliment to *Some Do Not...*, calling it one of Ford's "cleverest and grimmest studies of mankind" (1924, 5). *The Manchester Guardian* was much more positive, recognising that "Vitality of character and solidity of presentation are the outstanding merits of this very fine novel. Less sharply concrete than much of the author's work, it loses nothing of reality for the broader treatment." The reviewer concludes by asserting that "There is no need to worry about the state of the English novel while books like this are being produced" (C. M. 1924, 7). The *Daily Telegraph* criticised "the confused way in which the story is often told," mistaking technique for defect, but saw it as 'a notable contribution to fiction' (1924, 4). The *Daily Express* reviewer wrote: "The action takes place before the war and early in the war, but the whole structure of the work is inconclusive. It points no noteworthy moral, and is unnecessarily full of crude profanity of the type loved by pseudo-realists. As an historical sketch parts of it are good, but as a contribution to English fiction the whole is disappointing. One expected better of a writer of Mr. Ford's standing." (1924, 5) The mixed response was repeated in the later volumes although the novels focusing on the war were praised more substantially: the *Telegraph* reviewer of *A Man Could Stand Up*— continued to find Tietjens "irritatingly baffling," but concluded that "of its power and its brilliance, in the war chapters especially, there is no shadow of doubt" (1926, 13). Ford even began negotiations about film rights, but this did not progress to production (Stang and Cochran 1993, 224).

The relative success of *Parade's End* was recognised by contemporary commentators. The critic Frank Swinnerton observed that Ford:

has for years continued to publish his oddly uneven work in considerable quantity and to give rise in the literary world to innumerable rumours. [...] Hueffer is to me one of the enigmas of current literature. He has great talent, and much taste, to which he adds a considerable coarseness of spirit and a carelessness of statement which constantly spoil a reader's enjoyment of his work. (1938, 247–248)

The unevenness of Ford's canon now looks rather different, shaped by the enduring reputation of *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, while those rumours are now fascinating in looking back at a life well-lived (Tate 1998). That coarseness, too, gives Ford's work freshness and vitality against the popular primness of the nineteen twenties. By the 1950s, when *Parade's End* had finally been published as a single volume, and, significantly, was seen through the lens of another war, the US academic Frederick J. Hoffman saw the tetralogy very differently: "No American literature of the 1920s came quite so close to the heart of the cultural issue that Ford's tetralogy so brilliantly documents." (1955, 79)

Ford has recently been reinstated to the modernist canon. The *Agenda* special issue of 1989/90 collected a substantial new body of work on Ford, and Saunders's compendious biography ensured that Ford was taken seriously. The International Ford Madox Ford Society was founded the following year, and a body of scholarship was further built up in the volumes of *International Ford Madox Ford Studies* (2002–2016). Much initial work was necessarily recuperative, and the volumes published by Carcanet brought the material to a wider audience; Ford's work being out of UK copyright should enable further republication. While continuing to wrestle with the intricacies of the *Parade's End* novels, now is the time to work on other Fordian texts: many from both before and after the war have structural and thematic similarities to his most notable works. Further work remains to be done on more theoretical readings of Ford, with recent studies focusing on empathy (Hammond 2014; Sorum 2015) and sound and music (Waddell 2012; Vandeveldel 2014; Wrenn 2014; Moss 2017) pointing the way. Ford's work invites ecocritical approaches, with their interest in place and landscape, food studies, with vivid scenes such as the breakfast at the Duchemins' yet to be analysed from this point of view, and engagement with his love of popular culture (Waddell 2013). His output is undoubtedly uneven, but contains gems that are yet to be fully recognised.

The importance and influence of Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939) in early twentieth-century literature has recently been recognised, largely thanks to Max Saunders's definitive critical biography (1996). The enduring legacy of *Parade's End* is in testing the boundaries of acceptable representation of the First World War by approaching its horrors in complex aesthetic form. Such works paved the way for novels about the conflict which were more direct in their criticisms, and can usefully be understood as significant in the development in the post-war decade towards the War Books Boom of 1928–1930 (Frayn 2008). The recent success of the BBC/HBO television adaptation of *Parade's End* (2012), scripted by Tom Stoppard and, for a five-hour adaptation of a four-novel series, reasonably faithful to the novels, offers another avenue of enquiry in the form of adaptation studies (Park-Finch 2014), and promises to bring Ford to a wider audience.

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