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LOSS AND RECOVERY
OF A WESTERN TRADITION
IN SELECTED WORKS OF FORD MADDOX FORD

by

© David E. MacNeill, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
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of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

Department of English
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Ottawa, Ontario
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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
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"Loss and Recovery
of a Western Tradition
in Selected Works of Ford Madox Ford"

submitted by David E. MacNeill, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

The disintegration of English ruling class standards runs as a theme through several fictional works by Ford, rendering the "time spirit" of the modern age - systematized convention without firm moral foundation. This thesis examines Ford's analysis of the loss of a Western civilized Tradition and the possibility of its recovery in an altered form.

Chapter Two discusses The Good Soldier as an account of social decay, where personal isolation and a diminished power of communication are screened by a façade of convention. Chapter Three examines the final collapse of standards during the War in Parade's End and the possibility of a conscientious individual reconstructing a principled existence. Chapter Four finds in Providence the spiritual panacea to guide the future, a complementary ideal of frugality and responsibility. Chapter Five discusses Ford's saviour in Great Trade Route, the small-producer, a man of moral principle who recovers a workable code of values.

Table of Contents

Abstract	111
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Decay	23
Chapter Three: Collapse	50
Chapter Four: Panacea	86
Chapter Five: A Warning	120
Conclusion	155
Bibliography	160

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Ford Madox Ford was both a social diagnostician and prophetic visionary. By examining the symptoms of disease in the modern age, Ford developed a personal interpretation of both the identity of the sickness and its probable outcome. Motivated by a sympathetic responsibility toward mankind, he endeavored to portray his vision of contemporary man's predicament and the possible means for the resolution of difficulties. The decay and collapse of Western civilized Tradition is most fully explored in the two major novels, The Good Soldier and Parade's End, while Providence and Great Trade Route provide Ford's personal theory for the recovery of standards and the salvation of both the individual and society. The imaginative literary work appeared to be the most suitable vehicle for the delivery of a new version of contemporary history, for in modernity, "the novel has become indispensable to the understanding of life", through the provision of some "view of life as a whole".¹ Ford considered himself to be a modern historian in fiction, and such is the attitude expressed in the autobiographical It Was The Nightingale, where he elaborates.

The work that at that time - and now - I wanted to see done was something on an immense scale, a little cloudy in immediate attack, but with the salient points and the final impression extraordinarily clear. I wanted the Novelist in fact to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time. Proust being dead I could see no one who was doing that.²

Searching for the "time-spirit" of an age, Ford hoped to discover the key to the psychology of that era. In The Good Soldier the tense relationship between passion and convention colours all impressions,

1. F.M. Ford, The English Novel, (London, 1930), pages 8 & 12.

2. F.M. Ford, It Was the Nightingale, (London, 1934), page 180.

while Parade's End emphasizes opportunism and the loss of personal and social integrity. The "Up Against the Wall!" philosophy of the Western world on the verge of the Second World War permeates Great Trade Route, a personal plea for sanity in the face of impending chaos. Only in the earlier Providence does one find a spirit of harmonious balance, frugality and responsibility. The books are written around their respective "time-spirits", although Providence rises from an idealized past, each elaborating on the central theme through anecdote and impression.

Impressionism was, for Ford, the surest means of achieving his end - the unified vision. As Ford himself stated,

My business in life, in short, is to attempt to discover and try to let you see where we stand. 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.³

Since impressions appeal directly to the emotions and the imagination, they would have greater corrective influence over the reader because of the facility of retention. Influenced by the writings of Henry James and Joseph Conrad, and behind them the French, especially Gustave Flaubert and Guy de Maupassant, Ford felt that impressionism was the key literary movement of the early twentieth century. Ford concluded that "the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind. A novel must not therefore be a narration, a report we saw that life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains. We in turn, if we wished to produce on you an effect of life, must not narrate but render impressions."⁴

3. F.M. Ford, Memories and Impressions, (New York, 1911), page xviii.

4. F.M. Ford, Joseph Conrad, (New York, 1924), pages 192, 194 and 195.

The Good Soldier is the most concentrated and brilliant in technique of the novels, yet nearly all Ford's works utilize the impressionist formula in one way or another. Like James, Ford felt the "affair" or "case" to present an aid in understanding the contemporary situation, establishing a concise summary of wider problems. The inter-relationships of a small cluster of individuals taken from an episode or series of incidents in their lives might become symptomatic of the more general condition of society. When this small group is depicted as unable to communicate or function adequately, it is an indication that there exist further ills in the larger arena of national life.

In the novels, the theme of cultural disintegration is carried through the individual and his emotional life. The depiction of fragmentation and loss of stability within the individual consciousness mirrors the outside world. The effectiveness of impressionism in sending the point home lies in its ability to recreate realistically the workings of the human memory and the almost unconscious reception of sense impressions. Through careful manipulation and positioning, the facts of a situation gain the power to speak for themselves. Purpose continually relies upon implication, with the particular firmly establishing the universal.

Ideally, Ford proposed to influence the social patterns of an age through enlightenment. In his earlier years, the novel appeared to be the most suitable mode of expression, as it operates by approaching the imagination and makes possible a wide transmission of thought. The novelist, because of his recreative capacity, might reveal to the

individual a personal and structured understanding of life, despite the fragmentary nature of contemporary existence. Only when impressed by the extreme urgency of the situation during the late '30s did Ford abandon the subtlety of the novel and resort to the direct forcefulness of non-fiction.

Stylistically, the two novels adhere to an impressionist code, but the later non-fictional works are an odd blend of history, sociology, autobiographical anecdote and journal-writing. Such a highly personal mixture of style helps to overcome any reaction against what might be criticized as social propaganda in a more straightforward and factual account. While decidedly loose, the books are guided by reminiscence and a single powerful personality. They really exist as an expression of personality, for every page and every remembrance are coloured by Ford's own acute sensibility and wide-ranging tolerance. Unlike the pedant, Ford does not insist upon a strict adherence to formal rule, so intellectual integrity does not necessarily equate with factual scrupulosity.

Though separated by both years and style, Provence and Great Trade Route share with the two fictional works a close thematic link that makes of the four an intellectually coherent group - the loss and possible recovery of a stabilized Western Tradition. The novels examine cultural deficiency and impoverishment through the "case" of the individual. Through a small group of men and women one sees enacted a psychological drama of emotional strain and anxiety. Because of contemporary social corruption and cultural bankruptcy, the individual is denied the support of an established code of standards. Dislocation and stress have replaced reason and ordered sequence. Along with this

loss of a supportive sense of tradition and historical continuity, comes an equally disastrous instability of personal identity. Strain appears as the first symptom discernible in any man with a conscience who attempts to discover a standard of civilized behaviour in the modern world. For Ford, there was no acceptable standard to be found at the present time, so the individual must necessarily attempt to recreate within himself the spirit of an earlier age.

Modern man had apparently lost the power of communication and inter-personal contact, both on the individual and national levels, resulting in a widespread sense of mechanistic isolation and alienation. The Machine and Mass are the enemies in Ford's social drama, driving mankind ever closer to a return to complete barbarism. The fine shade of difference separating barbarity and civilization might soon become too blurred for distinction. The problem of communication is explored in The Good Soldier and further developed in Great Trade Route, where men in the "Age of Cellophane" feel threatened enough to put all foreign men and ideas "up against the wall!". When society loses its stability and cultural confusion becomes universal, the thinking man suffers. With nothing but his own ingenuity, he must rediscover for himself a code of workable standards. According to Ford, the thirst for acquisition and the sense of property developed to a high degree after feudalism, and these public characteristics led directly to modern social and personal fragmentation. Like a machine, the individual had adapted to specialization in the interests of increased production. Man's essential humanity was being eroded by his own mechanization.

The hope of mankind rests with Ford's notion of an idealized conscientious individual, a man who retains his integrity in the face of corruption. Tolerance and a sense of human community separate him from the general stamp, as he forsakes the spirit of the age with its materialism and pursuance of selfish interests. He opts for a modified version of the pastoral life, and uses as his base for action a personal altruism. This last quality is the one most easily disposed of by the great majority of men, for it aggressively clashes with the opportunism which saturates the public mind. Honour, the most favourable characteristic of the feudal tradition, remains alive only in this conscientious individual. Recognizing the futility of attempting to cure the ills of society and nations through legislation or public appeal, Ford felt the personal regeneration of individual consciousnesses to be the only chance for civilization to save itself. For this reason, the novels focus on the difficulties of the conscientious individual in his endeavor to carve out for himself a life of integrity. Such men possess qualities associated with an earlier age and another "time-spirit", the altruistic impulse, an instinctive sense of responsibility, a disciplined conscience and moral integrity. These are the virtues to be nurtured in modern man, but at the same time they place him in the hands of merciless enemies, for the majority see him as alien as well as a reproach.

The chief goal of mankind should be peace, both public and personal, but serenity is virtually impossible within the context of the modern world. By the time that Ford wrote Providence (1935) and Great Trade Route (1937), the contemporary situation and the disintegration of civilization had resolved itself, in Ford's mind, into a more

generalized division between North and South. The former appears as the homeland of a destructive "Nordic" barbarism - a source of divisive influence, where man had lost control over the machine and industrialism. Patriotism has degenerated into an aggressive "Wall" syndrome, since fierce nationalism replaces the need for thought and consideration. A colourless army of brussels sprouts becomes Ford's symbol for a barbaric North, poised and ready to spread its evil influence throughout the attractive South in a rush of savage occupation. A militarist technocracy eager to destroy all art and culture that stand in its path, the North demands conformity to its age of "mighty Cellophane".

In complete opposition stands the Mediterranean South, especially Provence, with its ancient ideal of frugality and responsibility. The man of Provence is an "homme connu", intimately concerned with all particulars of community life. Recognized by those around him as an integral part of the group, he avoids the withering sense of isolation that overwhelms the Nordic of today. The Provençal character is "founded on shrewdness, frugality and infinite pawky knowledge of the vicissitudes that beset human lives, and so branching out into infinite manifestations of passions that he has nevertheless always extraordinarily - pawkily! - well in hand".⁵ The passions, while allowed expression, are invariably under control, preventing those outbursts of ferocious savagery that characterize the North. The Arts may flourish in the South, for the spirit is conducive. Here, the artist is not looked upon as an alien element as in the North, but rather as a vital and integral part of the community.

5. F.M. Ford, Provence, (London, 1935), page 45.

Climate and diet are seemingly designed for a sound mind and body, and the chief characteristic of the inhabitants is contentment. The civilization of the South may lack the progressive dynamism of the North, but this is presented as a benefit. The dynamic energy of the North has led merely to production rather than enrichment, while the South remains secure in its stable emphasis on the quality of life. Permanence becomes the key-note of the South.

In order more clearly to understand the thematic unity connecting the four books in this study in a close relationship, it might be of some use to consider them in terms of musical form. Richard Cassell develops the notion of Ford's utilization of "the musical pattern of embroilment, exhaustive progression, culmination, and coda".⁶ The idea applies directly to the novels, and most fully to Parade's End. Some Do Not ... establishes the embroilment of the central characters in the personal and public conflicts which will concern them for the remainder of the work. As an introduction it serves as a preparation for and justification of the exhaustive progression of No More Parades, where the character conflicts of various relationships are heightened and intensified. A Man Could Stand Up - presents the culmination of the psychological drama, with the protagonist's decision to abandon his old class allegiances, sever ties with his past, and embark upon a life more in accord with the integrity of his own conscience. The coda comes with The Last Post, where resolution of the earlier conflicts recreates an harmonious balance once again. In this instance, coda indicates a form of relief. However, it may equally apply to "any passage, long or short, added at the end of a composition

6. R. Cassell, Ford Madox Ford. A Study of His Novels, (Baltimore, 1962), page 48.

or a section of a composition in order to give a greater sense of finality".⁷

This musical metaphor might also be applied to the larger group of four principal works in this study, already unified by the consistent thematic vision of the author. The Good Soldier provides embroilment, for in this earlier work civilization is depicted as in a state of decay. The stage is set for the further disintegration of society in Parade's End, the exhaustive progression. In both novels there is an attempt on the part of a conscientious individual to live a life in accord with personal integrity and civilized strictures. Although in the first novel this ends in failure, Christopher Tietjens, in Parades's End, through his own self-imposed reconstruction, moves closer to Ford's Provençal spirit than does Edward Ashburnham, who attempted to hang on to the trappings of an outmoded moral tradition. Culmination appears in Provence, where Ford resolves the personal and social difficulties of the novels, portraying the spirit to guide the future toward hope and serenity. While Provence itself provides a coda-like sense of relief with its idealism, Great Trade Route remains Ford's true coda because of its sense of urgency and finality. Spurred on by the thought that Western Civilization was only steps away from an abyss, Ford made one last importunate plea for man to save himself. The conflicts may still be resolved, but only with the proper choice. Embroilment, progression, culmination and coda.

Pre-World War I Western Civilization becomes a small group of intimates in The Good Soldier. The internal tensions destroying the social structure are equated with the personal conflicts between

7. P.A. Scholes, The Oxford Companion to Music, (London, 1972), page 200.

members of the circle and between individuals and their own consciences. Beneath the refined placidity of the external shell lies the turmoil and confusion of the modern age. Even when convention, both public and personal, is most rigidly upheld, decay is continually destroying the very foundations of the social structure and the private psyche. Apparent solidity and sureness mean little once decadence gains a foothold. Throughout the novel, passion and convention wage an incessant struggle for supremacy. "Quite good people" live their lives beneath the shadow of convention, scrupulously adhering to the restraints of respectability, while at the same time their passions are becoming ever more anarchical. Without a true integrity of conscience, modern men opt for a hypocritical adherence to conformity and a blanket of formality. Personal relationships break down completely when members of the group prove unable to maintain their passions within the confines of convention.

A man of some conscience, like Edward Ashburnham, is caught in the conflict between passion and convention, finally seeing no way past the predicament other than self-negation. His suicide may conform to the requirements of a hollow standard of behaviour, but it emphasizes the overwhelming power of passion to sway the individual despite stern resolution. His attempt to live honorably fails in the final analysis because of an essential lack of substance in his beliefs. The forms are there, but they no longer have any solid foundation. The other characters, with the exception of Nancy Rufford, mirror modern moral and emotional bankruptcy. A man like John Dowell seems to possess a mind totally incapable of comprehension at the moments when passion and convention collide. However, Dowell's vision of the "carefully

arranged" convention of ~~Nauheim~~ indicates that the force of modern structured formality might impinge even upon a consciousness as naturally obtuse as his. Lacking the supportive backing of a living moral code, these characters ape the demands of conformity without in the least understanding the reasons behind civilized conduct. The modern feeling of isolation and alienation breeds moral and emotional confusion.

Edward and Leonara Ashburnham embody England's concept of the "best people", that unique product of responsibility and refinement. John and Florence Dowell, wealthy expatriate Americans, stand for the leisured best that the New World might produce. The fundamental hollowness of the lives of both countries' representatives is soon apparent. They may be four inconsequential people leading intensely private lives, but Ford manages to give a degree of universal significance to their personal drama. Their characters and actions are echoes of the "time-spirit" - corruption and inner decay. The sureness and solidity of their civilization, before being smashed by the First World War, was really an elaborate sham, already exhibiting symptoms of a terminal disease that might be diagnosed. And Ford did provide the diagnosis. The world of the Edwardian era is depicted carefully, every element designed to promote grooming, ritual and a life of cultured gentility. Underlying all is an essential uneasiness, the result of powerful tensions between passion and convention.

Dowell is presented as an unreliable narrator, a man stunned by a host of successive revelations, who finds it necessary to give them concrete literary form in order to rid himself of previous conceptions. Layer upon layer of carefully contrived appearance is stripped away,

and the seemingly "safe-ship" of their four-square coterie's founders and sinks. Dowell is forced to acknowledge the collapse of his frame of reference. His personality influences the manner in which he composes the record of their shared history, providing Ford with the opportunity for a carefully modulated irony. Ford plays continually with the opposite poles of sentimentality and irony, allowing blunt ironic comments to undercut all that precedes them, including the style itself. Dowell's innocence and naïveté, along with the mutual conspiracy of the others, blinds him to a true interpretation of occurrences. While those around him are fully aware of an underground emotional life, Dowell is only made conscious of it through circumstance and revelation.

All four characters work hard at maintaining appearances based on a social norm, and such a life of formal ritual speaks implicitly of the weakness of a social convention without foundation. These people live in a world where everything is taken for granted, no one daring to penetrate the surface of an Anglo-Anglican system of behaviour. Passionate actions may deviate from the standard code, but they must be concealed beneath a cover of rigid conformity to external appearances. The American couple never present a picture of America as the bright new world, but rather one which has inherited the corruption of the old. They, like the Ashburnhams, hide behind convention in order to satisfy desire. Florence and Edward seek the ultimate physical embrace, Leonora ruthlessly manoeuvres to maintain her tenuous hold on her husband, and Dowell merely searches for placidity. Each individual proves equally matched in moral barrenness.

Where The Good Soldier depicts the failure of a man of some integrity to come to terms with the modern age, Parade's End, in the person of Christopher Tietjens, indicates the possibility of a conscientious individual living a satisfying life in harmony with a set of standards. Personal reconstruction provides the key. However, the man of honour will find himself almost powerless against the combined forces of opportunism, expedience, and the machine. He must remove himself from the mass-consciousness toward a quasi-pastoral state surrounded by others of similar outlook. Parade's End focuses on the active trials and emotional anxieties of an honourable man's conscience. Tietjens becomes the embodiment of an ideal of honour and tradition in confrontation with a disintegrating society. Corruption had gained sufficient strength to make of its very victims future supporters, destroying the last traces of chivalric altruism and feudal order.

Tietjens becomes an outcast from a society that inevitably recognizes in him those virtuous qualities that it has discarded along with its sense of historical continuity. Living a life that is a reproach to those around him, Tietjens is the victim of constant harassment and persecution. His scrupulous adherence to formal convention is based upon a surer foundation than that of the characters in The Good Soldier. Desirous of maintaining his integrity intact, Tietjens uses truth and taciturn reserve as a defense, having not lost contact with the fundamental needs underlying standards of conduct.

Tietjens feels that his behaviour is correct in not vigorously defending himself against attack, relying on a code of honour so strict that personal well-being is of less concern than a conscious integrity.

An emotional and intellectual affinity with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is stressed throughout all four parts of the novel. His life is a search for both perfection (in the form of an Anglican saintliness) and serenity (in the image of George Herbert and Bemerton parsonage). His character is of the past, entirely unsuited to the harsh scramble of self-interest. Looking bleakly on collective humanity (but not on the possibilities of the individual), Tietjens holds no high expectations of his fellow-men. However, for himself, only a strict code will suffice, placing him at a disadvantage in the face of jealousy, ambition and competitiveness. Since no one fully measures up to Tietjens' standards, except for Valentine Wannop, he is unable to condemn their weaknesses when it is an impossibility for them to live the life he intends to lead. He remains vulnerable.

Like Edward Ashburnham, Tietjens is a sentimentalist, but with the difference that he holds firm control over his sentiments, refusing to allow them supremacy or even occasional outbursts of freedom. He is not long in discovering his mental affinity with Valentine, and strives to find serenity with her by making a sharp break with convention. Unable to abandon his principles because of the needed personal stability they provide, it is only after the war, when his principles have undergone a convulsive but permanent transfer of allegiance, that Tietjens is able to deny the call of social responsibility, turn his back upon position and unite with Valentine in a non-urban world.

Parade's End moves a step beyond The Good Soldier in giving concrete detail to the general degeneration of Western Civilization. Once again, Ford uses literature as imaginative thought to reveal his understanding of the contemporary "time-spirit". New social elements

are indicative of a spreading barbarism and loss of integrity. The infiltration of vulgarity and social feuding between political parties are seen as disturbing new aspects of society, emphasizing a weakening of English solidity. Conscious of a recent social phenomenon, the introduction of new types of men and women lacking tradition and stability, Tietjens recognizes a barrage of degenerative factors transforming society into an entirely unrecognizable form from the one existing in his memory.

English mismanagement of the War effort is soon evident on the home front, and Tietjens shows little surprise when confronted by the same incompetence and corruption at the Front. The confusion and fragmentation of the modern world is consummately projected through a rendering of the madness of the wartime situation where irrationality has gained an ascendancy. The English, according to Tietjens, are unable to prove themselves true to either friend or foe. Already disillusioned by England's very entry into the war, Tietjens finds even more disheartening his nation's lack of disinterestedness and her final betrayal of her allies. This is the final instance of a national degeneration, and forces both Christopher and Mark Tietjens to abandon their allegiance to a way of life that is now dead.

To retain his integrity, Tietjens is forced to dissociate himself from his old class loyalties, and establish a new life. Choosing Valentine Wannop to share this life because of the basic contiguity of their ideas - honesty, responsibility, and frugality, those qualities later united by Ford under the appellation "Spirit of Provence", Tietjens finds living together synonymous with satisfactory conversation. Love becomes an intimate talk attained but never fully

exhausted, equated with successful communication between individuals. For this reason, Tietjens and Valentine provide hope for the future. With the capacity for genuine communion, they, like Mark Tietjens, wish to renounce a world "fusionless and dishonest" for one of harmony and peace. An existence in opposition to the "time-spirit" proves possible.

Provence provides a non-fictional culmination of the difficulties outlined in the earlier novels. The spirit that lives on in Provence becomes Ford's panacea for the ills of modernity. Hope for the future rests with the adoption of the Provençal frame of mind, the only remaining source of harmony and sanity. Ford assumes the role of prophetic moralist in order to reveal to his contemporaries the desirability and necessity of adopting this spirit. Personal impressions provide the substance of the argument, as they relate to history, literature, and sociology, while a certain structural looseness seems of secondary importance in the face of a single dominating personality. One tends to agree with the basic argument and ignore the lack of solid factual support and the odd twists of interpretation because of the persuasive attractiveness of the rendering.

The sharp differentiation between an industrial North and a non-mechanized South is not so fully developed in Provence as it was later to be in Great Trade Route. The division assumes a more particular turn through Ford's depiction of the fundamental conflict between the culture of Provence and the "barbarism" to the North. The men of Provence, retaining the healthy and cohesive view of life of their ancestors, provide a sharp contrast with the modern men of the

North who had lost all faith and a sense of continuing tradition. The life of Provence is firmly rooted in the particular, not in any general abstractions. The individual bases his life upon a commitment to direct and personal involvement in the affairs of a small community. The small-producer is united with the artist-craftsman to form an ideal combination to be lauded in Great Trade Route as saviour of the world. The age of Provençal Troubadours and Albigenses is presented as the model frame of mind to guide the modern man of conscience in his personal reconstruction.

With the root of uncivilizedness lying in the fear of coming to like what is alien through exposure, Ford attempts to destroy the defensive barriers separating the individual from beneficial outside influence. He wishes to effect an alteration in world life-style, to persuade men to "model their lives along the lines of the good Provençal and his Eden-garlic-garden".⁸ As the only remaining earthly paradise along the Great Trade Route, Provence inspires emulation. Since the days of the Troubadours and the Courts of Love, only Provence has kept alive the flame of true civilization, the reconciliation of "beauty and righteousness".

As a frame of mind, Provence is presented as a personal symbol rather than a geographical location. Here exist no "mental vested interests", which in the North instil a dependence upon illusions. Where there is room for a man to think, mental conjecture, and hence development, are encouraged rather than stifled. Constantly affirmed is the quality of "earthly permanence" that is everywhere made manifest in Provence, in its music, dance, poetry, cooking, entertainment - all

8. F.M. Ford, Provence, (London, 1935), page 22.

aspects of daily life. The so-called progress of the septentrional lands is regarded as an absurdity by the South, which shies away from the destructive capacity of mass-worship. Provence is the closest thing, both physically and spiritually, to an absolute sense of the immutable. The thinking individual may save himself by grasping the permanence of this serene and enjoyable way of life, for more effective than another Northern invasion would be the acquisition of a mental affinity with the South. Throughout history, Provence has always been conquered, but its underlife continues unimpeded, faithful to the ancient spirit of frugality, responsibility and gaiety. Upon a land that lies unchanging, the Provençal lives in close communion with the cultivated soil, possessing a right to the land that is beneath his feet, but not that which lies beneath a man whom he does not know.

Not satisfied that his point had been well-taken in Provence, Ford felt impelled to make an even stronger plea for the reconstruction of the conscientious individual along the guide-lines of the spirit of Provence. Great Trade Route, in which the complete bankruptcy of modern Western Civilization is exposed in all its vulgarity, emphasizes the need for immediate action. Spurred on by a sense of impending doom, Ford wrote under an urgency which occasionally mars the book's effectiveness. He again proposes a shift away from mass and the machine toward the self-sufficiency of the small producer - his vision of salvation. A feverish "Up Against the Wall!" philosophy is equated with the collapse of Western traditions and the supremacy of Nordic barbarism. A return to the original civilizing influences of the Route might enable mankind to avoid the coming conflagration.

Ford makes use of a winter voyage to America during 1934-35 to establish a framework for Great Trade Route. Travel is united with philosophy and an idiosyncratic interpretation of history and culture to form a plea for sanity and the recovery of serenity. Through anecdote, the book becomes the voyage itself, and follows Ford's path from France to America, chronicling his wanderings in rural and urban areas of both the north and south. The itinerary provides Ford with an opportunity to express his view of the West, its roots, remnants, and possible resurrection. The roots lie in the traders of the ancient Route, the remnants lie scattered from Peking to Memphis, Tennessee, and its resurrection depends upon the rebirth of the conscientious individual.

The Great Trade Route is depicted as a belt of land stretching from the East to the West, united by a frame of mind rather than any geographical similarity. While an equable climate and a fertile soil are necessary ingredients, the distinguishing features are more importantly "an equanimity of mind, frugality and moderation" - all in sharp opposition to Northern acquisitiveness, industrialism and efficiency.⁹

As a voyage of discovery, the book retraces the original "backwards and forwards" movement of civilizing influence from East to West. Once the Great Trade Route has been established as a frame of mind for the reader, Ford proceeds to outline the one fundamental conflict that has prevented the continuance of peace for centuries. The North and South are presented as diametrically opposed ways of life, each with a totally different system of values. Ford saw the confusion

9. F.M. Ford, Great Trade Route, (London, 1937), page 41.

of the modern age as symptomatic of a death-struggle between the values of the North and the South, "the Wall as against Civilization".¹⁰ Only his small producer is adequately equipped to fight "Wall fever". This fever seems peculiar to the North, the result of an overwhelming thirst for acquisition, one man's desire for what another man possesses. The attractiveness of all Souths incites all Norths to invasion through this desire for possession. The essential struggle is between the "Sino-Helleno-Latin civilization of the Mediterranean as against the murder and rapine of us conquering Nordics".¹¹

* Discounting the "progress" of the North, where aridity kills all natural growth and profusion, the author offers the option of an attractive alternative. The only thing the North produces in abundance is destruction, and with the growth of modern insensibility, this destruction will in all probability be complete. The spirit of the Route is cohesive rather than divisive, and must be recovered if civilization is not to completely disappear. Praising as saviour the small producer without national feeling, Ford develops the notion of spreading a new "Will" based upon the Provençal spirit. This new "Afflatus" rests upon the belief that it is better to work and earn than to take. The book is one man's attempt to launch an afflatus for the power of good against the degeneracy emanating from the North.

Ford uses a combination of anecdote and history in his desire to, most effectively illuminate the chaos and destructiveness of modernity and the attractiveness and sanity of the Provençal way of life. Here live men aware that, ultimately, war and slaughter as a means of

10. Ibid, page 91.

11. Ibid, page 23.

enrichment never pay. The attractiveness of destroyed civilizations that had apparently existed in a harmonious relationship with their surroundings, the Troubadours, or the American Indians, or the South of the Civil War, is repeatedly stressed. Typically, an aggressive North uses a moral cry to invade a desirable South. "Moral revulsion" is used tactically for purposes of plunderous incursion.

The ideal combination for the man of the future was part craftsman and part small producer, with self-sufficiency as the key. Such a union was foreshadowed in Christopher Tietjens on a fictive basis, but the urgency of Great Trade Route calls for the dropping of the metaphor. Contact with the soil a man works with his own hands keeps both his body and his mind vigorous and alive.

The North had fallen prey to the appetite of the machine, an instance of the servant becoming the master. The machine leads to technical progress which inevitably outdistances man's ability to accommodate to change. Mankind falls farther and farther behind the advances of the machine until he finds himself dispossessed and the victim of his own invention. To avoid such a prospect, Ford advocates a "Mediterranean brand of slackening off", a "weakening of the bonds holding man to conscious rectitude, acquisitiveness and efficiency".¹² Man must refuse to accept anything that does not accord with common sense and his own conscience. The level of world opinion must be raised through the rapid educative power of an "Afflatus", an "Immense Will" set in motion by the artist and given mobility by the similar aspirations of a great many, less articulate men. Prime responsibility

12. Ibid, page 214.

still rests with the individual to make of modernity a new Provence on a new Great Trade Route.

Ford establishes a New Dispensation in both Provence and Great Trade Route - a program of personal reconstruction. Without proper controls, man and the machine are unable successfully to co-exist. Worship of mass and the machine must be abandoned and replaced by the spirit that has guided Provence through the past. Ford sees as inevitable a return to the Dark Ages because of the gathering destructive force of the struggle between the "two opposed world tendencies" of Fascism and Communism.¹³ The only hope is that the Dark Ages may once again be those of Provence.

13. F.M. Ford, Provence, (London, 1935), page 319.

CHAPTER TWO: DECAY

The Good Soldier, the fictional examination of a four-square coterie of individuals, is a chronicle in microcosm of the deterioration of Western Civilization immediately preceding the outbreak of the First World War. Tensions within personal relationships mirror larger ills destroying the last foundations of a Western Tradition. Ford uses impressionism to explore the psychology of the principal players in the domestic drama. The fundamental problem confronting the couples is the lack of coherent and successful communication between individuals. Psychologically, each person exists in isolation, for the symbols of convention by which they order their lives no longer have meaning. What they feel and what they do are no longer one and the same. Thus, the four characters encounter difficulty in coming to terms with situations involving both passion and convention. While a strict code of convention remains operative, it no longer is supported by a stable tradition. Those who follow the code are no longer aware of the reasons behind it, and this reliance upon so superficial a standard of behaviour leads to moral deterioration. When confronted with anything of a passionate nature, the individual is thrown back upon an illusory store of convention, usually inadequate to save the situation.

Closely related to the passion-convention problem lies the issue of illusion and reality. Convention has no solidity, and only passionate motivations seem to have true life. Leonara Ashburnham goes through life governed by convention, both Catholic and social, placing her coldness and firm resolve in opposition to her husband's passion. Florence Dowell is the most corrupt of the four, allowing her life to

be ruled by passion concealed by convention. John Dowell has the ability to promote illusions through an early belief in the infallibility of convention. As uncontrolled expressions of passion gain supremacy, the weakness of such a hollow code is readily apparent. All four characters are emotionally bankrupt, with desires that are essentially directionless. Each is in a state of moral confusion because of personal isolation and a collective sense of instability. Integrity of conscience has little chance to grow.

Ford was conscious of modern degeneracy even before he gave it expression in The Good Soldier. His sense of personal and social fragmentation and isolation are foreshadowed in earlier works. In Memories and Impressions he outlines the conflicts that are more fully explored in the novels.

We are losing more and more the sense of a whole, the feeling of a grand design, of the co-ordination of all Nature in one great architectonic scheme. We have no longer any time to look out for the ultimate design. We have to face such an infinite number of little things that we cannot stay to arrange them in our minds, or to consider them as anything but as accidents, happenings, the mere events of the day. And if in outward things we can perceive no design, but only the fortuitous materialism of a bewildering world, we are thrown more and more in upon ourselves for comprehension of that which is not understandable, and for analysis¹ of the things of the spirit.¹

The individual is forced to accelerate his pace in order to keep in step with the "progress" of society. This acceleration creates an ever fiercer competition between men in the stern struggle for existence. Barbarism lies at the end of that particular road.

While speaking of Henry James, Ford indirectly presents his own vision of English society on the verge of collapse, explaining that James "gives you an immense - and an increasingly tragic - picture of a

1. F.M. Ford, Memories and Impressions, (New York, 1911), page 69.

leisured society that is fairly unavailing, materialist, emasculated - and doomed. No one was more aware of all that than he."² Ford recognized the danger of adhering to a formalized convention when it was based upon expedience rather than honour and integrity. Without any governing sense of tradition, tradition being conventions supported by a firm moral foundation, to fall back upon, the individual was denied adequate direction when faced with moral choice. The struggle between a passion that was unregulated and a convention that was without moral foundation could only lead to destruction, and this was precisely the predicament in the Dowell-Ashburnham relationships. The framework of The Good Soldier stems from an incident of Ford's own experience in which a crucial aspect of the English psychology surfaced - obedience to convention to the extent that the repression of all emotion is elevated to the position of a virtue. Ford relates in England and the English a scene of parting similar to that between Edward Ashburnham and Nancy Rufford, a parting accomplished in silence and formality. Without denying the efficacy of the decision to separate, Ford emphasizes the danger of using complete repression as the only weapon against desire.

It may have been desirable, in the face of the eternal verities - the verities that bind and gather all nations and all creeds - that the parting should have been complete and decently arranged. But a silence so utter: a so demonstrative lack of tenderness, seems to be to me a manifestation of a national characteristic that is most appalling.³

Ford utilizes John Dowell as an unreliable narrator in order to give the reader an insight into the workings of his psychology as well

2. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932), page 210.

3. F.M. Ford, England and the English, (New York, 1907), page 339.

as of the other three participants. As Dowell gropes for understanding in his attempt to reconstruct past occurrences in the light of successive revelations, the harsh reality beneath the thin layer of conventional refinement is soon revealed. While in the early stages of his dawning awareness a firm believer in the illusion of "a goodly apple", his experiences force him to acknowledge the essential rottenness of the core. The difficulty involved in distinguishing illusion from reality receives Dowell's bewildered examination. When no longer blind to deception, Dowell sees past events gain a heightened significance. Motivated to write as a form of personal therapy, he admits that he had previously considered the break-up of their coterie an "unthinkable event". Having existed in a world of ignorance and naive acceptance of surface values, he was understandably amazed at the speed with which the apparent permanence and stability of their group vanished. Their relationship was nothing other than "a prison full of screaming hysterics", the complete reverse of the proud, safe ship and the carefully modulated minuet of earlier images. Appearance and reality clash continually and Dowell, upon his arrival at Branchaw Teleragh in response to the Ashburnhams' messages, finds himself unable to believe "that anything essentially calamitous could happen to that place and those people . . . it was the very spirit of peace".⁴

Understanding nothing of the hearts of men, he was puzzled by a world that strives to conceal passion beneath a wall of contrived appearance. He begins to question everything. How could "poor" Florence come to know so much so fully? How could the Ashburnhams be anything

4. F.M. Ford, The Good Soldier, (New York, 1955), page 20. All subsequent references in this chapter to The Good Soldier will be indicated by a page notation within the text.

but a model couple? Dowell's reaction is one of amazement at each subsequent revelation of a thriving, entirely subterranean life. Everything in life demands continual play-acting, even love.

The Dowells are prime specimens of rootless modern man. Wanderers from America without any possessive roots in a specific locale, the couple drift across the continent, moving without purpose, trapped by boredom and Florence's sexual scheming. Dowell is held to the earth only by the anchor of the portable deed to his forefather's farm. Leading a purposeless existence, his only function is a false one, that of nursemaid to a healthy wife. Leonora Ashburnham was correct when she recognized in Dowell the true invalid. For years he endeavoured to keep Florence, the "bright beam", in existence, yet Florence is really the source of darkness in the group, the one who destroyed the lives of those around her with her irresponsibility and thirst for self-gratification. Her heart trouble saves her from a physical relationship with her husband, but it also prevents her from reaching England - her one desire. Florence wastes her potential, like everyone else in the novel. Although possessed of a keen intelligence, she reveals a propensity to intellectual slumming. The Dowells are travellers who, since they never develop, never really get anywhere.

More than once, Dowell mentions his sense of not belonging anywhere in the world. His "nakedness" at Nauheim, where he does not share the actual patient's feeling of comfortable participation in an established routine, is only a further instance of the Dowell's rootlessness. The irony is that Florence herself does not belong by virtue of her health. The location itself seems antipathetic to people, for even Dowell perceives an environment that is essentially inhuman,

where men are alienated by an existence too "carefully arranged". Individuals neither belong harmoniously to the setting, nor do they belong to one another. Here, a man like Dowell is reduced to counting his footsteps in order to generate an interest in living. Such a life-style is even more degenerate than that of the generation before, for at least the "lovable" Uncle Hurlbird worked until his retirement. He also suffered under the illusion of a false "heart", being kept away from topics on "things" just as Florence was directed by Dowell. The couple has no real substance, for their relationship is based upon deceit and ineffectiveness. The husband is incapable of offering a woman satisfaction, and the wife trades in lies and deception. Dowell's bewilderment caused by Florence's duplicity is nowhere better expressed than in his puzzled reaction to her mockingly inviting smile at the baths.

Similarly, the Ashburnhams follow a dumb charade of convention in order to better conceal the barrenness of their life together. Rather than being victims of mutual misrepresentation like the Dowells, they remain too keenly aware of their own true natures. Edward uses a rigid adherence to gentlemanly convention to oppose his own sentimentalized passion. His dedication to convention is carried to such an extreme that Dowell, upon their first meeting, sees him as absolutely expressionless. Even his eyes refuse to speak, appearing "perfectly stupid". Leonora, however, had eyes that did speak, for to Dowell they issued "a most remarkable, a most moving glance, as if for a moment a lighthouse had looked at me". (page 33) In her coldness, Leonora clings to her Catholicism and refuses to admit defeat at the

hands of circumstance. Her life is one of calculation; her heart and feelings locked in her dispatch box with the key on her wrist.

Although living together, the Ashburnhams continually work at cross purposes. Edward's stone-like façade belies his sentimentality, which Dowell soon sees to be the man's principal attraction for women. At the same time, Ashburnham's optimism in love and his elevation of constancy to the highest of virtues are treated ironically. Only naïveté could allow Edward to retain the belief "that the woman he was making love to at the moment was the one he was destined, at last, to be eternally constant to". (page 27) Naïve sentimentalism and a faith in convention blind Edward to the responsibilities of his relationship with Leonora. A love so lacking in communication and understanding gives birth to a force that is destructive rather than productive. They are prisoners in isolation, alienated both physically and psychologically.

The two couples come to establish their friendship upon a foundation of emotional blackmail. Leonora's moment of indiscretion when she strikes Maisie Maids provides Florence with enough leverage to effect a meeting. While Leonora realizes that she must force a meeting of the four, it is Florence herself who accomplishes the task by suggesting that they share a dinner table. Dowell recognizes the momentary check of Leonora's "horse"; with Florence she is up against a formidable force. Starting with the assumption that they were all "good people", it proved impossible for Dowell to see anything but the superficial. Leonora was more perceptive and soon understood Florence's threat.

Because of the notion of "good people", everything in the four-square coterie was taken for granted, and this precipitated the group's disintegration. With nothing to show for nine years of acquaintance, neither experience nor knowledge of another human being, Dowell realizes that it was fatal to fail to question everything. Honesty and dishonesty become indistinguishable, when taking everything for granted, since it precludes the necessity of critical examination. One must obey all social rules, and never question their validity. The standard may be uncomfortable, but it is essential to keep things going smoothly. The "good people" must recognize one another automatically and be willing to obey the ritual of the social programme. Even the participants in the game are conscious of the "damnable nuisance" of taking everything for granted.

The electrifying experience during the excursion to the Castle of St. Elisabeth of Hungary in the town of M--- accentuates the power in the undercurrent of passionate emotional life beneath the surface. Competition between the two women becomes fierce when Florence embarks upon a campaign to educate Edward, although she is stymied when confronted with Leonora's cultural and intellectual superiority. Without any effort, Leonora is able continually to outdistance Florence since her knowledge comes to her more naturally, being less studied. Florence only gains control of the situation through the delivery of an audacious anti-Irish Catholic tirade and the establishment of physical contact with Edward. The speech hurts Leonora, but it is the laying of Florence's finger on Edward's wrist that throws the Ashburnhams into a terrified panic. Dowell senses the panic, but fails to understand the cause, remaining deaf to Leonora's futile pleas for comprehension.

Recognizing Dowell's denseness, Leonora merely laments their mutual damnation.

"Don't you see," she said, with a really horrible bitterness, with a really horrible lamentation in her voice, "Don't you see that that's the cause of the whole miserable affair; of the whole sorrow of the world? And of the eternal damnation of you and me and them"(page 45)

When her spasm of panic and pain has passed, she is forced once more to adopt her façade, blaming her outburst on wounded religious feeling rather than an apprehension of misery to come. Leonora agrees to conceal reality, but Dowell can't even find it.

These characters are actors trying to establish and maintain a pose that will enable them to continue nursing their own desires without incurring any disagreeable social reprimands. They must remember their parts flawlessly, accommodating each gesture and word to the effect desired. Dowell continues as nursemaid, totally engrossed in his profession. Florence must never remove her mask of fragility in the presence of her husband. Leonora feigns interest in Dowell's endeavours and attempts to conceal her own fuller awareness. Few illusions remain for her, continually forced to live one of the saddest illusions of all, that of being a woman who can keep her husband. Edward strangles his passionate impulses in order to live honourably, but the whole thing is a charade. He is a man who refuses to come to terms with his own nature, not really being the man Dowell sees, "a luckless devil ... tormented by blind and inscrutable destiny".(page 49)

Ashburnham's optimism in matters of love makes him an easy prey of "the mad passion to find an ultimately satisfying woman".(page 51) A generous impulse to give himself to women in order to comfort them led him along a progressive path of adultery, from a servant girl to La

Dolciquita, Mrs Basil, Mrs. Maidan, Florence, and finally the real passion of his life, Nancy Rufford. Repelled by his wife's coldness, he was forced to search for sympathy. His sexual generosity was linked closely, in Leonora's eyes, with another great defect, his desire to fulfill scrupulously all obligations of position. His duty to his station and the responsibilities that it entailed led to years of bitter quarreling between Edward and Leonora. His convictions were expensive, since his background thrust upon him the duties of a beneficent ruler, duties he sincerely attempts to uphold.

For Leonora, this type of seemingly irresponsible material generosity is as inconceivable as that of a sexual nature. She does not understand that both stem from the same source in Edward, his sentimentalism rather than his profligacy. Capable of handling both infidelities and financial affairs, Leonora, because of her hardness, only succeeds in alienating her and her husband irreparably. Her calculating capacity fails to engender love in Edward, only earning her his fear, and sometimes an awed admiration. Yet Edward was plagued by shame and remorse, always wishing his wife to remain ignorant of his behaviour, to preserve her "virginity" of thought.

Leonora makes an error in judgement in attempting to rescue her husband. Although aware of the real situation, she desperately clings to her conventional framework, bringing misery to all. Leonora must prove her point, that Catholic women do not lose their husbands. She remains blind to the impossibility of success in her particular case. There is little chance for a lasting reconciliation since there isn't any communication between husband and wife. The relationship will never be satisfactory, governed as it is by illusion rather than an

understanding of one another's temperaments and needs. Letting herself be guided by her brand of rigid Catholicism, Leonora inevitably finds herself disastrously mismanaging Edward's special problem. She was wrong to rescue him, bound as he was for ruin and remorse, merely providing him with the time and opportunity to destroy others and agonize himself. Leonora's coldness, her rigidity and even her patience were all wrong, either for Edward's redemption or a more rapid, less harmful destruction. Because of his hatred of scenes, Edward might have been forced back to fidelity by a screaming and abusive wife, but Leonora can only let herself go when unobserved. Slapping Maisie Maidan was "just striking the face of an intolerable universe".(page 54)

Leonora and Maisie present one of the saddest relationships in the novel, one woman degraded and the other crushed. To Leonora, Maisie appears as a promise of rest and contentment, since no threat of money problems darkens the picture. Pimping for her husband in a horrible perversion of Catholic purpose, Leonora feels her affections being directed toward the girl because of the aridity of her own emotional life. She pays for Maisie's passage from India, to provide temporary relief from Edward's need for a satisfying woman. Free at last from the fear of blackmailers, Leonora experiences a transitory moment of peace. Then Florence arrives to shatter her security. She is cornered into an intimacy with the Dowells in order to prove that she feels no jealousy and to maintain a close watch over Florence. Pimping for Edward becomes her particularly loathsome cross to bear, forcing her into a conspiratorial concert with her husband and Florence to keep Dowell in ignorance. What can she do but "accept the situation with a gravity too intense".(page 68)

While conscious of Leonora's error in judgement, Dowell directs his hatred against Florence, the truly corruptive influence within the circle, blaming her for her cruelly disruptive interference. Cherishing fond memories of the "submissive" Maisie Maigan, he sees his own wife as her executioner. "Yes, it would have left a better taste in the mouth if Florence had let her die in peace"(page 52) Maisie's discovery of Florence's annexation of Edward leads directly to her attempted flight and death. Yet in Dowell's recurring vision of judgement, it is his wife who stands in solitude. Her isolation and loneliness appear so complete that Dowell can only feel compassion, even for the woman he hates. This acute loneliness is pervasive and attacks all four characters, a seemingly cancerous growth without cure.

Dowell's relationship with Florence is founded upon deception and fostered by delusion. To the satisfaction of both, it operates smoothly enough, until the fragile tissue of lies is stripped away. Revealed for what it really is, their situation strikes panic and bewilderment into the hearts of Florence and Dowell. Florence seems to live under some inscrutable curse that forces her to commit acts of corruption on certain dates. Ford continually associates August 4 with Florence, her birth, the trip with Uncle Hurlbird, her seduction by Jimmy, the marriage with Dowell, the death of Maisie, her final exposure and her suicide. Florence's aunts, genuinely fond of Dowell, indeed the only characters in the novel to use his first name, attempt to avert the marriage, having an agonized awareness of the girl's true nature without being willing to directly condemn her. Florence experiences moments of keen anticipation when threatened with the revelation of her

real self, fearing Dowell and a world that might recognize her for what she is. She dies when confronted with discovery.

Dowell errs in not passionately taking Florence in her room during their elopement, since his refusal to act upon her offer of a warm embrace induces her deliberate determination to keep apart. In later years, Florence justifies herself to Leonora for such an infamous betrayal on the grounds of an "overmastering passion". Yet the passion is forced underground where it festers. Florence is forever trapped in her role as invalid in order to conceal her impurity, and her union with Dowell is a mere form, artificial and lifeless, "the husband an ignorant fool, the wife a cold sensualist with imbecile fears".(page 93)

The relationship between Edward and Nancy Rufford had at least the potential for a satisfying communion. His uprightness and her innocent goodness might, but for circumstance, have united in a more productive manner than the false positions around them. One might discount Edward's better qualities as the common attributes of any English gentleman, but in his particular case they were sincerely, if misguidedly, held as a personal goal. It is Nancy who reveals Ashburnham's greatness and kindness, traits which otherwise might have gone unrecognized because of his modesty. Even Leonora, while still critical, acknowledges Edward's splendiddness in the public arena. But his downfall was brought about by his inability to accept the full moral responsibility which must accompany such qualities if they are to provide the possessor with some form of support in times of crisis and moral dilemma. Mere duty to rank and station prove woefully inadequate, and Edward's potential for a moral superiority degenerates into a

confused sentimentalism. His final decision to restrain his hand in his love for Nancy reflects the last traces of an upright morality that has lost its bearings. It only succeeds in destroying everyone.

The emotional connexions between Dowell, Edward and Nancy are coloured by Dowell's own sentimentality. His vision of Edward, a naive hero-worship, develops into a ludicrous identification of worshipper with hero. Despite the prohibitive "ifs" of the final analysis of the two characters, Dowell equates himself with the man he emulates. He loves both Edward, whom he zealously imitates, and Nancy, whom he wishes to possess as Edward might have done. Immediately following the death of Florence, Dowell gives verbal expression to his subconscious desire to marry Nancy, this desire for possession being only another facet of his sentimentalism, receiving an ironic satisfaction by the novel's end. Because of his illusions, Dowell must, of necessity, regard Edward and Nancy in their most favourable lights. Ignoring the man's moral instability and the girl's lack of understanding and compassion, Dowell is able to make of their essentially corrupt and vicious relationship something pure and innocent.

Dowell recognizes the pain that the revelation of Edward's love for Nancy must have caused Florence, but he feels that it is well earned. Presenting Nancy in her cream-coloured dress as "a phosphorescent fish in a cupboard", Dowell indicates the girl's capacity for acting as a beacon to Florence, drawing her toward her own destruction. (page 109) Dowell feels nothing consciously upon Florence's death, merely observing his surroundings and experiencing a sense of belonging to the "walking dead". He had belonged to the company of "walking dead" for the whole of his married life, until the

moment of dawning consciousness when Leonora bluntly reveals Florence's suicide and infidelity. With her confidences, Leonora begins Dowell's awakening. Insight produces an ability to let Florence pass completely out of existence for Dowell, until she becomes nothing more than a case for study. With the same indifference with which he would regard a "scrap of paper", Dowell can pass from consideration of Florence to meditation on love and desire.

For a man so lacking in passionate impulse, Dowell develops a singular sensitivity to the fine shades of motivation and meaning in love. His analysis of love in general and his recognition of the falseness around him, aid him in coming to terms with the harsh reality of Edward's love for Nancy. While for Dowell the "sex instinct" does not count "for very much in a really great passion", he never denies the possibility of a desire for consummation. He sees love as something to banish isolation and loneliness, a longing for communion.

But the real fierceness of desire, the real heat of a passion long continued and withering up the soul of a man, is the craving for identity with the woman that he loves. He desires to see with the same eyes, to touch with the same sense of touch, to hear with the same ears, to lose his identity, to be enveloped, to be supported We are all so afraid, we are all so alone, we all so need from the outside the assurance of our own worthiness to exist. (pages 114-115)

Edward's quest for the ultimately satisfying woman is nothing more than this desire to complete the self through union with a complementary being. An artificial union of two opposing forces, like the marriages in the novel, can never remain balanced or satisfying. A love which exacts self-sacrifice remains truer and more permanent than a struggle between two selfish desires for gratification.

In the Rufford-Ashburnham relationship, the corruption and destruction of a young innocent is brought about by the moral confusion

of a man and the cold conventional normality of his wife. The husband proves incapable of effectively applying his own principles, and the wife allows her religious conventions to deteriorate into a vicious drive to inflict pain. Together, they ruin a third being, first shattering Nancy's illusions of their own marital state and then embroiling her in their emotional turmoil. While Dowell recognizes in Nancy's purity and early innocence a quality of sainthood, when the girl finds herself thrown upon the emotional battlefield between Edward and Leonora, her eyes are soon wrenched open to cruelty and corruption. In her position as pseudo-daughter, she is the catalyst that produces a violent reaction at Branshaw Teleragh. For years, Edward had remained unconscious of any desire for Nancy and unaware "that the taboo which extended around her was not inviolable".(page 111) Nancy takes his early expressions of caring as approval for good conduct, not as an indication of infidelity. Edward himself was not conscious of a wish to corrupt, only of a need to love. Nancy's innocence and moral rectitude exist on so exalted a plane that Dowell becomes "positively frightened" and "almost afraid to be in a world where there could be so fine a standard".(page 125) Her Catholic background, with its rectitude and repression, leaves her unprepared for a confrontation with bare passion. Starved for affection, she had looked to the Ashburnhams for protection and emotional fulfilment. She finds love, but in an impossible and confusing form. Corrupting her, the elder couple damn her.

The Ashburnhams work feverishly to breathe life into their charade of mutual compatibility, while actually living in complete discord. Edward's sentimentalism produces no sympathetic response in Leonora,

who exhibits a coldness of heart that freezes Edward's affection. Both live by bolstering illusion, since the wide chasm separating the two is so firmly established that it seems permanent. Constantly fighting one another, passively on Edward's part, actively on Leonora's, they never understand what genuinely motivates them. Persecuted by his wife's suspicion, Edward uses only his eyes to reproach Leonora "for thinking that he would try to corrupt Nancy".(page 132) But the glance is effective. Leonora sees that Edward begins to break up, not from an overwhelming "desire for possession, but from a dogged determination to hold his hand".(page 133) Once aware of the intensity of her husband's struggle, Leonora, with a sense of relief, relaxes her rigid control of both herself and the situation. Her mind slackens fatally with her feeling of relief. Dowell is sensitive to the sadness of a "clear intelligence" wavering, realizing that when Leonora relinquishes self-control she sparks a rapid disintegration. Leonora's feelings of love-hate toward Edward foreshadow those of another Fordian woman of cool capacity and tenacious determination, Sylvia Tietjens in Parade's End. Both women endeavour to revive their husband's love, themselves under the influence of a "love of the deepest description".(page 140) Their tactics are entirely unsuited to the particular case at hand, and they watch helplessly as their husbands turn toward women totally unlike themselves.

Edward Ashburnham extends toward his wife every form of conventional consideration, without, however, loving her. His admiration is not sufficient to overcome a sense of repulsion aroused by the hardness of her determination. She needs none of the comforting

which Edward is so adept at delivering to women, possessing no "magnetism" of mournfulness. Completely unreceptive to his emotionalism, Leonora seems lacking in "sentiment". Her endeavours to curb Edward's ~~largesses~~ succeed only in raising his anger rather than in quelling his generosity. She and her husband are always at cross-purposes, never achieving the least degree of symbiosis in their relationship. Edward wanted sympathy, not an iron hand.

He imagined that no man can satisfactorily accomplish his life's work without the loyal and whole-hearted cooperation of the woman he lives with. And he was beginning to perceive dimly that, whereas his own traditions were entirely collective, his wife was a sheer individualist. His own theory - the feudal theory of an overlord doing his best by his dependents, the dependents meanwhile doing their best for the overlord - this theory was entirely foreign to Leonora's nature. (page 146)

The Kilsyte case came as a relief to Leonora, an opportunity to prove her loyalty as a wife through steadfast backing. Pained by their estrangement, she realized that it was caused by Edward's opinion of her. "He seemed to regard her as being not only physically and mentally cold, but even as being actually wicked and mean." (page 149) Whatever appealed to Edward's sentimentalism and sense of tradition was continually discounted by Leonora's efficiency, her attitude driving him to other women in search of "moral support". Unfortunately, Edward mistakes each encounter as the definitive love, erroneously concluding that it must establish a bond for life.

Saddened by the deterioration of two "noble" natures, Dowell watches as Leonora and Edward struggle with their emotions and with each other. Leonora is ruthless in her determination to recoup the financial losses incurred by Edward's irresponsibility, but she fails to appreciate the sharp pain which her methods cause him. Edward feels physically soiled by the letting of Branshaw, shedding tears over the

selling of the ancestral Vandykes, yet his wife's only response is to give him a set of unwanted, unnecessary travelling cases. A few comforting words would have proved more effective, might even have arrested the growing distance between the two. The denial of any personal intimacy only widens the breach, driving Edward into the arms of successive women who offer sympathetic understanding and an expressed love.

Pathetically, Leonora sees as the "great day" of her life the point where they might return to England from India, her economies having proved successful. This only raises in Edward, not affection, but an increased hatred coupled with respect. Once again, his sentiments are transferred to another woman, and even he is unsettled by his own inconstancy as his affections shift from Mrs. Basil to Maisie Maidan. While torn between duty to his wife and lands and his passion for Maisie, he is horrified by Leonora's intention to pay for Maisie's passage to Nauheim. She threatens to manage Edward's loves with the same purposeful efficiency with which she had controlled his finances, her every action becoming hateful. Although Edward labours diligently to maintain an appearance of harmony, their relationship appears not only bankrupt, but a mutual torture.

Of all the characters, Leonora experiences a disintegration of character that is the most complete. Even so, she survives. Her virginal intelligence as a sheltered Powys was soon contaminated after marriage to Edward, his chronic infidelities acting as a corruptive influence. Weighing heavily upon her conscience, Leonora's twisted interpretation of Catholic doctrine forces her into the commission of atrocious acts. Trained by tradition to maintain both silence and an

"unchanged front", she must fight fiercely the overwhelming urge to speak out and unburden herself. When she finally does allow herself this emotional release, it proves her undoing. Observing scrupulously all stages of Edward's affairs, she struggles against the temptation to either yield or denounce. She thinks and waits silently, tortured by the keen desire to see Edward return voluntarily. Bewildered by the fact that he fails to recognize the goodness of her intentions, she comes to realize that, ironically, his women are both good to and for him. Completely unsentimental and lacking a creative imagination, Leonora still finds incomprehensible a woman's continued fascination after any extended period of intimacy. Frightened by the possibility of Edward's promiscuity widening, Leonora is forced to promote the infatuation between Edward and Maisie in order to focus his attentions. There exists the chance that he might return to her if he could satisfy his longings through her active influence. Leonora finds herself in the hateful position of pander to her husband, waiting silently for his satiety.

To secure the return of her husband would be a victory for both Leonora personally and for the Roman Catholic Church. Dowell's interpretation of her behaviour is tainted by his own anti-Catholicism, but her actions do reflect an almost unbelievable rigidity and perverseness in the application of religious principles. Feeling that she can do little more than wait patiently until God chooses to reward her with her husband's fidelity, Leonora sadly excuses as natural all masculine behaviour, no matter how disagreeable.

She saw 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. That was her sad and modest view of matrimony. (page 186)

Consequently, Leonora is forced to conceal Edward's flagrant excesses in order to avoid scandal, should he finally return to her. She comes close to accomplishing her task when she discovers the key to holding Edward, keeping him supplied with amusing girls and money. Profoundly happy when she gains Edward's recognition of her rightness in husbanding his resources, she treasures each act of kindness as a dog awaits a pat on the head for a trick well-done. Intimate whisperings and timid advances are seized upon as sure signs of a rekindled affection. Then Florence Dowell shatters her last vestiges of hope.

Everything that Leonora has worked for is smashed when she perceives the look of intimacy pass between Edward and Florence during the confrontation at M---. She and her husband begin to crumble when the "common flirt" disrupts their reserve. The corruptive influence of Florence hastens Leonora's own deterioration by forcing her to break her proud silence in her spontaneous and unreflecting outburst of warning to Dowell. Leonora realizes that nothing could alter the course of the growing intimacy between Edward and Florence and she is terror-stricken with the knowledge that the innocent Maisie Maidan will be heart-broken by Edward's desertion. Though conscious of her responsibility toward Maisie, she is powerless to offer any effective protection. Her own predicament is no more enviable, but at least she possesses her resourcefulness and a chameleon-like ability to adapt to change.

Smitten with the vulgarity of Edward's "detestable" affair with Florence, Leonora relinquishes all hope for a reconciliation. Something so different from his previous engagements, something so utterly impure, sounds a new note of finality. The situation becomes even more

entangled when Edward begins to feel an awakening of his love for Leonora in his permanent desire to comfort the mournful. Her misery has made her attractive. Enraged by Edward's unfaithfulness to the memory of Maisie, Leonora allows her self-control to slacken, just when the urgency of the situation is most intense. With a weakening of her reserve, she loses her defensive barrier and gives way to "a desire for communicativeness". (page 192) Leonora, once she goes so far as to speak at all, is unable to restrain her need to talk and finds herself in a living hell as she communicates with Florence. Her enemy becomes her confessor in an odd perversion of Catholic emotional response. Denied the comfort of legitimate confession because of her deceit, she secures her only emotional release from loneliness through the woman who causes her misery.

The strain of attentive watching is relaxed when Leonora realizes that Nancy is safe from Edward, and since only her vigilance had kept her finely tuned and "up to scratch", she collapses when her anchor-lines have been cut.

She relaxed; she broke; she drifted, at first quickly, then with an increasing momentum, down the stream of destiny. You may put it that, having been cut of from the restraints of her religion, for the first time in her life, she acted along the lines of her instinctive desires ... having let loose the bonds of her standards, her conventions, and her traditions, she was being, for the first time, her own natural self. (page 203)

Realizing that Edward was gone from her for good, her behaviour becomes a whirl of discordant impulses. The impossibility of maintaining a balance between pity and disgusted loathing drives her to acts of vulgarity and cruelty. Her "desire for communicativeness" remains unabated and she pours out a torrent of words over Nancy, her one

remaining intimate. She becomes Our Lady of Sorrows for the girl, who worships her with the intensity of religious devotion. Still tortured by the fact that Nancy and Edward would make each other happy, Leonora experiences an intense urge to lash the face of the woman who possesses the power to accomplish what she herself could never do, win the affection of Edward through sympathy and understanding. The only wheal that Leonora does succeed in inflicting upon Nancy is mental rather than physical.

Outraged, Leonora wishes "to go on torturing Edward with the girl's presence".(page 212) She becomes the devil incarnate within the triangle, a "cold fiend" viciously using every tool at her disposal to inflict pain. Her husband and Nancy stand tied to the whipping-post, as she lashes out at everything she cannot understand, striking once again at an "intolerable universe". Stung into action by the fear that Edward might commit suicide, Leonora begs the girl to give herself to the man who loves her. Nancy herself had been aware that Leonora "would come to that", to the point where she had lost the last shred of dignity.

Nancy's bright innocence was soon tarnished by the atmosphere of Branshaw Teleragh, and exposure to the emotional turmoil of the Ashburnhams gave birth to a sad conviction that a couple might live together in misery. Reading Edward's symptoms, Nancy realizes that he loves someone other than Leonora. Frightened, she reads these same symptoms in herself, "a person who is burning up with an inward flame; desiccating at the soul with thirst; withering up in the vitals".(page 225) The damnation that Leonora had predicted for everyone chases after Nancy, spreading a wearying sadness a few paces

ahead. Overwhelmed by the despair of Branshaw, Nancy resigns herself to the fact that "one must live sadly".(page 226)

It seemed to her that everything gay, everything charming, all light, all sweetness, had gone out of life. Unhappiness; unhappiness; unhappiness was all around her. She seemed to know no happy being and she herself was agonizing(page 224)

In a transposition of roles, Nancy becomes the mother of Leonora, comforting the miserable woman with tenderness and understanding. At the same time, because of her love for Edward, she acts as protectress, defending Edward from the cruel attacks of Leonora. She thus fulfills a role as mediatrix. But her saintliness becomes almost vicious in its intensity as she is pulled emotionally by both adults in opposite directions, each claiming her allegiance. Her advances rebuffed by Edward, she is violently castigated by Leonora for her "sin" of beauty and goodness, and is presented with adultery as the necessary expiation for the remission of sin. Her goodness deteriorates into a frightening cruelty, pure in its intensity, that lasts even into her subsequent madness. Insane, she holds onto the remnants of her faith as she repeats her religious creed, "Credo in unum Deum Omnipotentem". Madness offers her the only refuge from the pain of corruption.

Misguidedly, Edward follows a clear course of action governed by his conviction that he must not commit the "unthinkable" act and make Nancy his. His virtuous intentions come too late to prevent a descent into hell, yet his passive submission in the face of the tortures inflicted by Leonora and Nancy reveals the strength of his present conviction, a conviction that might have been useful, had it come years earlier. The two women present a united front in their campaign of unflinching persecution; once Nancy's view of Edward has been successfully poisoned, she becomes just as vicious as Leonora. Edward

refuses to defend himself against these attacks once he has determined upon a "correct" course of action. Even when the emotional turmoil is at its most feverish pitch, all three characters maintain their conventional masks of impenetrability.

It is, at any rate, certain that Edward's actions were perfectly - were monstrously, were cruelly - correct. He sat still and let Leonora take away his character, and let Leonora damn him to deepest hell, without stirring a finger. I dare say he was a fool: I don't see what object there was in letting the girl think worse of him that was necessary. Still there it is. And there it is also that all those three presented to the world the spectacle of being the best of good people. (page 246)

Edward arranges his final parting with Nancy with such strict decorum, such a denial of all human warmth and tenderness, that even Dowell is struck by the "horrible" nature of the performance. The restraint shown by all concerned is cruelly deceptive, an utter denial of the intense emotions that are operating just below the surface. Their traditional standards deny them the release of giving vent to the savagery that threatens to escape their vigilant control. As Dowell sees it, knives would have been more appropriate than words for resolving their difficulties. Edward, Leonora and Nancy become shuttlecocks, tossed violently backwards and forwards from one to the other with no hope of rest.

With Nancy gone, a "holy peace, like the peace of God which passes all understanding", comes to Branshaw Teleragh, and Edward salutes Leonora's triumph in a sentimental quotation from Swinburne. (page 251) The peace proves tenuous and short-lived, for when Edward receives Nancy's flippant telegram from Brindisi, he finds himself without the strength to carry on the charade. A sentimentalist to the end, he is denied the heroism of a tragic figure because of circumstance and his own moral confusion. Martyr to his particular set

of misdirected principles, Edward survives the arrows shot by Nancy and Leonora only to die transfixed on his "little neat penknife". Irretrievably lost and with a spirit so crippled as his, Edward could do nothing other than destroy himself. Empathetically, Dowell no longer places the blame solely upon Edward for the destruction which followed behind him in life, but rather upon some inscrutable destiny that darkens the lives of exceptional human beings.

Dowell's own bewilderment never fully clears and he continues to question destiny, recording his experience in literary form as emotional therapy, trying to bring into sharper focus the meaning and significance of their little drama as a whole. His prime concern lies in recognizing the wide division between appearance and reality, convention and passion, but Dowell still yearns for an earthly paradise of genuine serenity and contentment, not the "broken, tumultuous, agonized and unromantic lives, periods punctuated by screams, by imbecilities, by deaths, by agonies" he has known. (page 238) Convention works to destroy the exceptional individual, and promotes the survival of the normal. And so Leonora is preserved, and earns the enmity of Dowell, who mourns the fact that to her normality were sacrificed two unusual beings whom he had loved, Edward and Nancy. Infatuated, Dowell remains blind to the glaring weaknesses of Edward's irresponsible adherence to his conventional principles, ignoring, for the most part, the destructive consequences of Ashburnham's actions. Undoubtedly, the normal individual does survive, but Leonora's descent from a "virginal intelligence" to a "wicked villain" is a journey of degeneration far beyond the compass of normal experience.

Society must go on, I suppose, and society can only exist if the normal, if the virtuous, and the slightly deceitful flourish, and

if the passionate, the headstrong, and the too-truthful are condemned to suicide and to madness.(page 253)

The hollow meaninglessness of what remains of their lives echoes the bankruptcy of the modern age. Just as Nancy's correctness masks her insanity and chaotic emotions, so does the superficial refinement of society conceal rottenness and moral confusion. While undergoing what should have proved an educative ordeal, none of the characters seem any better able to communicate than they had been in the beginning. Even confessions are thrown out like daggers and succeed only in wounding rather than in establishing any communicative intimacy. Everyone proves incapable of giving love an expressive form that might produce a satisfying relationship. Running after contentment, these men and women are forever outdistanced, and since the lines of communication have been broken, the individual is gradually isolated and alienated. Driven more and more inward upon his own personality, where the collective sense loses meaning, modern man finds opportunism and a desire for self-gratification taking the place of responsibility and integrity. Ford, in The Good Soldier, through the portrayal of a small group of men and women embroiled in a storm of deceit, corruption and degeneration, shows a society in the last stages of decay, headed for a cataclysmic collapse. The individual, when divorced from the supportive sense of a governing, continuing tradition, proves incapable of weathering the storm. Anxious, the modern age is unsure of where to turn.

CHAPTER THREE: COLLAPSE

Parade's End amplifies Ford's vision of social degeneration outlined in The Good Soldier. He now depicts its final collapse. The carefully contrived appearance concealing an inner decay in the earlier novel gives way to an increasingly blatant opportunism that kills both personal and social integrity. The introduction of new elements into the existing social framework produces a death struggle between honour and selfishness. Vulgarly, baseness and mere improper conduct gain a foothold, soon displacing even a superficial adherence to conventional standards. Successful communication between men becomes impossible, and the individual is forced into a psychologically withering state of isolation. The fragmentary nature of the modern experience denies man a unified vision of the present, and he is set adrift upon a sea of moral confusion.

The First World War seemed to Ford the culmination of degenerative forces that had been at work for years. During the War, complete corruption was fully revealed for the first time. Unscrupulous individuals and nations lacking any sense of collective altruism indicate, for Ford, the extent of the decay, a decay seemingly all-pervasive. A few lone survivors manage to escape its influence and, because of their conscientiousness, intend to reconstruct their lives on a personal plane. While Sylvia Tietjens, Edith-Ethel Duchemin and Vincent Macmaster succumb to opportunism and self-gratification, characters like Christopher Tietjens and Valentine Wannop maintain an affinity, both emotional and intellectual, with an earlier age, one where the altruistic impulse had not yet been obliterated. Christopher Tietjens is presented as a more rounded embodiment of the ideal

conscientious individual suggested imperfectly by Edward Ashburnham in The Good Soldier. His successful personal reconstruction in Parade's End, in the face of persecution, deceit and harassment, establishes the foundation upon which Ford would build his vision of a world saviour, the small-producer of Provence and Great Trade Route.

In his autobiographical It Was the Nightingale, Ford provides numerous references to the germination and purposes of Parade's End. Returning from the War, Ford was confronted by an altered frame of mind in the civilian population, a frame of mind which indicated that a new psychological era had been born. Ford recognized that it "was the first sound - like the first grumble of a distant storm - the first indication I had that the unchangeable was changing, the incorruptible putting on corruption".¹ The men and women of England showed a fierce determination to root out and destroy those who had fought in the War, engendering a dangerous cynicism in both traitor and betrayed. Such an unhealthy attitude at such a critical time of national life could only hasten the complete disappearance of any remaining vestiges of pre-War existence. Recklessness had become the dominant note of the age, individuals losing control of themselves and their destinies. Life in the trenches and life in London are both chaotic, one and the same, really. The madness of the wartime situation is presented through the consciousness of Tietjens, allowing the reader to share the shattered vision of a man returning to England from active duty at the Front. The insecurity and fragmentary nature of life during hostilities were mirrored in the everyday world of what had been home. "Nay, it had been

1. F.M. Ford, It Was the Nightingale, (London, 1934), page 12.

revealed to you that beneath Ordered Life itself was stretched, the merest film with, beneath it, the abysses of Chaos. One had come from the frail shelters of the Line to a world that was more frail than any canvas hut."²

Taking as his subject the public events of a decade, Ford wished to depict the crumbling of the Western World - the War. Utilizing the observations of a central consciousness, and Christopher Tietjens is an exact and conscientious observer, Ford focuses attention on the collapse of Western values. Yet he always maintains his faith in the possibility of recovery. As an earnest pacifist, Ford endeavours to obviate all future wars through a revelation of their utter madness and intense misery. Attempting to legitimize his concentration on the modern strain of anxiety, he stated:

... it seemed to me that, if I could present, not merely fear, not merely horror, not merely death, not merely even self-sacrifice ... but just worry; that might strike a note of which the world would not so readily tire ... worry feeds on itself and in the end so destroys the morale that less than a grasshopper becomes a burden. It is without predictable terms; it is as menacing as the eye of a serpent; it causes unspeakable fatigue even as, remorselessly, it banishes rest. And it seemed to me that if the world could be got to see the war from that angle, there would be no more wars.³

The worry and anxiety that haunt modern men are especially torturous to the man with a conscience. Such is the case with Tietjens, a man harassed by continuous worries both at home and abroad, to the point where the mind is driven in desperation to the verge of madness.

In addition to Ford's own idealized vision of himself, a personal acquaintance, Arthur Pierson Marwood, provides the model of conscious integrity and clarity of vision that was to become Christopher

2. Ibid, page 49.

3. Ibid, page 206.

Tietjens. A firm believer in a traditional standard of values, Marwood was a conscientious individual making an attempt to come to terms with modernity. Marwood "possessed the clear, eighteenth-century English mind which has disappeared from the earth, leaving the earth very much the poorer. It was not merely that his mind was encyclopaedic, it was that his information was all arranged".⁴ Although Marwood died before the War, Ford found little difficulty in continuing his friend's consciousness through these later years. He had been a man of profound understanding of contemporary issues. The intellectual and moral affinity between Marwood and the fictional creation is a firm indication of Ford's undying respect for the upholders of moral rectitude in an age of confusion. The resemblance between the two men extends even to their physical appearance, for Marwood once said of himself, "I'm an elephant built out of meal-sacks".⁵ These same words are used of Tietjens by Valentine Wannop as she sets out on her new life.

Tietjens is presented as a man caught in a web of persecution and lasting tribulation, "with a permanent shackle and ball on his leg ... something of a moral order and something inscrutable".⁶ His shackle is his relationship with his estranged wife Sylvia and his own sense of decency which effectively prevents a divorce. He faces his trials heroically and remains true to his own standard of values, but in the end is forced to abandon both his class allegiances and his ties

4. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932), page 359.

5. F.M. Ford, It Was the Nightingale, (London, 1934), page 188.

6. Ibid, page 189.

with the past in order to survive. Within the existing social framework, no place exists for a man of Tietjens' integrity. He must build his own society among like-minded individuals, maintaining the firm cohesiveness of a small community founded upon an effectual base. Unlike Edward Ashburnham's dreamy idealism, Tietjens' notion of a paradisaical state is firmly rooted in reality. As Norman Leer writes in The Limited Hero, "Ford always acknowledged the need for an idealism to overcome the contemporary sense of chaos, but this idealism had to be grounded in realities and based on a sense of limitation, both of itself and of mankind in general".⁷

SECTION I

From his introduction in Some Do Not..., Christopher Tietjens is established as an upholder of tradition and order. There exists a fundamental difference between his psychological make-up and that of Vincent Macmaster, his friend and fellow-worker, for Tietjens feels secure in his integrity and adherence to tradition, while Macmaster is modern, rootless and self-conscious. Macmaster must strive for position, not having been born to it. Leading a highly contrived life, he plans his actions carefully with an eye to advancement and security. The correction of a superior seems an act of foolhardiness that might lead to ruin. His admiration for Tietjens's loftiness is unbounded, recognizing as he does the sharp division separating those born on an elevated plane and those struggling to crash through the gates. From Ford's poem Mister Bosphorus and the Muses come the lines which delineate the separation between men of tradition and integrity and men of the modern age. Morally confused characters like Macmaster, Sylvia

7. Norman Leer, The Limited Hero in the Novels of Ford Madox Ford, (Michigan, 1966), page 111.

and Mrs. Duchemin are aware of integrity (in the person of Tietjens), but they fail to fully understand it and regard it as a personal threat which must be overcome. They cannot come to terms with a man who is psychologically secure in his position, a man neither opportunist nor afraid to commit outrages on conventions they feel to be sacrosanct. Tietjens's was a hard lot.

The Gods to each ascribe their various fates;
Some entering in; some baffled at the gates....
The Gods to each ascribe a differing lot!
Some rest on snowy bosoms! Some do not....
To some the stones; to some the yielding bed
The Gods ascribe!⁸

A man of such conscious integrity and almost incomprehensible scrupulousity was foreshadowed in an earlier novel by Ford, The New Humpty Dumpty. Count Sergius Macdonald confounds those around him with his disinterestedness and chivalric code of personal honour. Like Tietjens, he is surrounded by men and women of another "time spirit". Both men belong to the past in much the same way, or for that matter, to a Fordian utopia of the future. Macdonald's scrupulousness is given expression by one of his admirers, Kintyre, and the description applies equally well to Tietjens in many respects.

Kintyre couldn't in the least understand where Macdonald had got his peculiar scrupulousness. He could only imagine that Macdonald had been brought up ... to a point of punctiliousness that must have vanished from the world perhaps a hundred years ago. And, of course, he could see that Macdonald, having been educated in his later years at Harrow, had taken seriously all the points of schoolboy honour that he considered most English boys to regard as impracticable and too visionary for daily use.⁹

8. F.M. Ford, Mister Bosphorus and the Muses, (London, 1923), pages 56, 57 & 60.

9. F.M. Ford, The New Humpty Dumpty, (London, 1912), page 329.

Macdonald formulates his aims in life, and while they are more ambitious than those of Christopher Tietjens, they come from the same desire to preserve what is best in the world.

He was forced to regard himself - if he was to regard himself as anything at all - as something of a crusader in life. After all, he was trying to key things up - to key up the whole world. He was trying not so much to put back the hands of the clock as to retain for the world something that the world already possessed ... it was a question of proving to the world that certain things were good, and that there was enough to go around.¹⁰

The woman with whom he discovers an emotional and intellectual affinity, Lady Aldington, recognizes, like Valentine Wannop, the superiority of the man she loves. His chivalric qualities are presented as something precious that needed to be saved from the levelling influence of modernity, and his quixotic nature attempts to correct injustices however much harm he may cause himself. Even the man who, through envy, succeeds in destroying Macdonald, Mr. Pett, sees the desirability of preserving men of such stature. Momentarily, personal motives cloud his vision of a larger cause, and he kills Macdonald, but as the better half of Pett saw it:

It struck him that humanity had spent millions of pounds and millions of lives to train him to be the chivalrous and self-sacrificing creature that he is. Then what was the good of our spending just about as many efforts to undo what humanity has unconsciously been doing for ages? What we've got to do ... is to level up, not to level down.¹¹

Macdonald's Christ-like qualities, like those of Tietjens, are recognized but receive only reprimand and castigation, ultimately leading to his own crucifixion.

"Now, you know," Mr. Salt commented, "You can't go on being like a Jesus Christ all your life."¹²

10. Ibid., page 123.

11. Ibid., page 76.

12. Ibid., page 388.

In Parade's End, Sylvia Tietjens, the woman who instigates the persecution and harassment worrying Tietjens throughout the novel, is presented as a source of amorality and chaotic impulse. Introduced as a sylvan figure in a primitive setting, she suffers from modern boredom and a lack of direction. Completely anaesthetized against the savagery of the artistic decoration of her German locale, she provides a foil for the saintliness of Father Consett, a family friend and spiritual advisor. Father Consett develops into an important positive force, a source of light and clarity of vision. A living saint, he alone can match Tietjens's integrity, possessing a similar standard of values. Both living and dead, he exerts a powerful influence over the emotional life of Sylvia, memory of him acting as the spur to her own better conscience. A prophetic visionary, he sees Sylvia's hell as the love of her husband for another woman. Understanding odd motives, he outlines the future course of Sylvia's campaign of persecution and the probability of her committing an act of vulgarity.

"Doesn't every woman who's had a man to torture for years when she loses him?" the priest asked. "The more she's made an occupation of torturing him the less right she thinks she has to lose him."¹³

The lack of personal communication presented in The Good Soldier is repeated in the Tietjens's marriage. Christopher and Sylvia, with fundamental psychological differences, are unable to enter upon any form of productive discussion. Neither has the ability to understand the impulses which motivate the other to speech or action. Tietjens's traditionalism and staunch uprightness clash with the modern

13. F.M. Ford, Parade's End, (New York, 1972), page 42. All subsequent references in this chapter to Parade's End will be indicated by a page notation within the text.

opportunism of Sylvia, he being the product of a lengthy past, she the offspring of a new-born era. Her incomprehension of her husband is complete, for by a perverted twist of insight and reasoning, she comes to view Tietjens's outdated integrity as "immorality", judging his virtues to be defects. Sylvia's inability to draw any passionate reaction from her husband creates an unbearable strain, driving her into a frenzied frustration. Receiving nothing more than an aloof tolerance from Tietjens, Sylvia's "sex ferocity" forces her to inflict pain in an endeavour to realize some form of influence. Her husband's strict adherence to formal convention and truth infuriates her, she seeing his manners and reserve as mere signs of an unvoiced consciousness of personal superiority. Sylvia's desire to assert herself in the face of such indifference follows the only channel that remains open to her, revenge through torment. Her campaign of persecution touches upon Tietjens's most sensitive weaknesses, but finally drives her to the privately unpardonable sin of "bad form".

Opportunism is foreign to Tietjens's nature, and its absence leads the man to disaster, since his own class no longer lives by the same code. He takes the responsibilities of his position and his intelligence seriously, possessed of a mind that is not constantly working for advantage, but rather for self-satisfaction. Believing in the solidarity of men, Tietjens frowns upon modern jockeying for personal advantage or spite. His intellectual affinity with the past is stressed throughout the four volumes of the novel, and is in full accord with his traditional standard of values. Living in a present no longer his own, Tietjens's integrity leaves him at the mercy of men who have long since abandoned such a formidable scrupulosity.

Competitiveness may seem demeaning, but without conscious effort to maintain position, Tietjens feels it slip through his fingers. Because of Tietjens's honourable silence in the face of defamation, public opinion naturally comes to side with Sylvia and his detractors. However, he believes himself to be behaving "correctly" in not defending himself more vigorously against attacks upon his reputation, and continues to support Sylvia, feeling that it "was better for a boy to have a rip of a father than a whore for a mother".(page 77)

Tietjens is confronted with the rapid emergence of new social phenomena, the introduction of new social types lacking in tradition and stability. The bastion erected by preceding generations of gentlefolk is no longer secure against infiltration and invasion and Tietjens is aware of and regrets the fact.

"Ah! But it isn't so easy to arrange nowadays. All sorts of bounders get into all sorts of holies of holies!"(page 94).

The rise of vulgarity heralds the demise of everything that Tietjens cherishes. The scene in the golf club between gentlemen and the "swine" from the city marks "the end of the world", for here are the men of the future, rootless, vulgar and without circumspection. The suffragette disturbance on the links echoes this confrontation between old and new, and unsettles Tietjens with the novelty of screams against physical violence occurring on English soil. At the same time, some aspects of the past receive Ford's censure, especially when coupled with the desire for self-gratification. The insane obscenities of Breakfast Duchemin and his wife's hypocritical preference for a "thrilling chastity" reveal the author's lack of sympathy for the mere trappings of Pre-Raphaelitism.

General Campion compares Tietjens to Dreyfus, possibly an innocent, but an unsettling element within society nevertheless. Tietjens himself is conscious of his isolation as a "lonely buffalo", separated from the common herd, yet he maintains a faith in the value of the individual. The unit appears "agreeable" for the most part, but the mass seems "hideous". Alone, Tietjens finds his enemy to be a collective one, centered on his wife's machinations. On a one-to-one basis, Tietjens is sometimes able to establish a relationship of mutual respect, usually with social inferiors. His own class sees him as a threat which must be emasculated and rendered impotent. Tietjens is undeniably a man born to rule, a man whose competence and authority are recognized by both animals and menials. Only his peers fail to understand his motives.

One other conscientious individual survives in the modern age, Valentine Wannop, and she too is a discordant element within conventional society. Tietjens senses an emotional and intellectual affinity with Valentine, only finding true contentment in her presence. He recognizes their potential for exerting a beneficial influence upon the future of England, as a man and woman whose clarity of vision and firmness of standards make them the true "backbone" of the nation. While a common life with Sylvia would be a "cavernous eternity of weary hopelessness", life with Valentine would seem a balanced harmony. (page 121) Both women represent for Tietjens opposite poles of such complete purity that they demand respect, the destructive force of Sylvia to kill and the constructive force of Valentine to cure. Presented with an alternative, Tietjens is quick to transfer the major part of his sentimental allegiance from wife to lover. His early desire

to break convention with Valentine, indicated in his unrealized kiss, reveals the extent to which her influence might relax Tietjens's excessive stolidity. It is from Valentine, that Tietjens finally learns to differentiate between his principles, which give him stability and mere superficial adherence to "good form". Yet for some time he remains unable effectively to abandon either.

The modern note of chaos is nowhere sounded more clearly than in the psychology of Sylvia Tietjens. "Man-mad" like her set, she is driven by a compelling sex-ferocity that releases itself, when confronted with obstacles, in bursts of cruelty. The incomprehensibility of Tietjens for a woman like Sylvia proves an insurmountable obstacle. Her device of "scornful insolence" succeeds only in alienating her husband more completely. Her one desire is to recapture the brutality of her original seducer, Drake, even if it were to be with her own husband. Her frustration stems from the fact that none of her persecutory manoeuvres prove successful in eliciting an emotional response from Tietjens, an impregnable wall of aloof reserve and patience. Although failing to understand Tietjens's motives, she catches occasional glimpses of his superiority and his eighteenth-century habit of mind. Such brief flashes of recognition fail to promote her cause, since she lacks Valentine Wannop's unconscious power, of harmoniously insinuating her person into the mind of Tietjens. Sylvia shows an exhausted frustration when in close proximity to her husband, for even physical violence fails to ruffle his imperturbable calm. Several times, she expresses concern for Tietjens in emotional outbursts of thwarted protectiveness, all aspects of her fervent desire to draw some active response on his part. A note of pity often rings out in the midst of passionate recrimination.

Sylvia is aware of, yet baffled by Tietjens's code of honour, curious as to why so honourable a man is "overwhelmed by foul and baseless rumours". (page 166) She herself establishes the precedent for his persecution, and is soon imitated by others who see Tietjens as a disturbing threat. No honest current of communication runs between the Tietjenses, and only during rare instances of fierce confrontation does Sylvia at least give expression to her deepest feelings. She reveals what she desperately requires - not to be forgiven, spurred on by a thirst for condemnation.

Instances of bitch figures recur throughout many of Ford's works, most fully developed in the Countess Macdonald (The New Humpty Dumpty), Leonora Ashburnham and Sylvia Tietjens. These women live under a cloud of unrelieved anxiety and sexual frustration, for their efforts to either understand or retain possession of their husbands end in inevitable failure. Completely out of sympathy with their husbands' finer qualities, they endeavour to secure the return of their men through tactics totally inappropriate. The Countess Macdonald is markedly similar to Sylvia Tietjens, both in her campaign to achieve the ruination of her husband and her total incomprehension of his character. She exerts pressure and strain with her mere presence in much the same way that Sylvia Tietjens can draw a wince from Tietjens. "Upon Macdonald himself his wife's tongue, her mannerisms, the flow of her voice, acted with an enervating physical effect. It seemed at the same time to stop his heart, to set an immense weight upon his skull as if for many nights he had been deprived of sleep, and to render his limbs numb and weary."¹⁴ Like Sylvia, the Countess wishes to beggar her husband in order to secure his return.

14. F.M. Ford, The New Humpty Dumpty, (London, 1912), page 93.

"I'll beggar him. I've got ways to do it. And then when he's beggared he'll come back to me."¹⁵

But once a man has found "the ultimately satisfying woman", no one else can hope to retain him. The abandoned wife is left with only her incomprehension.

"What are they compared to a woman like me? What do you see in them? How do they attract you? It's a mystery; it's all a mystery."¹⁶

Tietjens gains a clearer understanding of his wife's behaviour only after he finds himself emotionally tied to Valentine. Sylvia's campaign of persecution is nothing other than a cry for attention and consideration, and Tietjens's firm belief in the reality of a "gallant enemy" leads him to shield Sylvia from all blame for their breach despite her self-confessed "wickedness". Brief hints are given of Tietjens's growing awareness of Sylvia's love, "the impossible complication". (page 224) Tietjens's taciturn elder brother Mark, with shrewd penetration, perceives Sylvia's love for her husband. At the same moment as he reveals the fact to Tietjens, Christopher has simultaneously reached a conscious declaration of his love for Valentine. This "impossible complication" instills within Tietjens a desperate suicidal impulse to return to active combat. There stirs within him also a desire to abandon his traditional code of behaviour, but to do so, he must first learn to distinguish between a code of convention and genuine personal integrity.

15. Ibid, page 215.

16. Ibid, page 95.

Tietjens is placed under enormous emotional pressure because of his adherence to a standard no longer common. His anomalous position within society requires a singularly tenacious hold on his principles. Peace and contentment, envisioned in terms of the eighteenth century, become Tietjens's prime objectives. With a private ambition to achieve an Anglican saintliness, "he must be able to touch pitch and not be defiled", but the pitch surrounding him becomes ever more black and difficult to repel. (page 187) The issue of the overdrawn bank account, designed by Brownlie to initiate Tietjens's ruin, appears to both the Tietjens brothers to be "the last of England". Even the denigrations of Ruggles are sufficient to retard Tietjens's advancement. The fact that Tietjens is more altruistic than the society around him proves a disadvantage, for everyone will attempt to undercut his moral superiority. He expresses a strong love for England, but reveals an inability to accommodate himself to its modern form. Around him, standards are being cast aside like soiled garments as individuals scramble for self-gratification in an atmosphere of moral chaos. As he himself sees isolation: "what I stand for isn't any more in this world an idealist - or perhaps it's only a sentimentalist - must be stoned to death." (page 237) Making others uncomfortable, he must either leave their society willingly or be forcibly cast out. This conflict becomes acute in Tietjens's powerlessness to reconcile the conduct of the War with his own conscience. His inevitable disillusionment when faced with the modern lack of disinterestedness, both public and private, is rapid and complete. Tietjens's loyalty and generosity continually meet with

abusive treachery. Only Valentine Wannop understands and shares his unique code of morality.

Valentine provides a source of calm and serenity for Tietjens, her ideal man incarnate. Her early illusions about human integrity were shattered with the revelation of Edith-Ethel Duchemin's real nature, having previously regarded the world as "a place of renunciations, of high endeavor and sacrifice". (page 229) Ford reveals Edith-Ethel in all her dishonest, squalid sexuality, hiding behind a screen of "thrilling chastity", a completely modern being motivated by pure selfishness and a determination to advance. With Tietjens, Valentine is able to recapture the aura of purity peculiar to her innocence. Permitted a different perspective of the man than Sylvia had ever experienced, she watches him become more human and less infallible as their growing intimacy establishes the freedom for Tietjens to give vent to the expression of doubts. Unlike Sylvia, who can find no breach in her husband's facade of "noli me tangere", Valentine finds a man of simplicity in need of comfort. Tietjens and Valentine maintain a remarkable moral balance in a tempest of compromise. Everything around them is crumbling, but they form a cohesive unit of determined resistance against the modern spirit.

SECTION II

No More Parades illuminates the madness of the wartime situation, a world where chaos and irrationality have taken command. The pressures of war, coupled with domestic difficulties, exert a profound influence upon Tietjens that steadily mounts to a pitch of near-insanity. The situation within the ranks is lamentable, but the blame is focused upon the self-interest and mismanagement on the Home Front. Ford emphasizes

the unbearable strain created by worry, concentrating on those problems occurring in England about which the soldier stationed in France can do nothing, the greatest pains being psychological and stemming from home. Modern war permits "unthinkable things", a sense of absurdity colouring all actions and words. Seeing the army increasingly demoralized by rumours of civilian intrigue on the Home Front, Tietjens is quick to perceive and regret the detrimental influence of civilian interference in military procedure. Disastrous Home machinations, entirely gratuitous, indicate a potential for English dishonour. Social, as well as political and military disintegration stem from one source, the modern lack of familiarity with elevated thought.

You cannot fight an atmosphere of poison gas with the rules of cricket any more than you can expect to rule cultured people - or any people if you are unacquainted with the highest imaginative thought of the world of your day. This Anglo-Saxondom has never believed. That is why Anglo-Saxondom is crumbling as Rome did to its doom.¹⁷

England's predicament in the War grew out of the national belief that the game is more important than the player. But the rules of the game don't take account of the individual, and Tietjens's sense of finality and impending doom is acute, as he expresses it to the crazed Captain McKechnie:

"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"(page 570)

While admitting the hopelessness of the situation, Tietjens struggles to maintain his sense of responsibility and forge some semblance of order out of the confusion around him. His sense of duty extends even to Captain McKechnie's mental equilibrium, since all his

17. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932), page 379.

men are pieces of His Majesty's property and Tietjens feels obligated to ensure their safety and well-being. Tietjens's attempts to impose order on his environment range from keeping whatever comes under his control in the best possible form, to the intellectually disciplined game of sonnet composition. Each is an instance of forced order in a world of chaotic absurdity. Tietjens is grasping for a sense of accomplishment, of doing the best possible job of which he is capable. The reality of War acts against him, he being continually harassed by the problem of maintaining an effective group together in the face of imminent dispersal.

The motives and emotions involved in the strained relationship between the Tietjens receive depth and clarification in No More Barades, as Tietjens's thoughts of Valentine become increasingly obsessive and he endeavours to think through the meaning of his ties to his wife. Imagining Sylvia as sending him her hate as a pure conscious exercise, Tietjens remains unsure of his responsibilities toward her, but firmly believes in the traditional English maxim of "no scenes", a man whose instinct for privacy is absolute. This makes his desire to leave Sylvia for Valentine all the harder to achieve. He had believed himself free because of the severed proprietary ties resulting from Sylvia's clear cry of "Paddington!" to the taxi-driver, but with the growing awareness of his wife's love for himself comes an ever stronger pull from his set of established principles. Effectively prevented from divorcing Sylvia as the mother of the heir to Groby, he finds freedom desirable, but is unsure of the extent of Sylvia's legitimate claims upon him. Aided by an anecdotal revelation of Mrs. Satterthwaite's about Father Consett, Tietjens perceives Sylvia's ultimate aim - the

permanent disturbance of his equanimity. He realizes that she had deliberately, if temporarily, manoeuvred him into Valentine's arms as part of her threatened campaign for his ruination. In her frustration, Sylvia edges closer to those acts of vulgarity and "bad form" predicted by Father Consett. Before Tietjens had returned to the Front, his last confrontation with Sylvia had concluded with a gesture of physical violence on her part.

Sylvia acknowledges her desire for her husband, craving some form of reaction from this man she still loves, a man whose expressionless face drives her to near insanity and provokes her into committing acts of cruelty where she may inflict the deepest pain. "By the immortal saints," she exclaims "I swear I'll make his wooden face wince yet." (page 381) Her desire to hurt springs from the same source as did Leonora Ashburnham's, the frustrated desire to draw love. For Sylvia, Tietjens appears to be playing an unacceptable part, that of Jesus Christ. At the same time, she feels that her relentless persecution is almost unsporting, for he impresses her as being "worn-out", no longer an equal opponent. She remains perceptive, however, to the stupidity of some of her strategic efforts to inconvenience Tietjens. Using Major Perowne, who himself recognized in her an aspect of cruelty, as a confessor, Sylvia reaffirms her love for her husband. Tietjens has spoiled her completely, for, next to him, other men appear immature.

"If that man would throw his handkerchief to me, I would follow him round the world in my shift! Look here ... see me shake when I think of it" (page 386)

Sylvia possesses a set of moral principles of her own, but unlike Tietjens's they do not have any foundation, always at the mercy of her

tempestuous passionate nature, where chaotic impulse frequently overrides considerations of scruple. While she refuses, because of her strong Catholicism, to swear an oath on her relic of Saint Anthony, when in all likelihood she would fail to honour it, she cannot control her thirst to pursue Tietjens with unbridled enmity. Fully aware of the ferocity of her sexual passion, and of the fact that it will probably prove to be the ruin of them both, Sylvia comes to fear that such a powerful force may reach madness. Feeling herself betrayed by Tietjens for the army rather than Valentine, she is sensitive of her inability to compete successfully. Failing to raise an emotive response in Tietjens, Sylvia is angered by his "appalling competence", which seems to indicate the presence of some "evil eye" or "special protector".(page 406) In desperation, Sylvia tells Tietjens's godfather General Campion that her husband is a Socialist, but once this has been done, the field for her persecutive activities can't be extended much farther. Sylvia communicates with her one light of guidance, the martyred Father Consett, making a pact that if one presentable man should present himself she would leave Tietjens in peace. When no sign is given, she continues her destructive campaign, recognizing Tietjens as the last of a breed and refusing to let him go. Her greatest fear is that her husband may be intent upon killing himself, using the War as an implement of suicide. To prevent this, she threatens him with the destruction of Groby Great Tree.

Tietjens's meeting with Sylvia at the Front, especially the nightmarish episode in her hotel room, pushes him closer to the edge of insanity. A nervous breakdown seems unavoidable when the irrationality of War life is burdened with the additional pressure of emotional

tribulations of an intensely private nature. The death of O Nine Morgan sparks in Tietjens a long-continuing morbid train of thought, the dead man haunting him as an eerie symbol of the seriousness of his responsibilities. His suffering over this individual casualty reveals to Sylvia the precariousness of Tietjens's mental state. Yet subordinates still recognize Tietjens's innate superiority, and even Colonel Levin is conscious of a self-sacrificial aspect which tends to blur his sense of "proportion". When persecution reaches the climactic point where Tietjens is to be sent up the line to an almost certain death, he momentarily feels that the time has come to retaliate. Seconds later he realizes his error.

"I shall fight this monstrous treatment of myself to my last breath" Of course he would never fight any treatment of himself!(page 477)

Tietjens can do nothing other than maintain his scrupulous integrity even when faced with death. He merely wishes to remain true to the notions of Anglican sainthood that were apparently given bodily form in his mother. As Tietjens sees it:

"It's the quality of harmony, sir. The quality of being in harmony with your own soul. God having given you your own soul you are then in harmony with Heaven."(page 496)

He explains himself to General Campion as an anachronism, a product of the eighteenth century caught in the convulsive modern world. An acute pang of "home-sickness" runs through Tietjens, but home remains forever unattainable, for it exists only in the past, the calm world of George Herbert and Bemerton Parsonage. Images of George Herbert and Bemerton as symbols of an idyllic peace recur throughout Parade's End. For Tietjens, and Ford, they represent the calm contentment and clarity of thought so characteristic of the seventeenth century. Even in the later

March of Literature, Ford reverts to the tranquility of George Herbert, noting Izaak Walton's acknowledgement of the man's fundamental generosity and compassion.¹⁸ But Tietjens's vision of Bemerton no longer exists in the world, and he finds himself both an outcast and voluntary exile, possessed of only one glimmer of hope, the possibility of communion with Valentine.

SECTION III

A Man Could Stand Up -- begins with the chaos of Armistice, and the confusion at Valentine's school effectively mirrors the unsureness of the times. Valentine is conscious of the day's importance, for normality may be either restored or lost. Lost it is, and she comes to see the "late cataclysm" as meaning "no more respect". The end of the War marks the definitive end of a way of life, and the path is now clear for the emergence of a tawdry modernity. In London, order gives way to saturnalia and a loss of control, a fitting background for the upheaval in Valentine's own scheme of things. Yet the day provides a chance for new beginnings, and Valentine seizes the opportunity to possess the man she loves.

Ford uses the time shift to retrace the development of Tietjens's battered consciousness, showing a man of integrity and intelligence overwhelmed by the insanity of war and the lack of altruism in the contemporary scene. Tietjens's nervous breakdown is induced by the spirit of the age, a world in which a man of his nature has no place. Ford utilized his own War experiences to render so realistically the intensity of the mental pressures and anxieties that stem from modern warfare - the unceasing noise, the mud, and the imposed idleness.

18. F.M. Ford, The March of Literature, (London, 1939), page 479.

Tietjens develops an obsessive detestation of slippery mud, and noise resolves itself, in his strained ears, into patterns that mimic orchestral composition. The idleness provides time for contemplation, but the chaos of the environment prevents any continuity or coherence of thought. Acutely sensitive to signs of approaching madness, Tietjens submits himself to constant self-examination. He feels the true image of modern war to be that of Time itself standing still, a product of the eternal process of waiting. Oppressed by the close proximity of McKechnie's madness, he keeps under a shortened rein his own wandering mental state. Ford emphasizes continually the strain of worry, as he outlined it in It Was The Nightingale, and this is one of the principal motives of the novel.

Wounds, rain, fear and other horrors are terrible but relatively simple matters; you either endure them or you do not. But you have no way by which, by taking thought, you may avoid them. There are no alternatives But what is happening at home, within the four walls, and the immediate little circle of the individual - that is the unceasing strain! And you are not even powerless to do anything You can do very little. But you can do a little and the real agony comes when you have to rack your brains over what, within those pitifully small limits, it is best to do. That is torturing he is indeed, then, Homo Duplex: a poor fellow whose body is tied in one place, but whose mind and personality brood eternally over another distant locality.¹⁹

Tietjens finds distressing the "un-feudal" composition of the modern army, where so many traditionally unacceptable elements are being introduced, both men and procedures. The notion of a single command was an issue of prime importance in Tietjens's conception of English military honour. General Campion himself had favoured the single command as indispensable for the conclusion of hostilities. However, both men are conscious of the "sharp practice" of the Home

19. F.M. Ford, It Was the Nightingale, (London, 1934), pages 196-197.

Front with regard to Puffles. Whitehall and the English authorities prove capable of sacrificing great numbers and disgracing one of their own best men in order to discredit both him and the idea of the single command.

Seeing McKechnie as an exaggerated example of those who were soon to rule the world, tiresome and "without manners", Tietjens experiences a loathsome sense of contamination when forced into close contact, even competition, with men such as he. However, such contamination makes Tietjens's final denial of class allegiances all the more acceptable, since he realizes that his integrity has no value within the context of modern society and his personal set of principles no longer belong to any class. Only a scattered group of conscientious individuals remain, who must seek each other out.

Tietjens's self-examination produces his freedom, revealing to him the need to create a life for himself that is in accord with his integrity. The men beneath him, expressing their loyalty, confirm his worthiness to exist, despite the persecution that comes from his peers. One N.C.O. sees him as a "law unto himself", proving both a shock and a reward, as Tietjens gains a momentary glimpse of how he is regarded by the inscrutable mass of the "Other Ranks". It appears as a "certificate of trustworthiness". (page 570) However much he dreads it, Tietjens remains a person fit to take responsibility. Despite the unreality of the War situation, he maintains his fidelity to a code of gentlemanly behaviour. Pained by the offensiveness of money, Tietjens experiences a sense of relief, when he realizes that he has remained the kind of man who will automatically lend. While these minor satisfactions are very

real for Tietjens, they are as nothing compared to the larger sense of relief created by his decision to embark on a new life with Valentine.

Valentine's mentality comes closest to Tietjens's ideal of an eighteenth-century balanced harmony. Through his war musings, Tietjens experienced a clarification of his own personal affinity with the past and, questioning where it has gone, realized that the past had little chance of coming back, not the peaceable contentment, the Anglican sainthood, the "accuracy of thought", nor George Herbert's Bemerton, "the only satisfactory age in England!" (page 566) Tietjens realizes that too much has changed, too rapidly, to permit any attempt to accommodate himself into the newly-erected social framework.

We have grown harder, we have grown more rapid in our movements, we have grown more avid of sensation, we have grown more contemptuous of public opinion, we have become the last word We are standardizing ourselves and we are doing away with everything that is outstanding In the atmosphere of today the finer things cannot flourish. There is no air for them: there is no time for them.²⁰

Denied the possibility of easily realizing his dream of standing up on a hill, Tietjens must divorce himself from a society so antithetic to his own views. Valentine becomes an obsession, as Tietjens craves an intimacy with her clarity of intelligence. Peace becomes the possibility of unrestrained communication with an "exact intellect". In Valentine, Tietjens has finally found someone with whom he might talk and continue to talk without ever fully exhausting the possibilities of communion. This is his conception of love. The impossibility of taking Valentine to Groby requires Tietjens's renunciation of his responsibilities to family and class convention, and his escape toward freedom is effected by the existence of his son, heir to Groby.

20. F.M. Ford, Memories and Impressions, (New York, 1911), pages 287 and 299.

Valentine, expressing her affection for the sanity of the eighteenth century, realizes that Tietjens's mind and hers march together in perfect understanding. Like him, she feels the necessity of living together for the successful completion of "talk". They both perceive the corruption and collapse of Western society as they had known and imagined it, and their disillusionment allows them to withdraw from this dead civilization. On their own initiative they hope to establish some form of existence more in accord with their principles. With feudalism finished, and the modern world no longer holding for him a place, Tietjens must create one, being now prepared to resist the unbearable treatment that he had previously accepted unquestioningly. What he wants, he is now ready to take - a life with Valentine, with no concern for those outside his new family core.

The War had made a man of him! It had coarsened him and hardened him. There was no other way to look at it. It had made him reach a point at which he would no longer stand unbearable things. At any rate from his equals! And what he wanted he was prepared to take What he had been before, God alone knew But today the world changed He was going - he was damn well going! - to make a place in it for A man could now stand up on a hill, so he and she could surely get into some hole together!(page 668)

Surrounded by the band of loyal misfits in whom Tietjens had instilled a deep affection, he and Valentine cautiously approach each other emotionally, conscious of their own personal feelings but unsure of the other's. It is Mrs. Wannop's pleading telephone call that effectually forces the couple to bring their relationship to a conscious level, where mutual expressions of affection reveal a passionate and steady love.

SECTION IV

The Last Post chronicles Mark Tietjens's recognition of the collapse of traditional standards leading to his death, and the

personal reconstruction of Christopher Tietjens leading to a new life. Both brothers share the same loss of everything they stand for in the contemporary world; it is only their methods of escape from modernity that differ. The musings and reminiscences of Mark develop into a full portrayal of both the Tietjens's past and the crumbling of Western civilization. The shrewdness with which he examines every aspect of what had happened to them personally as a family and the English as a nation, produces an uncompromising indictment of the modern age and its "time spirit".

Mark ceased to move or speak when notified by Lord Wolstonemark that no Allied advance was to be made into Germany. Effectively dead from mortification November 11, 1918, his mind continues to analyse and formulate opinion. His spontaneous reaction on Armistice Day upon hearing "The Last Post" had been "The Last of England". Previously aware of the acute deterioration of the Government, the morals of racing and the efficiency of old families, it is only with England's failure to march on Berlin that Mark realizes the extent of modern social degeneration. Having wished to relinquish his government post so as not to accept money from an organization that had dealt so treacherously with its allies, Mark only remained because Transport would be crucial in a projected drive into Germany, a drive which he thought inevitable. He felt that for England and the Allies not to have occupied Berlin was an intellectual sin, for logic demands that "the consequence of invasion is counter-invasion and a symbolical occupation".(page 775) Not to do so signifies both an abandonment of clearness of mind and a national mental cowardice, and for England to have shown moral cowardice was to have put the world on a lower plane.

Mark comes to see public life as so discreditable, that the real governing classes should retire from public pursuits, and his silence and immobility are his answer. The government, whoever now were to run it, must return to "some semblance of personal probity and public honouring of pledges". (page 746) The chances for anything of that nature being realized in the near future were dim.

Mark possesses a keen insight into the character of Sylvia, fully understanding the motivations behind her line of behaviour. Realizing that she loves Tietjens, he attributes much of her fantastic activity to sexual desire. While Sylvia is capable of going to any extreme, Mark credits her for at least not stopping with Jews. What he does find distasteful is her public revelation of her wrongs, but since the frequent invention of gossip ultimately affects one mentally, she will be chastened by Providential retribution. One cannot libel a saint (Christopher) with impunity. (pages 727 & 728) Mark finds her actions excusable only when "regarded as actions perpetrated under the impulsion of sex-viciousness". (page 730) Sylvia's cruelty springs from her unbearable sense of frustration, for living beside an untouchable divinity, while at the same time being ignored, is more than mortal can bear. Under certain conditions, the infliction of cruelty may give birth to excitement and interest, but Sylvia overreached herself to become merely a woman to be avoided. Once Tietjens is established with Valentine, there exists no further purpose for Sylvia's sadistic acts of vengeance, and even she finds in them nothing but continued frustration.

However, Sylvia remains adamant in her determination to harm Christopher, seemingly driven to continue the attack even after failure is signal. From her earlier dramatic revelation of impending surgery for a cancerous condition, to her making it clear to the Earl of Tittleworth that she wished to have the Tietjens brothers expelled from their present abode, Sylvia shows the same inability to effect changes. When Tittleworth refuses to accommodate her, Sylvia's superstitious nature sees him as a lightning conductor over the house of Tietjens, a wicked man but a protector of domesticity and women in childbirth. Already galled by the awareness that she no longer exerts any perceptible influence over Tietjens, it adds to Sylvia's bitterness that for Valentine he will attempt things that he would refuse to do for her. Even her friends begin to doubt the miserable picture of poverty she has painted of Tietjens's present circumstances, and Sylvia dreads the possibility of bringing about an irrevocable breach, the mortification of being "out" by Tietjens should he make the decision to erect an invulnerable barrier. The spiritual strain in Sylvia leads her to believe that God will ultimately intervene on behalf of Tietjens and the forces of good, for God apparently, is "rightly" on the side of "stuffy domesticities". Because of her superstitions, she feels that by allowing Groby Great Tree to be destroyed, the religious ban on the house of Tietjens might be lifted. This religious ban had weighed heavily on both the Tietjens brothers' imaginations, especially Christopher's. Spelden on Sacrilege had predicted disaster for families such as the Tietjenses, usurping former Catholic Church lands or displacing Papists. Only when Groby reverts to a Catholic, Mark Jr., does Tietjens feel a sense of release. At the same time, Groby Great

Tree, a Sardinian importation, had well-suited the Italian proverb, "He who lets a tree overhang his house invites a daily call from the doctor." (page 773) When both shadows have been dispelled, Sylvia begins to lose her sense of stability, while that of Tietjens increases. Her strength deserts her when she feels that God has now changed sides, and falls prey to a fear of both, the spectre of Father Consett and an August Will. Haunted by Father Consett's prediction that she would perpetrate acts of vulgarity should Tietjens come to love another woman, Sylvia becomes increasingly more tired from the constant exertions necessary to maintain her precarious position. The only future vista open to herself and General Campion is India, the last of the Empire, and it becomes ever more attractive as her position relative to Tietjens becomes increasingly abject. "If you rid yourself of the distinction of Groby Great Tree just to wound a man to the heart - you may as well take India." (page 794) Her deepest humiliation comes when her son elects to call himself Mark rather than Michael, a Tietjens not a Satterthwaite name, the name of he whom Sylvia hates for being the one man insensible to her charms.

The young Mark Tietjens, while under the direct influence of his mother, reveals strong emotional and intellectual ties with his father, himself disliking intensely Sylvia's tactical spying on Tietjens, wishing to adhere more closely to the rules of the game. A mean action is something to be dreaded, yet he sees his mother edge ever closer to its commitment. Like his uncle, he attributes the intensity of her persecution to "sex-cruelty". Realizing that his being sent to spy with the ludicrously vulgar American Mrs. de Bray Pape is a form of revenge

for his mother, Mark recognizes because of it both the beauty and cruelty of his mother in her "sex fever". Yet the landowner's soul lives on in Mark Jr., as is evident in his automatic impulse toward saving the standing hay beneath the hooves of Mrs. de Bray Pape's horse. His real problem is in coming to terms with his sexual inheritance, that which exists within his personality given to him by his parents. His feelings of desire for the older Mrs. Lowther lead him to smother thoughts of his mother as a whore, while at the same time, he remains unsure of his father's true nature, searching for some guide. He craves some form of paternal influence to balance the one-sidedness of his mother's. Since his parents are opposite extremes joined to redress extremes in the child, he necessarily requires association with each if the purposes of nature are not to be defeated. (page 729)

The elder Mark Tietjens looks at his younger brother and sees a man of much the same nature of himself, despite an element of "softness" in Tietjens inherited from his mother. Acknowledging his late step-mother's saintliness, Marks sees it as responsible for Christopher's continuous stream of problems. Mark and Tietjens both refuse to accept the privileges and responsibilities of Groby, wishing to remove themselves as much as possible from a world "fusionless and dishonest". While Mark feels himself to have been "born tired" of Groby and its tenantry, Tietjens has slowly moved toward this renunciation of a way of life that he had thought to have substance.

They were probably not corrupt but certainly, regarded as landowners, they were effete - both he and Christopher. They were simply bored at the contemplation of that terrific nuisance - and refusing to perform the duties of their post they refused the emoluments too They would not accept that post: they had taken others. (page 741)

Mark considers Tietjens's determination to have nothing more to do with Groby as part of his peculiar saintliness, where denying himself Groby provides a "mortification of the spirit", a necessary element for a man attempting to walk in the path of Christ. While not particularly sympathetic to Tietjens's motivations, Mark is in full accord with his final decision to live a life guided by a set of personal principles. He does, however, have a strong desire that Tietjens should accept what is rightfully his. While an intimacy was established during the sick-room reading of Boswell, neither brother proves willing to move an inch closer to compromise in order to accommodate the fervent wishes of the other. Mark had felt Christopher's Armistice Day refusal to accept money from him as the cold stab of a knife, pained by such unforgivingness following the brief flowering of their closeness.

Sylvia only admits defeat when her tiredness, coupled with her own brand of "sporting" morality, forces her to give up the game. Confessing her guilt to Mark about Groby Great Tree, she qualifies her self-condemnation with the reverence she feels for the unborn life within Valentine. Her one remaining bitterness is the awareness of Tietjens's possession of so much peace. Sylvia's future holds out little prospect of contentment, for India appears not as a voluntary choice, but as a last resort. Once Sylvia surrenders Tietjens, her own complex nature receives the pity of Mark and a form of admiration from Valentine. Mark, realizing that Sylvia is unable to bear children, is touched by her barrenness, and Valentine perceives a depth of timidity and nobility beneath her facade. Still powerful, Father Consett's influence forces Sylvia, through moral compulsion, to relinquish her hold on Tietjens. Mark may allow himself to die once his occupation is

over - he need no longer go on "willing" against the powerful force of Sylvia's determination. He dies in peace, but it is Tietjens who remains to live on in peace.

The Last Post is Ford's first successful attempt in fiction to portray effectively a conscientious individual building a life for himself in the modern age while retaining his integrity. Christopher Tietjens's personal reconstruction, begun in the earlier novels, ends in this volume with a practical attempt to live an everyday life in harmony with a set of elevated principles. Removed from the urban setting, he combines activities in the fields of both business and agriculture, becoming the embodiment of that ideal small-producer who would dominate Ford's vision of a possible Utopian world. Tietjens is able to function in modernity, yet maintain his integrity, primarily because of his careful dissociation from those elements of society that had brought about the disappearance of traditional standards. Forced to secure a living upon the cessation of hostilities, he capitalizes on his instinctive knowledge of old furniture, this presenting itself as the only acceptable possibility. America becomes an infinite marketplace, and as a further sign of the times, Tietjens enters into partnership with an American Jew. But such concessions to the contemporary scene are insufficient to destroy the newfound stability of the Tietjens ménage. Tietjens feels that England will ultimately "breed true", if only because of its infinite supply of George Herberts and Gunnings, especially the Gunnings - "the rock upon which the lighthouse was built".(page 814) This small group of individuals, with Chrissie as insurance for the future, represent for Ford the true

ruling class. "If a ruling class loses the capacity to rule - or the desire! - it should abdicate from its privileges and get underground." (page 818)

Although the material is not handled with a firm control because of Ford's post-war emotional instability, the semi-authobiographical No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction provides an early sketch of the man of integrity establishing himself in a new life as a small-producer following a period of personal reconstruction. The hero, Gringoire, much like Christopher Tietjens in The Last Post, is a projection of various aspects of Ford's own personality as they try to resolve themselves into a harmonious whole. On his small piece of land, Gringoire, accompanied by a sympathetic woman, lives a life of austere self-sufficiency. Yet the physical austerity in no way diminishes the emotional fulfillment of this way of life. The satisfaction of working the land with one's own hands and seeing directly the fruits of one's labours had always appealed to Ford. Gringoire and Madame Sélysette, like Tietjens and Valentine, willingly accept a life of frugality and responsibility, since it ensures them a peaceable contentment that is a rarity in the twentieth century.

Like Tietjens, Gringoire had, for the duration of the War, lost most of his sensibility to landscape. No Enemy, in part, hinges on four principal landscapes that had coincided with a momentary experience of intense awareness. As the landscapes unfolded before Gringoire's consciousness, they were joined by a heightened perception of other elements of contemporary and traditional life. These composite images resolved themselves into a lasting desire for a small patch of earth, whose sanctity would be impervious to the ravages that tore through the

land during the War. This is his ideal sanctuary, his "inviolable nook", and Tietjens comes to feel the lure of a like setting. Gringoire was acutely sensitive to the humiliation of the land in warfare, and his ability to animate stems from the sensibility of his artistic temperament, a sensibility which was Ford's own.

Just as trees and fields appeared to dread the contamination of alien presences, so with buildings. Only with buildings - and more particularly with houses - the feeling was very much enhanced. They seemed to dread not only contaminations, but pains, violations, physical shames, and dissolution in fire.²¹

Gringoire feels compelled to write War propaganda to protect what matters to him as sacred, the threatened nooks. His personal impression that the world might be saved through "graceful, poetic and pleasant lives" lived on a minute income, is Ford's own vision of the satisfaction to be enjoyed by all small-producers. Tietjens feels the pull of frugality in much the same way as does Gringoire. The simple life need not be limited. "Humanity would be saved - if it was to be saved - by good cooking, intensive horticulture - as opposed to agriculture. And of course by abstract thinking and the arts. And the avoidance of waste. Above all by the avoidance of waste."²² The smallness of one's income does not have a proportionate bearing upon one's capacity for either happiness or contentment. This ideal of a responsible frugality that directs the post-War lives of Gringoire and Tietjens is that elemental spirit of Provence that is extolled in Provence and Great Trade Route.

Men of integrity, if unable to assume direct control of the governing process, must do so through the persuasive force of

21. F.M. Ford, No Enemy: A Tale of Reconstruction, (New York, 1929), page 168.

22. Ibid, page 98.

influence. The Gringoures and the Tietjenses must live their lives without compromising their personal standard of principles. If their successful personal reconstruction is possible, then through their example other conscientious men and women might be incited to take up the challenge. This was Ford's hope for the world - the creation of harmonious lives - small-producers and artist-craftsmen guided by the inspiration of Provence. Tietjens follows the path of Gringouire.

I must have a dugout, as proof as possible against the shells launched against me by blind and august destiny; round about it there must be the strong barbed wire of solitude and, within the entanglement, space for a kitchen garden I go to prove that a decent life, clean, contemplative, intent, skillful, and with its little luxuries, may yet be lived by the Gringoures of the world - HOMINIBUS BONAE VOLUNTATIS.²³

23. Ibid, pages 266 & 272.

CHAPTER FOUR: PANACEA

In Providence, Ford develops his personal proposal for the salvation of humanity and of what remains of civilization. The Western world seemed to be on the verge of a return to barbarism and Ford's frequent references to the powerful, destructive force of Fascism proved remarkably prophetic. Hitler appears as an exaggerated symptom of the psychological disease infecting modernity, a sickness of confusion, insecurity and combativeness. Each individual, because of his instability, becomes more and more insular, and a fierce selfishness comes to dominate the personality. Any trace of an altruistic impulse has long since died, and this shift in concern for "us" to "me" marks the end of an established framework of social tradition. Men and women, if they think of anything beyond themselves, hide behind an aggressive nationalism that effectively dispenses with the need for any thought at all. Many, willing to grasp anything from a fear of chaos, are prepared to follow such false gods as Hitler and Mussolini, leaders extending a deceptive sense of direction and policy of action. Ford felt that the only thing offered by an aggressive nationalism was a chance for a berth on an express train to annihilation. Norman Leer summarized Ford's recognition of the dangerous contemporary situation:

The world was marked by two tendencies: a growing standardization, which left a climate of potentially-explosive apathy; and an upsurge of totalitarian nationalism, which appealed to the latent passion and hatred of the populace. The standardization brought about a lack of involvement for many people in the small but recurrent details of their lives, and the resultant apathy left these same people susceptible to the combination of force and rhetoric with which they were swayed by ambitious dictators and cunning politicians. In order to counter this ever more forceful rhetoric, the artist as Ford now saw him would have to become a more explicit moralist, all the while that he adhered to his highly personal way of life.¹

1. Norman Leer, The Limited Hero in the Novels of Ford Madox Ford, (Michigan, 1966), page 162.

While in Parade's End Ford had portrayed a man of conscience and integrity creating a new, satisfactory life for himself and his family nucleus, he felt that this model life, in itself, might not be sufficiently universal to aid the conscientious individual in resolving his own dilemma. For that reason, he turned from a fictional representation of the modern problem toward a semi-autobiographical mixture of anecdote, history, art criticism and sociology à la Ford. The author's own pronounced personality overshadows everything else, and while it may make the book more appealing, it often diminishes the persuasive power of the argument. Ford's generalizations are often nothing more than an expression of his own wishes, and the book lacks, as a whole, a serious understanding of the complexity of modern ills and a practicable resolution for these same difficulties. However, the fundamental attractiveness of Ford's essential thesis, and the shared fear of a threat to humanity, help compensate for the crankiness of various segments of the presentation. Ford's sincerity and motivating altruism are undeniable, colouring his affectionate portrayal of Provençe so convincingly that his dream seems possible.

Provençe is an attempt to render a frame of mind - the spirit Ford sees as the only hope for mankind. Should humanity fail to adopt this spirit of Provençe, Ford envisages a return to the barbarism of the Dark Ages. A sharp division is made between North and South, the one representing the instability and degeneracy of modernity, and the other a symbol of a way of life that retains a sense of continuity with the past, the permanence and contentment of Provençe standing in sharp opposition to the transiency and anxiety of a Nordic world of

"progress". Provence's past is the source for all civilized behaviour and Ford, in another book, A Mirror to France, elaborates on this point:

The chose donné ... of this book is: that chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts are the first requisites of a Civilization - and the only requisites of a civilization; and then that such traces of chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts as our Pre-War, European civilization of white races could exhibit came to us from the district of Southern France on the shores of the Mediterranean.²

As a prophetic visionary, Ford outlines the world tendencies that are pushing men ever closer to savagery and chaos, hoping that they might still be convinced of the urgent need to be influenced by the Provençal frame of mind. Here, men live a balanced life of frugality and responsibility, those elements so crucial to the happiness of Christopher Tietjens and Valentine Wannop in Parade's End. Contentment, that blissful state where anxiety is no more, becomes the human goal, only to be achieved through the civilizing influence of Provence. Looking at the permanence of Provence, Ford idealizes its feudal past and what remains of this past in the modern world.

It seems to me that when the world was a matter of small communities each under an arbitrary but responsible head then the world was at its best. If your community did not prosper then you decapitated your chief. Till then he was possessed of divine rights. Presumably you cannot better the feudal system.³

While personal inspiration might come from Provence, it is the whole of France that must be concertedly safeguarded from destruction, for the successful preservation of France is the Western World's only hope.

2. F.M. Ford, A Mirror to France, (London, 1926), pages 14 & 15.

3. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932), pages 81-82.

Ford, in a letter to Henry Goddard Leach, elaborated on the imperative need for a role model:

France - from the point of view of culture and the arts - manages everything so infinitely better than either branch of Anglo-Saxondom that the sooner we acknowledge the fact the sooner we shall be out of the wood. Both England and the United States have got to provide insurance for France: the world has to ... because France is expert in elegance, moderation, and knowledge of the values of life France must be preserved because those strains must be represented in modern life We are savages or so near it it makes no difference, we Anglo-Saxons, but we know that, with very little of a slip back towards barbarism we should become naked gorillas, barely able to walk sufficiently erect to keep the steel mills going. On the surface we detest elegance, moderation and knowledge of life - because we do not know how to enter a room, how to hold our hands, how to construct a single decent sentence in our own language or how to order a meal that will not in its menu proclaim us barbarous as gorillas So, vaguely conscious of all that, under the shouts of the Chauvinists, we know that the counterbalance of ourselves must be preserved.⁴

PART 1: THE GREAT TRADE ROUTES

Conversion to the Provençal spirit is Ford's aim, and he uses the travel-book form in order to take his readers on a voyage of mental discovery. To make this spirit come alive, the author establishes both a physical setting and an emotional and intellectual aura, the anecdotal rendering of an atmosphere doing much to make the reader sympathetic to Ford's purpose. One of the first introductory notes sounded is the notion of a Great Trade Route, the outline of which Ford provides to center in his reader's consciousness the idea of a "backwards and forwards" movement of civilizing influence existing since time immemorial. The Route, stretching from Cathay to Land's End, saw the continuous passing of a set of merchants protected by divine forces and taboos, these "sacred messengers" exchanging goods with native peoples through barter. According to Ford, these men existed in

4. R.M. Ludwig, Letters of Ford Madox Ford, (Princeton, 1965), pages 288-289.

a state impervious to danger because of their acknowledged semi-divinity, and this safety, created by awe and reverence, assumes a willing receptivity to foreign influence on the part of the natives. Ford felt that at the root of modern uncivilizedness was a pronounced Nordic fear of being influenced by the ancient culture of Latinity. Receptivity to the lure of the Mediterranean way of life was our last chance for survival.

Ford utilizes an operative form for the book to sharpen the distinctions between North and South, clearly defining an overture with an adumbration of themes, an introduction and a registration of various leitmotives, to be worked out in two keys, the dominant and the tonic.

... the dominant theme is that of our great, noisy and indigestion-sick Anglo-Saxondom which can only be touched by inspiration from the spirit of Provençal Latinity, frugality and tolerance. That consideration begins and ends and is the tonic or normal key of this piece of writing.⁵

The dominant key stresses modernism and "progress", while the tonic sounds a note of serenity, a remedy for Northern ills offered by Dame Provence.

Dame Provence sits at home, forsaken but reading in her little account books with, in her apron pocket, the one bulb and the sole herbs that cure all indigestions, crises, impulses to massacre(page 70)

The reconciliation of "Beauty" and "Righteousness" appears essential for the continued survival of civilization, and only in ~~Provence~~ are the two forces compatible. Everywhere else, it seems that one quality is upheld at the expense of the other, and a state of disequilibrium results. The Provençal, however, is a man able to accommodate both in one human life. Purity without attractiveness does

5. F.M. Ford, Provence, (London, -1938), page 69. All subsequent references in this chapter to Provence will be indicated by a page notation within the text.

little for mankind, and a beauty that lacks any foundation does no more. Balance is always the key to a Southern existence, a state of perfection in Ford's eyes. But even paradise has its scourges, and "Le Parlement, le Mistral et la Durance sont les trois fléaux de la Provence." (page 23) Yet these three flails only seem only seem to endear the Provençal to his land more intimately. Here, men and the earth are bound inextricably together, for the permanence of the setting gives to the human population its own brand of solidarity. The harmony of beauty and righteousness extends from the man tilling the soil to the soil itself, both establishing a balanced rhythm.

Thus, of the many elements contributing to the Provençal spirit, from the architecture of the Maison Carrée at Nîmes to the poetry of the Troubadours, one quality suffuses them all - rhythm, the harmonious correlation of parts. The rhythm of the ancient traders on the Route formed an integral part of their persuasive power, and the arts were handed down through the years to modernity, for even now the Provençal retains an intrinsic relationship with artistry. For Ford, the most moving symbol of the South's affection for and satisfaction in the arts is the memorial tablet of the Boy of Antibes, where a young dancer gave pleasure and was accorded the immortality of stone. In The Rash Act, Ford has his hero contemplate this same memorial tablet and contrast his own suicidal impulse with this young boy's ability to dance and give pleasure. Thus, "the self-negation that suicide represents is countered ... by the idea of giving pleasure. To be able to give pleasure to another person is really an affirmation of the self, and it is simultaneously an expression and a transcendence of one's own

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identity In the image of a body exhibiting fulfilled purpose, the symbol of the Boy of Antibes denotes harmony, vital enough to reconcile the violent discords of post-War society".⁶ The rhythm of the dance, the art which Ford found most lovely because of its "fugitive" character, prompts this recording of an emotive beauty and its appreciation. Even today, the music and artistry of the pastorales carry forward the Provençal dedication to rhythm, to beauty and righteousness reconciled.

While recognizing the difficulty of attempting consciously to change one's habit of mind or body, "still, inward change does occur in men without any consciousness on their parts, so that there may yet be hope". (page 60) A moralist does not moralize without the hope of being listened to, and as an advocate for the spirit of the South, Ford makes a convincing and attractive case, and the Provençal character of controlled passions, frugality and responsibility, is held up for emulation. The man of Provence symbolizes men everywhere who possess a stoic resiliency with which they confront life, and accept unforeseen circumstances with fortitude, eyes ever-open for the next hardship. A set of disciplined emotions is trained for anything that lies ahead. Ford recognized these Provençal characteristics appearing sporadically in men and women throughout the world, and that meant that if he could find them then they might be recreated in the future, anywhere.

This common stoic endurance and preparedness for the unforeseen even appeared in some members of the English peasantry. In England and the English, Ford introduces Old Meary, a peasant woman whose motto "Ah keep all on gooin'!" sums up her attitude to life. As Ford saw her:

6. Norman Leer, The Limited Hero in the Novels of Ford Madox Ford, (Michigan, 1966), pages 178 & 180.

Upon the whole my Meary was the wisest person I have ever met. Broadminded, temperate, benevolent, cheerful and cynical, she could confront every hap and mishap of life, whether her own, her neighbours', or the state's, with a proper fortitude or a sane sympathy.⁷

Permanence assuming human form. In the same way, the peasantry of France is likewise ready to bend beneath inevitable vicissitudes, and so ready to rise up once again and carry on when they have passed. In his war propaganda book Between St. Denis and St. George, Ford expresses it thus:

... the French peasant who evolved the maxim that life never turns out to be as fortunate or as unfortunate as one expects of it probably did more for France on the battlefields of to-day than all the inventors of the Creusot firm working together. For it is because the French peasant, the French farmer, the French small handicraftsman, and the French small trader do not expect vast things of life, do not strive after the immense fortunes of the modern industrial system, that they remain so much more largely than any other race, patiently and efficiently working on the acres that saw their births. And it is because these patient, efficient, sober, industrious, and splendid populations remain upon their acres that France will have saved Europe, if Europe is to be saved.⁸

Perhaps the two greatest elements of civilizing influence of the Provençal past were the Troubadours and the Albigenses, one group of men devoted to love and literature and the other to speculative religious thought. Influenced by his father Francis Hueffer, Ford early in life considered the troubadour as a desirable life model. The troubadour lived a literary life idyllic compared to that of a modern man concerned with the arts, enjoying advantages that none of Ford's contemporaries possessed - a sympathetic milieu in which to work. A sense of "team spirit" took precedence over recriminatory

7. F.M. Ford, England and the English, (New York, 1907), page 189.

8. F.M. Ford, Between St. Denis and St. George, (London, 1915), page 68.

"back-biting", partiality and self-seeking, those ingredients of the modern literary stage. Ford himself held it as a firm belief that writers, for the sake of both expedience and "noblesse oblige", should never indulge in the temptation to abuse the reputations of one another. The Provençal poets, with their high regard for technique, their simplicity and "domestic imagery", display an intimate beauty that is accentuated by the fact that the language bears a close affiliation with Latin. The result - a corresponding beauty of sound in each composition. These poems, whether written by the Troubadours or the félibristes, remain intimate and intensely alive, the Provençal traditions being carried on "without any fuss, obscurely", their strength undiminished. It is a poetry possessing a quality of "quiet universality", clearly evident in Ford's example "Reverie d'un gardian" by Joseph d'Arbaud, and for this reason it remains undated. (pages 73-76) The poems make of chivalry a desirable, achievable goal.

Chivalry is the most valuable thing in the world ... all the chivalry in the world came from France. Fine views and a generous climate breed a race that can afford to be fénéreux All chivalry, then, all learning, all the divine things of life came from that triangle of the world which holds the Chateau d'Amour, midway between Les Baux, Arles and Avignon The races affected by that Romance culture are all one race. That is the true truth of history, for all these races see God and the great archangels and the little angels of God, with much the same vision from much the same angle. For races outside that circle, God is Wodin, or Aegir, or Sad Necessity.⁹

The Albigenses too, with their rational latitudinarianism, displayed a similar concern for the survival of civilization, their "gentle" heresy keeping thought alive and succeeding, unlike most religious beliefs, in humanely reconciling beauty and righteousness. With the world extremely real to them, these men maintained spiritual

9. F.M. Ford, Between St. Denis and St. George, (London, 1915), page 68.

of Provence, modern man must here search for contentment and satisfaction of his inner life. Only Provence remains human and alive.

And there is neither mass-production nor the worship of mass-production, and Provence is at once the cradle and the conduit of that humane Romance Latinity that alone can preserve from putridity our staggering civilization and world(pages 68& 69)

PART 2: PROVENCE SEEN FROM THE NORTH

Ford repeatedly juxtaposes the barbarism of the North with the civility of the South, seeing the real Fall of Man as having occurred when he moved Northward into lands unsuitable for human habitation and a balanced way of life. Man might have remained in Southern lands, where sin plays no part, certainly never exerting cruel and tyrannical pressure on the minds of men. Sin is unnecessary in a world where life is made to be enjoyed, and those mental vested interests taken so seriously in the North are counted as nothing. "The sublimities of the North become, amongst the orange-coloured, sun-baked rocks south of Montélimar, pleasant absurdities, the South making forever of our Nordic virtues a continual *reductio ad absurdum*."(page 81)

The Provençal climate and vegetation make the inhabitants wary of coming face to face with difficulties, they seeking rather to "circumvent" than "overcome" them. Thus the path which is the easiest to follow is the most used. With the present and the particular being of more importance than the future and the abstract, anxiety is rare. However, the past always colours the present, for the innumerable layers of dead civilizations remain alive, especially their artistic expression. With an overwhelming sense of the transience of human achievement, the South has few illusions as to the importance of the contemporary era in anything other than personal terms. Only the land

itself has earthly permanence and immutability, spreading its beneficial stability and capacity for endurance to those men who work it. The inhabitants themselves are not tempted to change the face of their environment, for the "Provençal being a fatalist is by nature conservative".(page 93) Only the evil influence of Nordic "progress" alters the landscape, as Ford's rendering of the destruction of the "sacred fields" of the Aliscamps burial ground for the birth of a railway reveals, ruining beauty and delicate emotional appeal.

Along with an awareness that she must forever exist beneath the heel of some conqueror, Dame Provence possesses an indomitable spirit of resistance, remaining firmly ensconced, while the conquerors continually replace themselves. Because of her capacity for keeping alive a strong and vital underground life, she looks toward the future unperturbed. Like a phoenix, Provence rises from its ashes after every wave of invasion has swept over it, preserving intact her Latinity - her "frugal, temperate and infinitely industrious strain of mind".(page 103) Having survived countless armies and the sword, is she now to succumb to cellophane and the tourist's almighty buck? Ford thinks that we should all be frightened by the possibility.

The barbarism of the Nordics commences almost at the gates of Provence, for even Lyons on the Rhone is, in Ford's estimation, the city "where Industrialism, the Commercial Spirit and Puritanism all together reach at once their apogee and find their earthly close".(page 87) Such close proximity is a constant threat, but the traditional Northern desire to go South need not, like the Teutonic habit, necessarily mean armed invasion. Hopefully, through an educative spirit, it might mean the birth of an emotional affinity. Ford works to

establish in the minds of his readers both a spiritual and intellectual kinship with Provence and a more general cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitanism like that already existing in the internationalism of art. All men can benefit from the artistic creativity of the past, making of civilization a "radiation of loveliness", as long as we remember that art springs from the South of the Great Route.(page 100) Rather than rape the South, the North must learn the lesson she has to teach - learn how to live all over again.

I don't want our civilization to pull through. I want a civilization of small men each labouring two small plots - his own ground and his own soul. Nothing else will serve my turn.(page 125)

Ford had to combat the false messiahs of the North on their own ground, a people lacking coherence and a sense of pattern. With their loss of a unified vision of life as a whole, Northerners scatter their emotional forces and accomplish little more than blind destruction, victims of "the thwarted ferocities that gave rise to the Gothic in North Europe and to the mad, sadic cruelties of the Northern Middle Ages".(page 174) Prone to savagery, the North easily becomes the dupe of mechanism, enslaved by tins, preservatives, mass and machine. Change comes fast and furious, what was new yesterday becoming old today, but the North only regresses further and further from either beauty or righteousness.

Ford sees the development of Northern "Great Powers" as lamentable, the cause of much of the degeneration of Western civilization. Non-benevolent rulers see their power as a formidable force designed to destroy all traces of individuality from beneath their feet. These powers and men are Ford's "steamrollers", driven forward by the thirst for conquest and the desire to gain through

seizure and domination. It was one of Ford's most sincere beliefs that war as a means of enrichment does not pay, conquest breeding nothing but subsequent conquest. The Sicilian Vespers, the rising of Sicily against the French, March 31, 1281, should be a warning to all conquerors. Men must learn that "ill-gotten gains" are seldom, if ever, enjoyed with impunity. Intensely selfish and individualist, the North breeds conquest and a fervent nationalism, this patriotic impulse being "the meanest of all the virtues and an alcoholism to which one succumbs at one's peril".(page 257)

In contrast, the history of Provence reveals an unchecked flow of civilization, and the Arts and Thought continue to flourish, whether openly or merged in the subterranean rural life of the peasantry. Imaginative speculation is accepted by the Provençal, even religious faith revealing the native capacity to accommodate the exceptional. Provençal legends are quite capable of ignoring fact, without in the least diminishing their emotional impact. For example, the Roman Caius Marius is given the honour of being the husband of St. Mary Magdalen, despite the fact that he was dead either before she was born or before she landed in Provence with the Virgin Mary by boat, the Maries having left the Holy Land following Christ's crucifixion. Sentimentally attached to the belief in the Holy Maries' journey to Provence, the Provençal shows a mind capable of encompassing both fact and fiction in one composite reality. Here, spirituality itself is humanized, and a close intimacy develops between the Provençal and his religious figures. The votive pictures of the common man, those "little intimate representations of quiet humanity going upon its daily avocations", are a sure sign of this involvement.(page 107)

The earth is worshipped in much the same spirit as are God and his Saints, one of intimate rapport. Unlike the Northerner who looks for a wild aspect in Nature, the Provençal considers Nature in terms of small cultivated plots with many evidences of the human hand, since there exists a closer affinity between man and land, a more complete familiarity and sense of ease. The Latin spirit focuses on a love of the earth, revealed in a careful nurturing and protective observation, much like raising a loved child. Harmony seems to be the key, for along this segment of the Great Trade Route, things are done "according to the laws of the arts, the requirements of beauty and the divine dictates of Nature and the beloved earth".(page 115) In this respect, the North and South show that same innate purity in killing and curing exhibited by Sylvia Tietjens and Valentine Wannop in Parade's End.

Ford sees Provence as, in its early years, developing a dual civilization, with, on the one side, the more aristocratic Troubadours, and on the other the fundamentally agricultural Albigenses. However, both were harmonious components of one single whole, characterized by a pervasive laissez-aller tolerance. The "whole social cosmogony was salutarily latitudinarian, the knights being without discipline, the rural thinkers without prejudices as without puritanism".(page 129) The aristocratic tradition blossomed under the Good King René, who established a well-remembered Golden Age, which itself had been preceded by that of the Avignonnais Popes. Ford admires the King's devotion to the Arts, whose own works "bear witness to the peacefulness of his aims and the beauty of his aspirations".(page 212) Everything worked toward harmony and peace: the chivalric code, the religious feeling, the arts and royal decrees. King René's judicial system proved

equally admirable, for he instituted a system of fines for criminal activity, seeing that to lead to beggary those men whose original motive had been a desire for gain, would provide both a successful deterrent and a fitting social revenge. The group as a whole receives the benefits and the brutality of traditional punitive measures is lessened. But it was inevitable that the effortless peace and prosperity of Provence should incur the jealous hatred of the North, for "the happiness or prosperity of another nation cause [sic] in every other people a nightmare so atrocious that they will have no peace till that evil is remedied".(page 177) Thus a Northern moral cry against the Albigenses was used as a shield for invasion.

The Albigenses, Ford's "gentle heretics", grew out of a sense of doubt and scepticism concerning the validity of a religious faith continually traduced by its own proponents. Their speculative thought carried them toward rationalism, and their beliefs were coloured by the native tolerance and indifference of Provence, their religion being human, alive and exhibiting a freedom from narrowness. This group "expressly disavowed the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, advocated a strong application of laws of both physical and mental purity and professed disbelief in any personal deity. They substituted for that article of the Creed a theory of two first principles, the one of good, the other of evil".(page 131) Feeling themselves to be in harmony with the Universe, they posed a threat to the established Church which felt forced to extirpate such heretical belief. Hence the Albigensian Crusade. Under the Crusader Simon de Montfort, inspired by St. Dominic and employed by Innocent III and Philippe II, an army extinguished a way of life. The papal legate Arnaud Amauri revealed the

bloodthirstiness of the expedition in his cry; "'Kill them all; God will know how to choose his own.'"(page 182) Ford's grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, sympathetically condemned the Roman Church's treatment of the Albigenses, and Ford seems to have inherited his spirit for lost causes. For the cause was lost, and even the Holy Inquisition could find little more fuel for a fire in the remains of this gentle interpretive heresy. Unfortunately, "the defeated cause fails because it stands for a higher civilization".(page 187)

The condition of the Arts in any land is, for Ford, the most positive indication of that land's relative civilizedness or barbarism. Always, the South reveals a nature conducive to artistic creation, while the North thwarts and discourages such activity, the North providing no incentive for the artist who must fight against seemingly insurmountable odds. With a climate too rigorous, the North is unamenable to the café congregation of artists for intellectual discussion and the dissemination of culture. Exchange of thought is unnecessarily impeded, if not killed outright. Clarity of mind is an essential ingredient for successful art, and Ford recognized the necessity, if art was to create a change in men's minds and habits, of some controlling agency of "accuracy of mind and a certain erudition".(page 222) The supreme artistic achievement, especially imaginative literature, must be "inspired by next-to-all knowledge and rendered beautiful by cadence, just wording, toleration, pity and impatience"(page 223)

While recognizing their genius and accomplishments on an interpretive level, Ford feels that the Stage Queens of England are representative of the degeneration of Nordic artistry. The North is

presented as a better artistic classifier than creator, but even this gift for an internationalism of "display" does not compensate for an inability to actually bring forth pieces of original creativity. Unlike Provence, which values the creative artist, the North worships more the performer. Ford realizes that since performers work directly on emotional responses, they are most vividly remembered, but their power of creativity has become diluted and channelled into a mechanical vein. For Anglo-Saxondom, the Stage Queens have come to mark the histories of both cities and men, such figures providing a system of dating through atmosphere and mental association. However, the intimacy between a great actress and the medium of her art has become in the modern age a form of habitual repetition, with genius finding itself faced with a constricted freedom of expression. Thus modern performers are denied full scope for the exercise of their natural talents, being relegated to a demeaning "mechanical reproduction".(page 262) Whenever the North does succeed in producing an artistic expression, it is usually, in the contemporary literary scene, characterized by defeatism, and an intimate acquaintance with Death and its messengers. This septentrional striving for delivery in art contrasts sharply with the creativity of Provence, where the arts are cherished with respect.

Provençal literature receives a warm treatment in Ford's The March of Literature, where he links it firmly to its roots in the best of Latinity, much as his father had done in his book on the Troubadours. Technique is all important in Provençal literature, as content takes second place to variation on a given theme. Recognizing the influence of classicism on the song and verse of Provence, Ford stresses the

unbroken east-west flow of ideas and emotions. The union of artist and small-producer in the "exquisite" poetry of Tibullus, and the relation of kitchen gardening to the Romans and Virgil, are reflected in the Provençal concern for frugal happiness and a close intimacy with the land. Past and present are closely intertwined in Provençal art, and Ford sees in the modern pastorales a vital link with the ancient contes-fables. Mediterranean civilization insists that the "province of art is to delight and thus ennoble humanity by permitting it to perceive truths for itself in the enlightenment given to it by that delight", while the Nordic races believe that the artist must direct the "public conscience" by providing only that which society sees as accepted truth.¹⁰ For example, in the "Aucassin and Nicolette" tale, the hero reveals the Southern frame of mind in his preference for a pleasant Hell with his love, rather than a Paradise peopled with misfits and the weak. To achieve what is sufficient and what is pleasant are the two aims in life of the Provençal, his art providing a mirror for these desires. From the Boy of Antibes, to Peir Vidal, to the félibristes, the artist receives affectionate reverence, for every man maintains an intimate contact with the arts. No matter what temporary chaos may sweep over the land, the underground life of Provence will carry forward the Arts with an undying dedication and vitality.

The influence of the Troubadours began with Raymond Bérenger's decision to provide himself with their accompaniment on a visit to the Emperor Frederick at Milan. So impressed by the Troubadours was the Emperor, that he granted Bérenger Provence, a land where the existence

10. F.M. Ford, The March of Literature, (London, 1939), page 501.

of small semi-independent city dominions was conducive to the rapid spread of Troubadour popularity. While primarily an aristocratic phenomenon, it had a democratic aspect in that, as an art form, it was open to all men of ability. The poetry of the Troubadours became a "variation on a given theme" and, since craftsmanship was of prime importance, content meant no more than technique.¹¹ The poet was treated with high consideration, especially by the husbands of the women whose praises he sung, these rulers being aware that it was the poet who would or would not secure them immortality in their versification. For this reason, as well as for the beauty he creates and the pleasure he gives, the poet stands above other men. They were halcyon days for the artist, with a living "tradition that occupation with one art or the other is a proper thing for sound men". (page 234)

With the disappearance of the small courts, destroyed by Inquisitional persecution, came an end of the Troubadours, but not of the motivating spirit of artistic creativity which was kept alive through an underground life - less aristocratic, but indigenous just the same. As Ford's father stated in The Troubadours, "... the Crusade against the Provençal heretics implied at the same time an onslaught of Northern centralization on Southern independence, the success of which finally resulted in the abrupt and total decline of Provençal literature".¹²

The men of Provence live in harmony with their setting, composed and feeling neither the anxiety nor the tension of the alienated Northerner. Provence allows natives and visitors alike to "make

11. Ibid, page 175.

12. Francis Hueffer, The Troubadours, (London, 1878), pages 130 & 131.

patterns" out of life, since its civilizing influence of "clear light" and dignity acts as an organizing force. (pages 231 & 232) Traditional arts are practiced by all, from the enactment and embroidery of the pastorales to the creation of saintons, the secular-religious figurines. The pastorales themselves are a living and cumulative art, wherein the present is united to an ancient past. The process of creation is on-going, and everyone is involved in some way in either artistic creation or performance. The arts provide a sense of pride and comfort, forming an integral part of everyday life, with the small, primitive votive pictures being the most moving example. Ford praises their sincerity and naive realism, noting that they, like the poems of the Troubadours, are variations on a theme. Their "sensual" rather than "representational" character grows out of their chief function, to give pleasure to the saint to whom they were offered. Spontaneous and alive, they reveal the intimacy between the Provençal and art.

Ford has considerable praise for Mistral and the félibristes, poets attempting to revive a beautiful tongue and carry forward the influence of Provence. With a natural realism, they render "the intimacies of human life and natural vicissitudes", possessing the great poetic gift of colouring a reader's vision. (page 162) The "authentic note of the great poet is to modify for you the aspect of the world and of your relationship to your world". (page 166) The félibristes provide another lesson in the Provençal concern for rhythm, and before them, the primitive painters paid especial attention to the same requirement of harmony in composition. Motivated by the desire to adorn and please, they concentrated less upon an intellectualized

conception of the work of art than upon the flow of pattern so that the observer's eye might move over a piece in the most pleasing and effective manner. The decorative aspect of Provençal art, the "abstract variations on an aesthetic, given theme", appeals to Ford, the idea that a work of art is designed for adornment and beautification. (page 240) The rhythm of any art, whether it be plastic, dance, or verse, works on the senses and the mind of the beholder, and in Provence it has the power to both effect changes and remain itself forever the same.

PART 3: MISE A MORT

When Ford arrives in Provence, he automatically becomes a native, shedding all influences that originate in the North. Endeavouring to make of this land an earthly Paradise in the mind of the reader, Ford succeeds in rendering a portrait of a land at peace with itself. The powerful allure of a haven of serenity and contentment leads the reader to accept Ford's fear that an invaluable way of life is being threatened by an aggressive and destructive force. The threat comes from the North, contaminated as it is by mass, machine and greed, where there "have stolen away from us, unperceived, Faith and Courage; the belief in a sustaining Redeemer, in a sustaining anything ... the belief in the Arts, in Altruism ... in the Destiny of our Races". (page 261) Ford preaches salvation in a temporal form, preservation from calamity. We might be saved through a wide diffusion of the spirit of Provence, whereby men would become able to control their own lives, be satisfied, even happy. To this end each individual is the possessor of a fine human capability, able to accomplish the duties of more than one aspect of his daily existence. Such versatility

contrasts with the Northerner's fragmentary over-specialization. Modern men no longer have a guiding hand in the course of their destinies, having created in the machine a servant who has usurped the role of master, unlike the Provençal who realizes that Mass and Machine are servants he can very well do without. For the Provençal, temporary ease and prosperity were no substitute for permanent peace of mind. The Southerner sees his own labour as earning him the right to possession, through his ability to create the possession. Personal action creates privilege.

In the past, Provence has kept alive the spirit of the land through a reliance on the powerful force of an underground life that stands in opposition to "standardization". Provençals are adepts at producing variations on a theme, and the phenomenal variety with which they bring forth both objects and sentiments contrasts with the North's ruthless determination to destroy aberrations and the unique. Unfortunately, signs of encroaching Northern barbarism begin to appear even in Provence. The modern Riviera, the creation of "Big Business", that characteristically anonymous Northern entity, seems merely an excrescence on the complexion of fair Provence. It grows as a "parasitic life", feeding on the surface of the land's traditional life. (page 266) Ford sees the spread of Northern influence as facilitated and fed by newly aroused greed, some men of Provence, principally Monegasques, succumbing to the temptation of pandering to the ready money of the North. The tourist, armed with cash, stands firm in his determination to be accompanied on his travels by his own national prejudices and barbarisms. Misled by visions of quick prosperity, the weakest Southerners turn from the path of their better

natures. Ford laments this degenerative influence, seeing it as an "atrociousness of the corruption of the innocent". (page 268) Travel should instead be used positively as an opportunity for broadening one's horizons and learning, Northerners desperately needing a greater degree of receptivity to foreign ideas and manners.

Cuisine is one of Ford's principal themes, building as he does, much of his framework for understanding the disparate minds of Provence and the North on diet and nutrition. Deprived of freshness, seasonings and properly cooked meats, the North inevitably falls victim to the digestive difficulties which, when allowed to continue over long periods of time, give rise to those outbursts of savagery and sadic aggression characteristic of Nordic barbarism. Poor food without taste is a sure indication of dining in a land under Northern influence. Thus for Ford, civilization means the absence of Anglo-Saxon dietary forms, particularly underdone roast beef and brussels sprouts. Personally, Ford finds beef emotionally distasteful because of his absorption in the heroics of the *mise à mort*, refusing to eat the flesh of the principal actors in the drama of the bull-ring. Provence is one locale that produces dishes that are in complete harmony with the nature of the land and its inhabitants, blest as it is by its ability to grow the olive, whose oil provides untold benefits. The ideal is presented as a primarily vegetable diet, relieved by a smaller proportion of fish. This use of the vegetable as a food staple was typical of the ancient Romans and is still the support of the modern Provençal. Ford continually emphasizes the subtlety of Southern cookery with its use of condiments and fresh ingredients, a good cook providing hints and indications of his materials, so that a diner suspects rather than

being fully assured of the composition of his meal. One of the greatest dangers to Provence is the Anglo-Saxon who travels with his prejudices, seeking everywhere to find his own home specialties. It is important that both regional dishes and pastimes should remain in their native regions, for such things invariably suffer from transplantation. Customs are most suitable to particular localities, lending themselves to an existence balanced, and in harmony with their setting. Ford seems to forget that he wants to transplant all of Provence.

Ford's vision of the border between Provence and Italy, accompanied by Biala's drawings, provides a graphic illustration of the contrast between two ways of life. On the one hand, stands the infinitely preferable civilized calm of southern France, while on the other stand row upon row of menacing, armed men. The pacifism of Provence and the threatening aggression of Mussolini's Fascist regime are portrayed with respective attractiveness and horror. The appeal of a human gesture from the lone Frenchman, reclining at his ease in a chair, is shadowed by the chilling mechanism of soldier and gun, the guns providing a warning for modern men of conscience, indicating a life that must be abandoned before it manages to destroy everything around it. Ford feels the pull of the South, a thirst for the clearheadedness so alien to the North with its squalor and emotional confinement.

I feel that my thoughts are going to turn to glue; my brain into curds My chest will burst. I shall suffocate if I cannot get to a hard, hot stone, flat on an iron, parched hillside, looking between olive, almond and mulberry trunks over the Mediterranean. (page 295)

Sheer dependence on "progress" and innovation is nothing other than regression, since increased artificiality and sterility only deny more

vehemently man's fundamental humanity. Each individual deserves to be valued as a person rather than as a mere marketable commodity, and this the South allows.

Even religion in the modern age cannot offer a panacea for Northern ills, for Christianity as a spiritual force died during the War. Because the Church failed to protest energetically the evils of War, having rather provided a supportive element, it necessarily lost its life force and failed to emerge from the War as "a surviving propulsion towards the example of the Founder of the Church"(page 306) Sincerely believing that the Church, and all religious forces, should condemn and attempt to prevent war rather than lend their aid, Ford was obviously disturbed that spiritual advisors on both sides of a conflict are obliged to invoke the assistance or intervention of the same God for their personal cause. Necessarily, the common man's, as well as the religious man's strength of conviction suffers. Thus modern faith takes a new form, becoming more secular and further removed from the established Church, a force of negation rather than positive affirmation. Right and wrong become the chief poles of belief, divine revelation playing little part in a faith developed by men burdened by doubt and seeking for some guiding truths in a world of confusion. The modern man of reflection "believes in the necessity for personal and mental purity ... in the necessity for the reduction of the population; in the absolute sinfulness of wars and in the right to suicide", but his belief "is a product of doubt coming after immense public catastrophe in which, as he sees it, all his leaders have been found wanting - of a doubt and languor"(page 306) With faith as

a powerful motivating force dead, a renewed affirmation of life is essential for the survival of the Western world, a world which has for too long laboured under the illusion of the efficacy of the machine and life-denying "progress".

Science and the machine have made the North even more barbaric than would normally have been the case. Man having lost control over the development of the machine, he relinquished what little power he had of influencing his own destiny. Once the machine had assumed an ascendancy and gained mastery of self-control, man found himself a servant ever more ruthlessly downtrodden and manipulated. Technological advances move at a more rapid pace than man's ability to accommodate himself to them and, displaced, man has nowhere to turn for release from the dominance of his own creation. The discoveries of Science have continually been used to increase man's proficiency in killing his fellow men and, in Ford's opinion, the benefits owing to Science are far outweighed by the detrimental effects. Science has discovered how to kill multitudes, but it also manages to preserve the defective and devitalize the healthy. In contrast, change moves at a slow pace in Provence, if at all, taking centuries to accommodate progress to itself. Ford realizes that it is unlikely that the world will ever be completely rid of the curses of humanity - the machine, Science, Law, the sense of personal property, and national patriotism - but their powerful influence may and must be diminished. What is required is a fundamental "change of heart in humanity", a recognition that we are on a path to destruction and a willingness to allow the balm of Provence to work its restorative influence. (page 320)

If this civilization of ours is to be saved it can only be saved by a change of heart in the whole population of the globe. Neither,

improvements in machines nor the jugglings of economists can do it. To have a living civilization we must have civilized hearts. I don't mean to say that it is a very good chance. But it is the only one. And it is a change that can only be brought about in convinced worlds by the artist - by the thinker who has evolved living words that will convince¹³

Believing that the opposing world tendencies of Fascism and Communism are about to lead the world back to the Dark Ages, Ford sees as inevitable the coming of a New Dispensation, an ordering for which all thinking men should begin to prepare themselves. This New Dispensation is Ford's projection of an ideal union of the traditional spirit of Provence with the requirements of a modern world. Guided by the Provençal attitude toward life, men can manage their own affairs in such a way so as to produce an environment, in no matter what locale along the Great Route, that is conducive to a harmonious and balanced existence. This Dispensation advocates as a necessity a return to an intimate contact with the earth for survival, tilling of the soil assuming more importance than either trade or industry. The ideal being small self-sufficient communities without any fierce sense of nationalism, "without rigid boundaries, violently settled codes of manners, without lethally supported senses of property"(page 318) Envisaging a redistribution of working hours, Ford sees more time being spent on market gardening than on mechanical labour, the individual concentrating his efforts on his own small piece of land. Self-sufficient, he would produce food for his immediate family, any surplus or works of craftsmanship or artistry being bartered for whatever additional goods were required. This insistence on self-sufficiency and a localized barter-economy is

13. F.M. Ford, Mightier Than The Sword, (London, 1938), page 164.

essential to Ford's plan for the recovery of stability in the Western world. The conscientious individual must willingly adopt this enduring frame of mind, working and creating in the name of humanity, for this is what gives to labour and art true permanence. The New Dispensation would spread the civilizing influence of the Great Route throughout the world, providing the manifold benefits of Latinity; "all that is clean, sound, a little beautiful, frugal, equitable, and beneficent"(page 290) Intellectual vitality, clarity of vision and a non-mechanized existence are crucial to the success of Ford's Dispensation - to sanity. And while wars may prove unavoidable, the new ordering would guarantee that they remain localized, preventing the possibility for world annihilation which presently threatens mankind. Ideas must circulate throughout the world as easily as produce, and only the reopening of the lines of communication along the Route would make it possible.

Ford dreams of an ideal fusion of the best characteristics of all nations, essentially a duplication of Provence. So the ideal already exists, and Ford's aim is merely the adoption of Provence by mankind as its spiritual if not physical homeland, resulting in a collection of men united by their tolerance, frugality, sense of responsibility and sanity. The pervasive influence of the Southern spirit must lead men to a true conviction that all men are equal. "The maxim that will save the world will ... be found in the ultimate discovery that you must love your neighbour better than yourself and that, all men being born free and equal, every man's neighbour ... is as good as oneself ... and better."(page 320) Tolerance, and once again tolerance. Men and ideas are only acceptable in a land with no mental vested interests. Using

his presence at a rehearsal for a pastoral in the Calanques as an example, Ford stresses the idyllic nature of a Provençal existence. Past is united with present, a sense of responsibility with a vibrant *jolie de vivre*, and men and women join together in a spontaneous recreation of two thousand years of history.

Provence appears as a personal expression of paradise in Ford's poem "On Heaven", where God and the saints inhabit a heavenly land spreading calm and contentment. Arriving, the poet and his loved one leave behind them the cares and coldness of their previous existence and embark upon a new life, one of inner peace and fulfilment. Provence is a living heaven, where cares are such that they make this new life only more the worth living.

"So it is, so it goes, in this beloved place,
There shall be never a grief but passes; no, not any;
There shall be such bright light and no blindness;
There shall be so little awe and so much loving-kindness;
There shall be a little longing and enough care;
There shall be a little labour and enough of toil
To bring back the lost flavour of our human coil;
Not enough to taint it;
And all that we desire shall prove as fair as we can paint
it."¹⁴

As a magician, God provides in Heaven for each man after his own heart. For Ford, it was peace and serenity. Here, one strives to forget the unsatisfying life that has gone before and learn to give oneself up to the warm satisfaction, overcoming the force of ingrained habits.

"But one is English,
Though one be never so much of a ghost;
And if most of your life has been spent in the craze to
relinquish
What you want most,
You will go on relinquishing,
You will go on vanquishing

14. Basil Bunting, ed., Selected Poems. Ford Madox Ford, (Cambridge, 1971), page 23.

Human longings, even
In Heaven."¹⁵

The "dead" in Heaven need no longer face the need to relinquish, for their life, being one of peace and harmony, is also one of acceptance. All memory of past pain is soothed by the warmth of Provence, a Heaven that exists at our doorstep.

"And it is here that I have brought my dear to pay her all
that I owed her,
Amidst this crowd, with the soft voices, the soft footfalls, the
rejoicing laughter,
And after the twilight there falls such a warm, soft darkness,
And there will come stealing under the planes a drowsy odour,
Compounded all of cyclamen, of oranges, or rosemary and bay,
To take the remembrance of the toil of the day away."¹⁶

Ford ends Provence with a sympathetic rendering of the *mise à mort*, the bull-fight assuming heroic proportions and becoming an expression of pure artistry in motion. Rhythm and a sense of movement, natural to all Provençal art, here achieve a superlative dimension, the viewer finding himself spellbound by the skill of the protagonists. Describing the experience of various "king emotions", states of rare and heightened intensity, Ford recreates at one point a performance of the "Great Chicuelo", matador. Attending a fight, Ford sensed an apparently inexplicable "heaviness", until it was revealed to him that because of some slighting reference of Chicuelo's, the Nîmes audience had determined to face him with hatred and determined silence. Despite the man's magnificence, his actions received no recognition. Thus Ford's "intense depression ... had been the ambience of all those detestations falling through the air"(page 349) The *mise à mort*, as pure art, is extremely powerful emotionally, and one loses the idea of cruelty through a concentration on the development of the tragic

15. Ibid, page 13.

16. Ibid, page 19.

elements rather than a concern for the fate of the participants. Completely absorbed by "the intellectual character of the long duel", one is hypnotized by a sense of unreality in a great match, a combination of the "fantastic and the unthinkable".(pages 352 & 353)

Watching the incomparable Lalanda and an equally incomparable bull, Ford is awakened to the purity of an art that depends on concrete movement while giving the illusion of the unreal. Strategy and form are used with precision to create a oneness in an audience's response, an admiration that in Provence is ever sensitive and observant of the possible, coming movement. At one moment roaring its approval or disapproval, the audience can instantly transform itself into a silent solid mass, breathless to catch the finest shade of technique. The controlled emotions and keen observation of form and technique once again reveal the Provençal propehsity for variations on a given theme. No more cruel than fox-hunting or the mindless insensibility of destroying what you don't understand, the *mise à mort* seems to act as a cathartic, preventing national or local outbursts of savagery. Emotions, while under firm control, are given expression. The *mise à mort* presents to each individual in the crowd, "the infection of all their minds and the infinite satisfaction of being at one with one's fellows over a supreme work of an incomparable art!"(page 353)

Provence remains the last stronghold of sanity and contentment in the world, with inhabitants who, like their ancestors, have held on to their healthy and cohesive view of life. The individual, with a firm commitment to the local community, bears the responsibility for a direct involvement in its affairs. Ford always saw Provence as an earthly paradise, a medicine to cure all personal and national ills.

The spirit that guides the Provençal inspired the words which Ford wrote to his daughter Julia Ford (Bowen) in explanation of his life in Southern France.

I live about the world with no politics at all except the belief - which I share with Lenin - that the only thing that can save the world is the abolition of all national feeling and the prevailing of the Small-Producer - and the Latin Tradition of clear-sightedness as to what one means oneself.¹⁷

And when Violet Hunt asked Ford for a workable Heaven, he presented her with the "On Heaven" poem, a paean to the powers of Provence. Ford's own passion for Provence is infectious, two of his mistresses, Stella Bowen and Janice Biala, awakening to the magic of the land. In her autobiography Drawn From Life, Stella Bowen expresses her understanding of Provence's appeal.

... the spell of Provence lay heavily upon us, and coloured all our hopes for the future. It lies upon me yet. It is something to do with the light, I suppose, and the airiness and bareness and frugality of life in the Midi which induces a simplicity of thought, and a kind of whittling to the bone of whatever may be the matter in hand. Sunlight reflected from red-tiled floors on to white-washed wall, closed shutters and open windows and an air so soft that you life equally in and out of doors, suggest an existence so sweetly simple that you wonder that life ever appeared the tangled, hustling and distracting piece of nonsense you once thought it. Your mind relaxes, your thoughts spread out and take their shape, phobias disappear, and if passions become quicker, they also lose their powers of slow and deadly strangulation. Reason wins.¹⁸

We must model our lives, if we are to survive, on the rule of Provence; responsibility, frugality, and the reconciliation of beauty and righteousness. Only Provence provides us with permanence, and even if it is only a close approximation, it is sufficient for a balanced life of peace and prosperity. So long as one Provençal remains alive, there

17. R.M. Ludwig, Letters of Ford Madox Ford, (Princeton, 1965) page 238.

18. Stella Bowen, Drawn From Life, (London, 1940), page 147.

is hope for the future. Standing in a land which possesses the emotional appeal of the Boy of Antioch, the beauty of art in motion in the mise à mort, and the most beautiful edifice in the world in Nîmes' Maison Carrée, Ford is reminded of, for him, the world's most beautiful words.

ERAMEN MEN EGO SETHEN ATHI PALAI POTA

TE SPECTEM SUPREMA MIHI QUUM VENERIT HORA (page 364)

A land of beauty and righteousness can only produce a harmony of emotion and thought.

CHAPTER FIVE: A WARNING

In Great Trade Route, Ford presents one last passionate plea for sanity in the face of impending chaos. A sense of urgency pervades the work, as the author outlines the growth of a dangerous spirit current throughout the Western world. This modern "Up Against the Wall" philosophy breeds on fear and ignorance, producing a fever of intolerance and isolationism, a fever that Ford feels is about to destroy the last vestiges of a cosmopolitan civilization. Fierce nationalism appears as a consequence of ignorance, men fencing themselves off from all forms of external influence -- including those that might prove beneficial. As Ford saw it, the fact that "men living on one side of an imaginary line called a 'frontier' should automatically hate people born on the other side of that line is a conception of madness - of the madness that the gods send to people whom they are about to destroy".¹ Man's capacity for hatred, a hatred that maims and distorts vision, had grown to such an extent that Ford feared for the security of world peace. Rather than learning to live together through cooperation and understanding, nations tend to use anyone beyond their frontiers as scapegoats for their own economic and social ills. Men feel compelled to annihilate everything which opposes them, even if the opposition is merely a difference in outlook or interpretation. That which appears different must be destroyed, and with variety stamped out, standardization may take its place.

All his life, Ford had propounded the benefits to be derived from an exposure to ideas and customs foreign to one's own tradition, and

1. F.M. Ford, It Was the Nightingale, (London, 1934), page 318.

"Wall Fever" was an immense afflatus that had the power to render impossible any future contact between men. Ford's purpose in Great Trade Route was to launch an afflatus of his own stamp, a "Will" for the power of good, based on the Provençal spirit he had outlined in other works. While making a strong protest against modern cultural degeneracy, Ford also stressed the need for each individual to fight against succumbing to the spirit of the times. The corruption and malignity of the present could only be overcome through the personal reconstruction of conscientious individuals and these were the men and women to whom Ford addressed himself, hoping that they might catch the creative impulse of his inspiration -- that same spirit of Provence. They must develop their own form of tradition, secured through a continuity with the past.

Ford once again explains how the Great Trade Route is a larger, more expansive and all-inclusive expression of that vital Provençal spirit that is so necessary for the continued existence of civilization. Now he extends the relevance of Provence to a world-wide scale, as the Route becomes an international frame of mind, an "... equable climate rather than a geographical delimitation, a swathe of fertile land rather than a matter of races. It is above all a belt of the world in which men tend to be distinguished by equanimity of mind, frugality, and moderation rather than by huge appetites, crowd massacres, and efficiency".²

While the Route extends from China to America, its existence depends upon the individual and his desire to live by a code of responsibility

2. F.M. Ford, Great Trade Route, (London, 1937), page 41. All subsequent references to Great Trade Route will be indicated by a page notation within the text.

and altruistic impulse, acknowledging the necessity for particular, personal involvement. Thus the emphasis is placed upon smallness of scale, where everything is localized and particular, yet a necessary element of the larger, complete design. Ford still saw mankind's last hope as resting with the small-producer, the artist-craftsman who as a conscientious individual would allow himself to be seduced by the attractiveness, and urgency, of the Provençal spirit.

Great Trade Route, designed as the adumbration of a "Quietist Anarchism", continues Ford's life-long struggle "on behalf of Sino-Helleno-Latin civilization of the Mediterranean as against the murder and rapine of us conquering Nordics".(page 23) Ford presents once again the physical delineation of the Route, but he now extends its path across the Atlantic to the southern states of America. However, its purpose remains unchanged, the channeling of a backwards and forwards civilizing influence, unaffected by Technology and the Machine. Although much of his material had already been presented in Provence, Ford continued to stress the life-restorative powers of a Provençal frame of mind, where "there was neither occasion nor necessity for theft, murder for possession, chicanery, or any of the legalized crime by which today we possess ourselves of the goods, gear, and specie of our neighbours".(page 40) All virtue and light originate here.

To successfully reconstitute the ideal life of the ancient Route, we must think in terms of "Small" rather than "Big". Ford's image of the Route is a personal one, firmly established by coincidences in his own life, and he continuously uses anecdotal reminiscence to show how

intricately such coincidences knit all of one's life together. All elements, however disparate, appear united in the light of the Route's cultural backwards and forwards movement. But it is the Mediterranean segment of the Great Trade Route to which Ford is most passionately drawn, he experiencing a permanent desire to live in close proximity to its beneficent influence, a "... sheer longing for soft blue seas, hills covered with cyclamen ... and for non-Nordic langour".(page 36) The Mediterranean becomes a fascination and personal symbol for a life of equilibrium, and Ford utilizes both his own acknowledged facility for fabrication and his perceptive observation to convince his readers of the efficacy of the area to change one's life and outlook for the better. The force and honesty of an impression overrides concern for strict veracity in any given case, for Ford was a master in his ability to make of the world of the imagination a reality. "Even as a little boy I knew that I had the trick of imagining things and that those things would be more real to me than the things that surrounded me."(page 19) And the trick never left him. He saw his artistic purpose as a continual movement of observation and a consideration of what had been observed. Such impressions as were gathered were then rendered in writing, rendering being, in Ford's vocabulary, "... the reproduction by one art or another of the impressions made upon one by one's observation".(page 43)

Ford shared a belief with Joseph Conrad that "... if you can make humanity see the few very simple things upon which this temporal world rests you will make mankind believe such eternal truths as are universal"³

3. F.M. Ford, Joseph Conrad, (New York, 1924), page 178.

Thus literature was to be used as an effective means of educating the conscience of modern man, the literary artist being the prophet of the new age.

The province of Art ... is the bringing of humanity into contact, person with person. The artist is, as it were, the eternal mental prostitute who stands in the marketplace crying: "Come into contact with my thought, with my visions, with the sweet sounds that I cause to arise - with my personality." He deals, that is to say, not in facts, and his value is in his temperament.⁴

Great Trade Route hopefully becomes just such a seductive form of instruction -- a moral lesson achieved through personal observations. In a letter to E.C. Cumberlege (27-10-36), Ford summarized the motive behind its composition.

It is in short a book of advice from a man of wide experience and a remarkable memory who is without any illusions and no ironies in any fire to men of reason, good will and common sense who desire that the present tumults which overflow the world should be suppressed so that they can get on with their jobs in peace ... It is in short what in the old days would have been called humane literature.⁵

Great Trade Route is written with a keen sense of urgency, as Ford surveys the modern situation. He works under a sense of impending crisis, feeling that another Northern invasion of the South would undoubtedly prove final, the result being world annihilation, at least of the world in any civilized form. Prospects are bleak for a world that refuses to heed the signs indicating chaos. He realized that, "carrying on its back a screaming Mass Production, the bronze bull that is the Machine Age charges the brazen wall called Crisis". (page 44) The book follows the itinerary of one of Ford's journeys from Europe to

4. F.M. Ford, The Critical Attitude, (London, 1911), pages 63-64.

5. Richard Ludwig, ed., Letters of Ford Madox Ford, (Princeton, 1965), page 264.

America and home, tracing the poisonous spread of "Wall Fever" in the late 1930s. Everywhere, the same flourishing intolerance demands the eradication of all foreign influences in a rabid strain of nationalist insularity. From the earliest passages of the book, the spread of Nazism becomes a supreme expression of the evils of Nordic barbarism. While still having to operate under a hypocritical disguise (being forced to camouflage a Nazi vessel under the appellation "Jewish" ship), Nazism makes its pernicious influence felt universally as it taints even the Great Route itself. On board ship, Ford encounters the leitmotif of modernity, sufficiently well-expressed by the intoxicated Nazi professor, "'We shall put up against a wall -- and shoot -- all Jews, all Catholics, all Communists All that Vermin!'" (page 52) All the while claiming to be desirous of "Peace always. Deepest Peace". Such a program for human regeneration is purely genocidal, designed to eliminate the need for accommodating non-aligned groups and races. Ford reaches America, only to see the Statue of Liberty obscured by the ship's scarlet swastika banner - two symbols standing in opposition, one denoting hope and the chance of freedom, the other indicative of the Teutonic mechanism's efficiency in destruction.

Modernity is losing touch with civilized culture and a basic sense of humanity. "Letters and ideas have so little place in our body politic and the doctrine of pride in work as work; of engrossment and of serenity; of aloofness from the world and of introspection with no other purpose - is here anathema."⁶ Each generation will become progressively worse as Technocrats gain an ascendancy, the direction of both the government and the entire social

6. F.M. Ford, No Enemy, (New York, 1929), page 197.

system being given over to technicians, scientists and engineers. "Progressive" America appears well on the way toward divorcing itself from any sense of a stabilizing tradition.

A culture that is founded on the activities of the applied scientist, the financier, the commercial engineer is not only very little elevated above the state of savagedom, but it is foredoomed. Armageddon, as it was called, came upon us because of those activities.⁷

Ford agrees with Gertrude Stein that "Americans existing Americanly exist if they exist in existence Americanly outside Time", meaning that America is separated from a conscious awareness of Past and Future, unlike Europeans, and is living in a pure present of Today -- the age of Cellophane. (page 63) Modern America does not particularly welcome reminders of its past, and is concerned only with Today, all else resolutely ignored. It would seem unwise to recall anything beyond the Present, for a great multitude of Americans are ready to pronounce sentence on whosoever should dare to either remember or predict. The American common man fears ~~an~~ outside influences, even the simple pleasure of good wines and a knowledge of their appropriateness, seeing them as a dangerous and sinister form of foreign corruption.

Ford also senses an American lack of personal involvement in contemporary society, a deep-seated and threatening anonymity. Seeing that a robbery may pass either unnoticed or purposely unacknowledged, Ford combines his feelings toward the American outrage of "cops and robbers" with passages of Malory, providing a sharp contrast between an ignoble modern age and the "elevated plane of a past literary and chivalric world. The modern cry rages against whatever one personally dislikes, and is typified by Ford's "Communist" who pledges: "'Blood,

7. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932) page 378.

fire, extermination. Up against a wall. All artists, musicians, singers who are the props of the capitalist system. Up against a wall, Matisse, Picasso; all the works of Renoir, Manet, Cezanne, Sisley. Turn the machine-guns on the rotting canvasses.'"(pages 77-78) Such a mechanical destruction of art appears both ridiculous and horrendous to Ford, for whom art exists above and beyond politics and politicians. The "Eminent Technocrat" at Theodore Drieser's Mount Kisco continues the leitmotif of ignorance and the Wall philosophy. Speaking to Ford of Jews, Catholics and immigrants, he continues the cry: "'Put 'em up against the wall We will let no one live here who has contacts outside the country.'"(page 81) He would willingly destroy all traces of the past and its glorious culture - the extreme expression of the American desire to acknowledge only Today. Ford realized that he, the Technocrat, and his kind could only lead to the destruction of what little remains of civilization. He represents everything that Ford has spent his life fighting, and while the rendering of his fanatical ravings is hilarious, the horror of the situation emerges. Ford recognizes the value and necessity of that which the insanity of the Technocrat seeks to obliterate and efface:

He is going to send the U.S. Army to massacre all the males of Belgium and sterilize all the females of France. The United States will order the British Fleet to blow every Italian town off the face of the earth till there's not a beastly mouldering stone on a beastly mouldering stone on a Roman or Medieval ruin and not an obscene fresco on an obscene church wall in the whole of the peninsula.(pages 81-82)

Despite the Technocrat's ludicrousness, he does unfortunately possess power and exert influence, for his attitude is merely an exaggerated reflection of the general modern mood. Ford ridicules the

Technocrat's proposal for an ideal mechanized State, but the frightening image of the man's vision remains sharp and clear, despite the mention of his inability to bring his automobile back to life when it breaks down soon afterward. The Machine rolls forward toward perfection, and the Wall philosophy indicates that modern butchery is million-minded in contrast to ages past, which Ford thinks might only have been unable to conceptualize the idea successfully. But the horizons of the Modern man have expanded when they have to do with eradication, while at the same time becoming narrowed to blindness with regard to the genuine human condition. One need only compare Ford's continual pleas for sanity with the Technocrat's bellicose ravings:

"Cellophane can do anything. The world owes the US gratitude for cellophane alone. Hoch, Cellophane! ... In two years we shall have Our great dam supplying All Power. We shall be the All Highest. Then all you Small Producers with your frescoes and laces and epics on toilet paper shall be set up against walls. We shall have bullets that will pierce a hundred men on end and Machines that will convert Jewish corpses into always more Power. The Machine alone shall survive and We the Masters who can make the Machine do everything"(page 83)

Ford² can only feel an abhorrence for the inventors of cellophane and "packet goods", as a supporter himself of a more natural system of food production and delivery, stressing the urgent need for a return to groups of small producers. Because of the high degree of artificiality in modern foods and the poverty of contemporary working habits, men's "brains are forever starved of good blood" and "their minds are incapable of reflection, courage, or stability".(page 44) Thus diet and nutrition, according to Ford, play an important role in the psychological composition of the modern man, who, if he is denied fresh produce and the knowledge of how to prepare it, will inevitably fall victim to a stagnant mind and become either a passive automaton or a

ferocious aggressor. Ford recognized the closeness between cellophane, that completely artificial creation of the machine, and destruction.

The Technocrat told me that his Government encouraged the incredibly extended use of that transparent calamity because in ten minutes a cellophane factory can be converted to manufacturing T.N.T. or some other high explosive. (page 88)

In opposition to all this stands Ford's small producer and man's fundamental need to work the soil and grow things by his own hand. Ford emphasizes the emotional satisfaction and sense of well-being to be derived from the possession and cultivation of a plot of ground no matter how small, even if it be only the size of an empty soup-tin. Men must be given the opportunity to express themselves in the earth. Without such a release, they remain incomplete, frustrated by a sense of inadequacy which must, and will, be compensated for, usually with violence.

Great Trade Route, like Provence, continually stresses the sharp division between the fundamental temperaments of North and South, barbarism as against civilization. Humanity must be made conscious of the essential unity of the Route in order to avoid the occurrence of future war and bloodshed. Ford dreads the possibility of another Southward march by Northern invaders, reading the signs of rampant Wall Fever and looking once again toward Africa, the continent of unending spoliation. Troubled by the Italian advance into African territory, Ford ponders on the possible outcome of this renewed attempt to rape the black world. Seeing Fascism as an abhorrent Nordic barbarism, the author extends his sympathies to the dark continent, while his fears reside in the knowledge that some "New Thing" will emerge from the conflict, possibly inundating the world. Any incursion on African territory has always led to heavy consequences, and Ford envisages war

in the near future as the inevitable outcome of the Italian campaign. As a result of his personal vision, all negroes are, for Ford, depressing reminders of Africa, "... that mournful continent, protected by an avenging Nemesis that cannot keep her from being despoiled but always pursues her despoilers with dire persecutions and disasters".(page 59)

We must recognize a world outside the narrow confines of our own immediate environment as a first step toward salvation. The successful interpenetration of social elements from the East and West should "remind you that there is a world outside your backyard and the next-door movies. That realization is the beginning of a State of Grace".(page 100) Ford admires a combination small-producer cum artist-craftsman with strong pacific tendencies and a cosmopolitan perspective, who should model himself on the early merchants of the Great Trade Route, men loving peace, tolerance and sunshine. We must exert a Will for the triumph of sanity, in order that the contemporary age might by some slim chance leave behind it legends of its own Golden Age.

We have to consider that we are humanity at almost its lowest ebb since we are humanity almost without mastery over its fate ... the whole world trembles at the thought that tomorrow our civilization may go down in flames - trembles will-lessly and without so much as making a motion to preserve itself.(page 102)

Ford sees as prophetic of impending doom the common man's relinquishing of his personal involvement and responsibility in public affairs, his reliance upon politicians to do the work for him. These same politicians are in the author's eyes despicable, men to be regarded with supreme contempt because of their complete uselessness and utter incapacity to fulfill creditably the duties of their offices

- offices which should never have been so artificially created in the first place. Men of thought are neglected, while men with a turn for making money or arousing nationalist fervour find favour with unthinking electors. Our choice of politicians is accordingly guided by negative rather than positive considerations, thus producing a body of governing officials totally inept, yet highly sinister.

We do not choose them for their intellect, their artistic intelligence, their altruism, the mellifluousness of their voices, their physical beauty, their abstract wisdom, their seasoned knowledge of the values of Life. We choose beings who hypocritically suggest that they and they only can fill our individual purses, our maws, our stores, our banking accounts with property that at the moment of their appeal for our suffrages belongs to the heathen stranger ... or our fellow-countrymen We elect them because they assure us that they will help us to take the bread out of our brother's orphan's mouth and we get the rulers - and the double-crossing - that we deserve. (page 104)

Ford realizes that the responsibility for the actions of these politicians ultimately rests with those individuals who relegate their powers to them, and who accept the manner in which they operate once in office. We must regain control of our own rights for decision-making and choice of social and personal direction.

Although outside the bounds of Trade Route civilization because of its Calvinistic inheritance, Geneva is presented as a symbol for a congeries of nations, a meeting place of cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic sentiment. The League of Nations appears as Western man's sole political hope for survival, for here, diplomacy and discussion might come to supplant arms and aggression. Ford realized that Hitler and Mussolini might only too soon prove to a frightened world how slim a chance it really was. He sees the bas-relief of the Rape of Europa on the Geneva rail terminal as an ironic commentary on the modern situation, the sculptor humourously, if unconsciously, depicting the

League in the guise of a "screaming, buxom female" carried off by a raging bull.

Fervid nationalism, in the guise of Nazism and Fascism, was propelling Europe toward a senseless conflagration, finding willing adherents to policies of racist domination, military might, and the thirst for "lebensraum". Even those men who recognized the impending danger did little to avert their fate, the Axis meeting little resistance in the early years of its march toward domination and destruction. Ford deplored the lack of decision apparent in the West to act or even speak out against the coming tide of totalitarianism.

Ford sees vestiges of a Golden Age in the continued presence of itinerant vendors who still travel the Route, merchants characterized by an idyllic honesty and a lingering sense of rejoicing. These romanes are a survival of a romantic past, a past that is kept alive in various forms all along the Route, especially in Provence, where the past becomes a living celebration. In Provence, religion maintains strong links with the past, providing a deep sense of continuity for modern believers. Old faiths prove tenacious and never die completely, being deeply embedded in the memories of the people. The past, because of distancing, always appears more idyllic than the modern age and is remembered with a growing fondness in a burdensome age of uncertainty. Especially attractive is the yearly celebration of the village of the Saintes Maries, where legend holds that the Holy Maries, St. Mary the Virgin, St. Mary the Magdalene and St. Martha were aided by the local gypsies upon their arrival in the Camargue from Jerusalem. Thus the legend, while lacking foundation, becomes truth through faith and perpetual repetition. What is believed, becomes so.

Sir Walter Raleigh's belief that if you take millions it isn't piracy is seen as indicative of the Western discovery, glorification and worship of mass. Ford sees the psychology behind the machine as inevitably leading to our own destruction, the notion that "stealing-a-million-isn't-piracy". The human conception of the reality of quantities tends to become extremely fuzzy with excessively large amounts. While "thousands" may retain a sense of human scale and immediacy, "millions" tend to lack substance. The greater the volume of mass, the more any meaning is obliterated. Millions stolen or millions killed never has the same emotional impact as a personal theft or the death of an acquaintance. Mankind becomes anaesthetized against large numbers and, for this reason, men may become insensible of the moral responsibilities of conquering foreign nations. Hitler and Mussolini counted on their own persuasive powers to dull the sensibilities of their nationals with regard to the morality of waging aggressive war and Ford realized that it could easily be done.

The "bloodthirstiness" of modernity overshadows any hope for survival, mankind needing a prophet of salvation and a leader of moral strength, not a fascist dictator. We must come to realize, as Ford clearly did, that "slaughter as a means of enrichment does not pay". (page 124) Otherwise, the world will continue to reel "from Deluge of blood to Deluge", unless the coming one was to be final. Conscious of this threatening imminence of a New Deluge, the result of a dangerous but powerful desire for imperial possessions, Ford realizes that a future afflatus of hope might spread only after most of the world has suffered extermination. Then may begin the lengthy process of reconstruction, moral, physical and intellectual.

Ford examines the notion of an afflatus or a Great Will running over the earth at various times, influencing mankind for the better or for the worse. The spirit of the modern age is one of the Machine and Gigantism, bolstered by the annihilating doctrine of the Wall. This Will has superceded the earlier Will of peace that typified the Golden Age of the Great Trade Route, going as far back as the time of the surviving sons of Noah who had been "shaken by the cataclysms of blood and water into a determination to live godly in the future under skies of the utmost possible amenity"(page 124) Hopefully, the world may be ready for a new afflatus, not merely a continuation of the aggressive spirit of Fascist imperialism, but a resurgence of a healthy belief in peace and international cooperation. Ford envisions the possibility, however remote, of a New Order along the Route and extending beyond its borders, a reinstatement of the Golden Age. Mussolini's imperialist policies in Africa, that dark continent where plunder becomes a curse, cannot succeed with impunity, and the Nazi quest for lebensraum in the east can only lead to disaster. Ford recognized an inevitable vortex of clashing forces: a militant Fascism, a powerful Communism and a decadent Capitalism running out of control, hurling themselves into a life and death struggle. The only way to avoid this impending catastrophic confrontation would be to succeed in setting adrift a new afflatus over the world, one of reason and hope, where the scale of living would be down-sized from the Gigantism of today to a concept of the miniature and the local. And this is the purpose of Great Trade Route, Ford firmly believing in the efficacy of literature and the printed word to spread enlightenment and belief. The Word requires the as-yet-unexpressed affirmation of the people, those

unable to fully articulate their inner desires. If modern man can rouse himself from the lethargy of a dangerously "contagious indifferentism", and this appears to be what has killed Christianity, he might still succeed in keeping alive the spirit of Provence. "The Word supplies the Afflatus that sets a spirit traversing the world, but the aspirations of innumerable humanity are needed to supply the mobility of the Word." (page 128)

Each individual must recognize within himself the need for a new inspirational force, one with the power to raise mankind above strife and confrontation to a new plane of serenity and peace. This hoped-for Word is neither new nor difficult to find, but as old as the Route and as near as Provence. In a land of plenty and clement weather, Ford feels that peace has a greater chance of survival, since men are less apt to resort to the force of arms to settle differences when the land they work is capable of supporting them adequately. A benign turn of mind should grow out of a benign setting, just as the necessity for oppressive toil ushers in the discovery of invasion, robbery and enslavement. The new Word seeks to abolish need and attempts to keep the notion of personal property undeveloped. Ford dreaded the threat of covetousness and saw the wisdom of those ancient traders who placed the eminently desirable under the protective cover of tabu. They had recognized also the 'fundamental law of conversion: in order to seduce and influence, one must attract. To offer the conquered new happiness will always prove more successful an inducement to acceptance of a new regime (either physical or spiritual), than use of the sword and compulsion. The diffusion of a new Afflatus must proceed in like manner, for through a combination of attractiveness, probity and sheer

concentration and persistence, this fledgling Word, like a smaller power, may succeed in overthrowing an apparently superior force. The size and strength of the combatant is less an indicator of victory than the degree of faith and determination with which the battle is waged.

Ford's sentimental attraction to North and South American native populations, another instance of his trenchant support for the under-dog and lost causes, finds full expression in Great Trade Route. He sees these aboriginal peoples as sustaining a stronger connection with the Golden Age than the European colonists and invaders who overran them and their way of life. They "appear to have been simple in their tastes, frugal in habit, practitioners of the arts, skilled craftsmen, and - above all, and that is perhaps most significant, they were without wheels".(page 150) Another quirk of Ford's, this, his belief that the wheel was the root of all evil, leading to the barbarisms of mass and machine, and through an increase in the ease of transport, to the possibility of ever-greater mass slaughters. Native populations with their wheel-less civilizations are presented as almost virginal in their purity. But like most peaceful and attractive paradises, they fall victim to the invasion of plundering foreigners, gentleness and beauty always proving the victims of greed and aggression.

Ford detects a marked affinity between the American Indians and the Troubadours of Provence in their attitude toward life and coexistence. American natives proved unfamiliar with the European concept of owning land, they merely desiring an inalienable right to inhabit and utilize the land beneath their feet. They failed to realize that by trading with the invaders their land for goods, they did

thereby sign away such rights, the notion of impersonal property being a specifically European convention. But in Ford's estimation, it was the Indians who exemplified all the essentials of true civilization.

They were men leading a life that satisfied them and one that was adapted to the country in which they lived. They were obedient to laws evolved by custom; they were hardy, frugal, had arts and crafts suited to the manner of their lives and, what was very important, they were not over-crowded. (page 155)

Early colonists existed solely upon the sufferance of the Indians, who were superior initially in both arms and the ability to cultivate and hunt. Gradually, the "Whites" learned from the natives both agriculture and scouting, fundamentals adapted to the land. Only then did they possess the necessary strength and skill to enslave or exterminate the indigenous population. Ford saw the "Reds" as placing a greater value on the life of men because human beings were less plentiful than land to live on, whereas the "Whites" were infinitely more concerned with property and held life relatively cheap, relying upon bloodshed to settle differences.

While Ford's simplistic portrayal of the two psychologies and ways of life glosses over obvious inconsistencies and exceptions, he remains faithful to his notion of the moral rectitude of motivation and the essential rightness or wrongness in looking at life. Once again, the rendering of the vanquished race is idealized, yet the fundamental truth of its vision remains convincing. We know Ford distorts and exaggerates, but we still agree with his basic premise that the weaker force in a confrontation, the one that is finally subjugated and destroyed, is usually infinitely more precious and life-affirming than the one that succeeds in conquering it.

Ford emphasizes the sharp contrast between the Northern Anglo-Saxon colonists and the French-Latin colony in the South, the latter revealing a more natural and humane feeling of "kindly fraternization" between the French and the Indian natives. Ford quotes as an echoed expression of his own sentiments, Michelet's comments on the "ferocious exclusivity" of the northern settlers.

"Crime contre la Nature! Crime contre l'humanité! Il sera expié par la stérilité de l'esprit." (page 161)

Even in colonial America, the Latins exhibit a more sympathetic understanding of the nature and problems of effective coexistence than their northern counterparts. The South always stands for harmony.

Ford reiterates the desirability of small-producers/craftsmen when surveying the American scene on this leg of his journey. From a historical perspective, early colonial productive gardening is presented as generally inefficient, home (English) interference having retarded the growth of small-production and truck-farming. The colonists came to realize that they must adapt production to the new country's character and requirements. Contrary to the advice provided by England, the growing of tobacco proved more profitable than the cultivation of silk-worms. Thus first-hand experience necessarily overrode the dictates of an absent directorial force, home decisions appearing arbitrary and ill-considered to the colonists, and seeding the ground for an inevitable confrontation. These early Americans proved adaptable and their firm avoidance of rigidity in method and practice was beneficial in exploiting the resources of the new land. Ford admires, as examples, Washington and Jefferson, whose homes, Mount Vernon and Monticello, were workable models of self-sufficiency farming.

Ford's rail journey south through America forces upon him the ugliness of modernity. Even his method of conveyance lacks poetry. If the world must "progress", and if it is unable or unwilling to return to more primitive forms of transportation (Ford's preferred mule), it should do so quickly and move into the future - the air. At least an airplane has a mechanized, futuristic poetry of its own. "I like to think of the railway as dying away, like the Middle Classes, of which it is the expression." (page 177) Both are antiquated. Ford finds contemporary long-distance rail journeys to have lost the buoyant enthusiasm and innocent pleasure of earlier years, monotony and grimness having replaced the sense of *joie de vivre*. Through the window, the receding view of the Northern States seems desolate, peopled with unemployed figures standing in the landscape.

Yet in New Jersey, Ford discovers a paradise in America to equal a plot in Provence. Visiting a truck-farm, he finds a kindred soul in the farmer and his domain, beyond the competition and control of larger company-owned farms run on principles of Mass and Machine. Ford's mind at once leaps to the envisionment of an idyllic New Jersey of Small Producers, maintaining both its integrity and independence directly in the shadow of factory chimneys. He firmly believes that the factories could not hold out indefinitely against the singlemindedness of dedicated men and women, to whom the land must inevitably revert. The Small Producer has a remarkable resiliency under any crisis, his tenacious resourcefulness making him relatively immune to external circumstance. The man "supporting himself and his family by the work of his hands ... is the one human being whom currency, finance, tariff, the refrigerator, and the machine - those arbiters of the destinies of

all other mortals - cannot very much affect. Even wars cannot root him out".(page 188) Only the elements may prove antagonistic, but they too can be understood and lived with. Once the farmer accommodates himself to nature, fluctuations in the world outside the perimeter of his farm rarely have the strength to conquer. However, Ford realized that great malevolent political tides like Fascism might eventually overwhelm even men like these.

What is oft-repeated may still be a Great Truth even if by now a platitude, and such, Ford feels, is the case with the belief that mankind needs contact with the earth for both spiritual and physical renewal. We must make a concerted effort to return of our own volition, since it "is for us to decide whether our return shall be merely an Antaeus retouching of the earth to regain strength or whether it shall be cataclysmic - a be-panicked *saute qui peut* after world disaster".(page 191) Unfortunately, the latter seems the more likely. As the Worker becomes gradually more and more dispossessed by the Machine, conflict within and between nations becomes unavoidable. This, coupled with the degeneration and weakened vitality of modernity, spells annihilation. Just as surely as technology will improve machines and streamline operational procedures, it follows that ever greater numbers of men will find themselves dispossessed, having been standardized out of the labour market. At the same time, the vital energy of mankind is being sapped through the growth of occupations totally unrelated to nature and the increasing scarcity of fresh nutritious food. Ford's aim is to reawaken, if not instill, a desire to return to the land in whomever his words reach, the projected ideal being a life of individual and intensive culture, craftsmanship and

cultivation.(page 195) Agriculture and gardening spell hope. As Ford said, the "idea of putting tiny dark objects into the ground fascinates me. Over their germination and growth there is something mysterious and exciting. It is the only clean way of attaining the world's desire. You get something for nothing. Yes, it is the only clean way of adding to your store; the only way by which you can eat your bread without taking it out of another's mouth."8

The Crowd in all ages is frightening, but the modern age has produced one that seems particularly ferocious if not manic, and Ford realized in which direction the modern currents were headed, his prophecies being realized only a few short years after he wrote. The boredom instilled in the contemporary mind by frustrating anonymity and the crushing sterility of standardization was rampant and dangerous, boredom creating a thirst for excitement and strong emotions. If the thirst can't be filled on an individual basis it will be either vicariously or on a collective level. And anonymity, besides being an unwanted curse, can be used as camouflage to avoid responsibility for personal action. Crowd mania unleashes the ferocity of bottled frustration, and "humanity in a crowd is humanity with its passions almost completely uncontrolled A man will confront the strongest imaginable emotions with an iron equanimity and exercise his cool judgement as long as he is alone. Yet the same man, acting in company with several thousands of relatively decent human beings, set in motion by a wind of contagious emotions, will commit atrocities of hideous kinds and reduce himself to a loathsome being."(page 201) Hitler and Mussolini were accomplished manipulators, both knowing well that the

8. F.M. Ford, Return to Yesterday, (New York, 1932), pages 168-169.

Crowd breeds irresponsibility and feeds on the loss of personal identity. Thus each man must remain responsible for his own actions - always.

Ford distrusts Law as it now stands, structured as it is by a formalized process of standardization. As an exponent of Quietist Anarchism, he senses an essential unfairness in the Law, where one man is subject to another - the majority. Justice remains distinct from Law, Law changing to maintain contemporaneity, being merely an expression of the political majority at any given time. Rigidly formalized laws "apply only to theoretic norms. No norms exist." (page 204) Infinitely preferable to written bodies of Law are remembered customs applicable to small territorial units - Ford's groups of small-producers - where differences are encouraged rather than forced into a mold of bland conformity. The Law, to remain just and effective, requires flexibility and humaneness. Ford sees the formality of the court system, especially that of the English, as abstract and inhuman, capable of lending a sense of horror to any proceedings. While conscious of a "less cruel air" in the informality of the American system, he recognizes the dangers ~~so~~ evident even here, using as an unhappy example the use of a criminal trial to release publicly a vindictive ferocity, where Law becomes Spectacle. The Bruno Hauptmann trial in Flemington, New Jersey, which Ford attended, the end result of the extravagantly publicized Lindberg kidnapping case, becomes the epitome of the public's voracious thirst for vicarious excitement. Ford sees the trial as the mise à mort of another human being. The State and the Law itself were here discredited at the point where the prosecutor,

as a public functionary, loses or relinquishes his impartiality. The Crowd wants blood - and gets it.

Against capital punishment as both uncivilized and ineffective, Ford, like the readers he would appeal to, possesses the ability to imagine himself in an accused man's place but for circumstance. A defect in the Law exists in the ferocity of punishment, in that it "arouses sympathy for victims of the Law ... and against the victims of the criminal But it is worse that human beings should see nets closing pitilessly round another human being and not feel sympathy for him." (pages 208-209) All men must bear and acknowledge responsibility for "exhibitional murder by the body politic". (page 202) Equality under Law is essential, and for this reason customs prove more workable than a strictly codified, written structure. Customs evolve through the labours of all members of the localized political unit, thus making it easier for the majority to acquiesce to their guidelines. Law as Custom doesn't appear as a legislated imposition from above that requires enforcement. Humanity must base Law upon Justice rather than acquisition and the maintenance of personal property rights, the "eye for an eye" theory of retributive justice being discarded and replaced by an operable, fearless public conscience.

Ford advocates a spirit in sharp opposition to traditional New England "virtues", which consisted of "rectitude for the sake of gain, honesty which is only the best policy, continence so that you may creep into the back door of heaven, frugality for the sake of adding to your store". (page 214) We need to loosen the rigid bonds of the old Puritan work ethic and sense of moral rectitude, substituting for them

a less confining, more easily followed, code for human behaviour. If the code is designed for men rather than saints it will necessarily be more obeyed than breached. The craftsman motivated by the spirit of Provence embodies the new code and provides hope, since he is farthest removed from the imprint of mechanization. A "handicraft goes at a pace commensurate with the thought in a man's head".(page 223) Because his work is personal, the dedicated craftsman produces excellence. He is thus able to experience a sense of pride and accomplishment in his labour, something the modern worker geared to the dynamics of the machine can never hope to achieve.

The Puritan idea of acquisitiveness and the sanctity of property as an impersonal entity is alien to the Provençal spirit. Property must become more intimate and personal, not merely a purchase, but worked with affection. A multitude of personal possessions is not a prerequisite for happiness, and Ford's utopian vision requires nothing but the most frugal establishment. Beautiful things need only be accessible, not personally possessed, the public exhibition of artworks being infinitely preferable to the exclusivity and restrictedness of a private collection. The craftsman embodies the true definition (in Ford's sense) of a gentleman, "a person living in harmony with his cosmos", and to do so one must not hunger for acquisition nor be bridled with the fear of losing one's possessions.(page 228) If men could abolish the need to accumulate immense wealth, mass production might be done away with.

Ford's visit to Philadelphia produces an unhealthy symbol of a still-prospering but gorged industrialism, all aspects of which tend to negate the human role. The city is presented as an example of the

accelerating deterioration of urban centers during the early decades of the twentieth century. The Machine Age, which is fundamentally urban, destroys the integrity of the individual by forcing him to live vicariously a diluted existence, lacking vitality and privacy. The ever-increasing pace of the industrial era leads to a frenetic existence in which the individual must adapt and accommodate himself to change and technological advances that would have seemed humanly impossible a hundred years ago. Only man's elastic properties have kept him sane in the face of these leaps, if he has remained sane. The social and political writing on the wall of the 1930s seemed to indicate to Ford that many men might have already been pushed over the edge, beyond their capacity to adapt. While mass production drains men physically and emotionally, it never approaches a complete utilization of human resources and potential. Except in the field of technological development, man's most valuable asset, his creativity, is either totally ignored or incontinently wasted. Man is capable of accomplishing many feats without the aid of the machine, merely using his ingenuity and his body - the one machine that is a true miracle. Ford recognized one glimmer of hope in the burgeoning conservation movement of concerned environmentalists. Although such a group might be small, it was indicative of a changing public temper, of the fact that some men were dissatisfied with the barrenness and deterioration produced by the Machine when it rapes Nature.

Democracy has apparently lost its efficacy. Men elect and give control over their destinies to incompetents, since those who are able to appeal to any vast majority are stage men rather than thinkers capable of developing real solutions to the problems facing modernity.

Fervently opposed to the notion of a career politician, Ford realizes that honest men are presently at a disadvantage in the political arena since they remain unable to get an effective hearing. Because of the sheer size of the electoral structure, electors must "vote not for measures but for men. And to appeal to electorates so vast, politicians, to be successful, must employ methods that are fatal to their own self-respect and to their own senses of honesty To indulge in a political career is, in short, to have your sensibility deflowered and your morality blunted by continual compromises." (pages 241-242) Once elected, the politician soon forgets or stifles the altruistic concern for social betterment he so audibly expressed while campaigning. Ford's panacea requires of every man a sense of personal responsibility. Each individual must retain control over his own destiny by refusing to relinquish this responsibility for the body politic's accountability, and this he cannot do if he feels himself to be absolutely powerless in the face of some abstract, external political force. He must become intimately involved in governing, voting (preferably by referendum) on every issue. Ford suggests that such a solution might be made more practicable through the diminution in size of basic political units, substituting smaller local groups for the mass electorate. The politician's usefulness would be eliminated with the willingness of individuals to accept a measure of political decision-making responsibility within their community.

Travelling south through the American states, Ford registers further contrasts between the mentalities of North and South, industrialized efficiency as against creative humanism. Apparently,

even the South is being influenced for the worse by Nordic tendencies of modernism, many Southerners relinquishing what was most civilized in their existence for the tawdry gains of "progress", canned goods, a radio and a cheap car. The enticements of Mass and Machine exert an evil influence on susceptible men, starting a corruptive disease that leads to standardization, a living death. Accuracy and efficiency are not virtues to be commended, but rather Nordic notions that must be diluted if not abandoned, Ford's own writing providing a practical example, where an effective rendering of atmosphere is more important than a literal presentation of verifiable facts. The South and its way of life (and thought) are an escape from the "infinite aridities" on a land moulded by "the eternal nothingness of Northern ideals".(page 279) The North kills any growth or natural profusion, being able to produce only monuments of industry - all inhuman and alien to both thought and true leisure.

The real threat of modernity is the struggle between the remnants of civilization and the Machine, rather than the traditional problem of religious intolerance, although Ford realizes that this still exists, seeing Hitler as a dangerous Nordic aberration. The modern era's growing religious tolerance seems "an immense advance in the psychology of humanity", a great stride forward where men learn of the possibility of peaceful coexistence between groups of different religious persuasions.(page 292) However, a new threat to humanity developed coincidentally with the weakening of the old conflict of intolerance. The new "Conception of Murder as a Remedy" is a perilous throwback to primitive savagery, wholly alien to Ford's conception of Great Trade Route civilization. The "world illusion that mass, national and race,

wholesale murder for commercial profit was a practicable idea", must be eradicated from the modern soul. (page 292) Once again, war as a means of enrichment never pays.

Instead of being willing to absorb and learn through contact, the North repeatedly plunders and attempts to subdue the gentle spirit of the South. The harmony and peace of a Southern existence seems to act as an insulting reprimand on men who lack the benefits of true civility, the idyllic combination of an amenable climate, fertile soil, and both physical and spiritual liberty spurring Northerners to drive for conquest and destruction. Ford uses as examples the extermination in France of the feudal Troubadours in the thirteenth century, and the obliteration of the Southern way of life in the American Civil War, both instances of a Northern moral cry used to invade a South for gain. While slavery may have been abominable for both the individual and the body politic, the motives and methods of the North in its abolition were just as harmful if not more far-reaching. For slavery would, in all probability, have soon died the natural death of a lingering anachronism. Used as an excuse for invasion, it ended in Northern supremacy and consequently the growth of industrial mass-production and a belief in the efficacy of murder as a means of acquisition. Ford sees the road to the Civil War as paved by economic rather than moral issues.

One distinction between North and South (in any era and any set of nations) provides all Norths with a keen advantage in a life and death struggle: the South is usually more thinking and divided, while the North is more Plutarchian and machine-like - ready for the kill. Any South "will almost always present a cracked and divided front to the

solid, wedge-shaped phalanx coming from the direction of the Pole".(page 359) Another characteristic hampering any South is its ingrained unwillingness to send any armies northward, unlike the North which will enthusiastically and without hesitation invade the South whenever its population and needs become too great. The moral cry is used merely as a tactical device, instilling enthusiasm and concealing true motives.

Ford fervently hoped that men might learn to widen their fields of vision, to see past the confines of a circumscribed nationalistic spirit toward a more international perspective. This concern for the global aspect of humanity should be coupled with an intimate concern for localized community affairs, personal involvement and responsibility being essential in both areas. Thus national barriers would be broken down to destroy recurrences of fanatical patriotism. Nazism and Fascism were staring Ford in the face, threatening everything he believed in, and everything he felt we should all believe in. Ford supported contrariety both in the individual and in cultures, the ability to appreciate opposites simultaneously or in succession, and any fierce nationalist ethic would attempt to impose a rigid and stifling standardization - steamrolling before it anything or anybody not conforming to the mould.

Panic is driving men to expedients, the most dangerous and contagious of which is the "Up Against the Wall" syndrome. The modern political machine, not only totalitarianism, had become a "system of representatives with obscure and almost illimitable power, no responsibility and such a grip on the electoral machine as to be practically irreplaceable except before tremendous gusts of public

bewilderment or despair".(page 322) At the same time, the growth of insensibility permits the possibility of total destruction. With the world on the verge of catastrophe, Ford makes a plea for a universal change of heart, away from the contemporary call for blood. The growth of fear and intolerance can only be checked by men of conscience, unafraid to speak out against the direction in which our politicians are taking us. Each man who truly thinks (and dreams) must "stubbornly and passively" resist "anything that ran counter to common sense and the elementary dictates of conscience".(page 369)

Ford's ship journey home to Europe provides him with further observations on the sharp difference between a fundamentally life-enhancing attitude toward existence and the pervasive mechanism of the modern age. The ship was filled with a motley collection of Jews, Italians, and North Americans, young and old, all crammed together for the duration of the voyage. The lack of privacy, which Ford detested and saw as symptomatic of industrialism, forced passengers into an exposed condition. Each man needs space and time to be with himself and think, and this the times prevent. But, even here, Ford is able to find an affirmation of life and buoyant spirits. Deeply affected by the infinite variety of Jews aboard ship enroute to Palestine, he finds their singing moving and "triumphant". The gayness of their song was coupled with the thirst for a homeland, and Ford feels the "Peace of God" descend upon him in the midst of this Jewish group yearning for a home. The joyousness and hope of these Jews, whose co-religionists were so soon to be hunted across Europe and liquidated, stands in sharp relief against the bolsterous rowdyism of the crowd of young Italian-American boys being sent to meet and praise Mussolini in

Italy. Ford was scandalized that these youths from a land of liberty should be on their way to a fascist state. "I found hot indignation filling me at the thought that American boys should be taught to sing hymns of adoration to a foreign dictator." (page 411) Exhibiting no consideration for anyone around them, these boys, when loosed from the restrictions of good behaviour because of their sense of Fascist superiority, act as a disruptive influence destroying the peace and enjoyment of the sea-crossing. Their selfishness and arrogance are hallmarks of all totalitarian tendencies in Ford's view, and only emphasize the gentle spirituality of the Jews in the steerage. The characteristics and relative positions of the two groups are indicative of a world which is continually "expelling its images of virtue and breeding such proletarian children". (page 412)

While not as arrogant a life-negating force as the Fascist youths, the Catholicism of Spain, as Ford found it, was another oppressive influence that worked for the power of darkness rather than light. For Ford, Spain was emotionally unattractive, and the Cathedral of Malaga appears as a symbol of the country's dark Catholicism, "a black immensity". (page 400) The size dwarfs humans, and encloses for Ford the whole of the night and its darkness, not the spiritual light of worshippers. The impersonality of the religion reflects the aura of cruelty Ford sensed in Spain, where tortures "are enacted and then regarded with absolute composure Spanish inflictions of suffering are like acts of faith performed in public by passionless executioners who are doing their duty." (page 415) The religion lacks gaiety and joyousness and, not being rooted to the individual's daily life, tends to destroy them. It becomes a vacuum that sucks up any life that comes

near it - a great absorber. The faith is cold yet burning, and provides no comfort for emotional and spiritual anguish; rather it inspires it. With one last shudder at its bleakness, Ford turns from the heaviness of Spain back to the lightness and immediacy of the Judaism on the ship. His own personal belief in the Spirit of Provence has more in common with the gaiety of the Jews than his fellow Catholics.

Returning to his small plot of land in Provence, Ford makes one last plea for a change of heart in mankind. Attempting to launch an afflatus for the power of Good and Sanity among the men of the Great Trade Route, he wishes such men of conscience as his words reach to spread the Word amongst themselves - that salvation lies with the self-sufficiency of the artist-craftsman/small-producer. The professional politician is to become anathema, as the individual interests himself in the direct control of his own destiny. The personal voice and the referendum would become the essential political mechanisms along the Route, replacing officials, central authority, leaders and the threat of totalitarianism. Man's only hope is the power of education, and educating rapidly through the successful launching of a world afflatus. Men must learn, especially those of the North, to give up their notion of efficiency, acquisition and power as virtues. Ford, like the South, felt that the only true virtue was charity, not something that might lead to intolerance and aggression.

Ford remains adamant that War never pays, conquerors always being hounded by nemesis. Wars today are never merely local, but ultimately affect the entire world - they are always a global issue and a curse for both victor and vanquished. "The one is accursed by prosperity in sin that time shall fully avenge; the other is accursed by a bitterness

that will prove an unending drag on his civilization." (page 368) All warriors are a threat to the well-being of man, and Ford detests such modern monsters as Hitler and everything he stands for - ferocious nationalism and persecution. Ford was the supreme anti-patriot in a narrowly nationalistic sense.

The only faint glimmer of hope lies in the growing ability of men of different faiths to peacefully co-exist - barring such excrescences as Nazism and Fascism. If religious faiths have learned to live relatively harmoniously side-by-side, it might be possible for politico-social groups to do the same. "It merely needs a little elevation of public world opinion." (page 427) Ford pleads with the world to recognize the stupidity and wastefulness of aggression. Senseless and ultimately unprofitable since revenge always follows, aggression and Wall Fever lead man nowhere but in a vicious circle.

Humanity in the twentieth century has "increased in ferocity and in the power of doing murder", the modern age seeing two opposing afflats paramount - Communism and Fascism - and these powerful forces are threatening mankind with a global civil war. (page 432) "Both are the products of despair and both transcend all other passions." (page 435) Only by a resurgence of the Spirit of Provence and a rebirth of individual conscience and responsibility, will man avert catastrophe - if he really wishes to, and his belief in personal freedom is strong enough. Western industrialized society may be spiritually bankrupt, but the essence of the Great Trade Route might be recreated through faith and hard work. If mankind were to believe in itself rather than the machine, it might yet survive and the Great

Trade Route is the frame of mind to which we must return, one of pacifism, harmony, frugality and responsibility.

I want to belong to a nation of Small Producers, with some local, but no national feeling at all. Without boundaries, or armed forces, or customs, or government. That would never want me to kill anyone out of a group feeling. Something like being a Provençal And I want the whole world to be nothing but undefined nations of Small Producers without boundaries or custom houses or politicians. That would be a happy New Year to all mankind.(pages 86-87)

CONCLUSION

These four selected works by Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier, Parade's End, Provence and Great Trade Route, share a thematic link in their examination of the disappearance of a vital, civilized Western Tradition, a set of ruling class standards of convention based upon a firm moral foundation, in the twentieth century. In the two novels, Ford, as a contemporary historian in fiction, attempts a rendering of the modern "time spirit". Seeing around him a climate of psychological anxiety and emotional strain in which men increasingly suffer a disintegration of personal identity, he wrote, firstly, about the decay and collapse of a system of both public and private ethics, and secondly, about the possibility of salvaging the remnants of a civilized existence. What most concerned him was that the moral impoverishment of the individual resulting from a pervasive cultural confusion was leading inevitably toward a hollow social structure, a framework of conventions without any true standards.

Ford initially had considered fiction to be the most effective means of portraying the "time spirit" of modernity, operating as it does directly upon the imagination of the reader and his emotions. The Good Soldier reveals Ford's masterful control of impressionist technique, presenting the corruption and selfish opportunism of the contemporary scene through a particularized delineation of the psychological conflicts of a small group of individuals. The novel focuses on the crisis that develops when a man of honour, Edward Ashburnham, endeavours to live a life in accord with a feudal sense of social responsibility and chivalric behaviour. Unfortunately, his notion of honour is a disastrously sentimentalized version of the finer

qualities Ford himself admired. Ashburnham's fundamental weakness is the passionate side of his own nature, which clashes with the dictates of convention at every turn. This passion-convention dichotomy within Ashburnham leads to the destruction of both himself and those around him. His sentimentalized code of ethics has a rigidity that cannot accommodate his passionate impulses. This inability to achieve a balanced relationship between one's own basic nature and the moral code by which one attempts to live, emphasizes the lack of direction and stability in the modern world that so worried Ford. Ashburnham's psychological struggle ends in failure, since he refuses to relinquish his hold on a set of outmoded moral conventions that no longer have any foundation, conventions that could never be reconciled with passion uncontrolled. Ford presents in The Good Soldier a tradition of civilizedness that has degenerated into mere façade.

The psychological conflict of Christopher Tietjens in Parade's End moves a step closer toward a successful resolution of the modern problem of living a life guided by moral principles in an age of corruption. Ford recognized the World War as marking the final passing of a way of life, of everything he valued. Standards were swept away so irrevocably that not even a façade remains, and men no longer feel a need to conceal blatant acts of commercialism and self-seeking individualism behind a mask of convention. Tietjens, unlike Ashburnham, has the will-power to subjugate his passionate impulses to a code of honour more personalized and therefore more meaningful. Striving for the seemingly impossible goal of Anglican sainthood, Tietjens needs years of tortuous self-analysis to finally achieve a sense of personal harmony. He succeeds in living a life in accord with the dictates of

his conscience only through the abandonment of his class allegiances and moral remnants from the past. Ford saw that conscientious individuals, men like Tietjens, could survive with their integrity intact by dissociating themselves from the contamination of today's society and establishing small semi-pastoral communities of like-minded men and women. Tietjens, along with Gringoire in No Enemy, becomes Ford's first portrayal of the conscientious individual as successful small-producer. A man, even in a decadent age, can live guided by his principles when willing to remodel his life and return to the soil. Personal reconstruction is a means of salvation, and it was a viable solution which Ford would stress again and again, with an ever greater sense of urgency, as he saw the world racing toward what threatened to be a final conflagration.

Ford's shift toward non-fiction during the 1930s for saying what was closest to his heart seems motivated by the sense of urgency which permeates both Providence and Great Trade Route, the latter especially. Distressed by the madness of a bellicose and destructive age, Ford feared for the survival of mankind, and certainly of civilization as it once had been known. While he continued to write novels, Ford's prime social concerns are reflected rather in his later non-fictional works, books which paint a grim picture of the probable consequences of continuing along our present path of development - or rather, degeneration. Mass and Machine are the new divinities of an industrial age, having enslaved men to a "progress" that can only lead to annihilation. In Providence, Ford provides an idyllic, but nonetheless workable, panacea for the ills of modernity, a guiding spirit that might lift men of good will from the moral morass in which they find

themselves. In an expansion of Tietjens's successful personal reconstruction as a small-producer in Parade's End, Ford elaborates on the possibility of the Spirit of Provence, a complementary ideal of frugality and responsibility, guiding whole nations, a whole world, of small-producers, each man cultivating his own land and his own soul. To adopt this spirit would be to give birth to a New Dispensation rooted in the soil, one ruled by custom, operating through barter, and reconciling beauty and righteousness. Ford fervently believed that the ideal might be realized, provided it was not already too late.

Ford's sense of urgency was painfully acute when he came to write Great Trade Route, his one last importunate plea for sanity in the face of impending chaos. The panacea outlined in Provence no longer seemed to have been portrayed with a forcefulness adequate to combat the reader's indifference and lethargic acceptance of those forces currently leading us all toward destruction. Mass and Machine, industrialism, fierce nationalism, and the potentially disastrous struggle between the two opposing world forces of Communism and Fascism, were all contributing to the reinforcement of the "Up Against the Wall" philosophy rampant during the 1930s. Ford believed that if this inevitable conflagration was not to be final, men of conscience must begin a process of personal reconstruction that would take them back to the soil and provide immunity from the effects of current world tendencies. In Great Trade Route, Ford returns to his small-producer as Saviour of mankind, a man still guided by the Provençal spirit of frugality and responsibility, but now universal. The proper spirit can support him anywhere along the Route, ensuring his survival and the continuance of his way of life. In years with Hitler, Mussolini and

Stalin casting lengthening shadows over the Western world, Ford believed that little else could save us. The beauty of Ford's love for Provence colours his last poems, and we hear a man tenderly affirming his fidelity to his "invincible nook".

... But I like the baked,
 severe, bare
 Hill with the sea below and the great storms or
 later ...
 And for me
 There is no satisfaction greater
 Than the sight of that house-side, silver-grey
 And very high
 With the single, black cypress against the sky
 Above the hill
 And the palm-heads streaming away at the mistral's will.¹

Life must become a denial of intolerance, with a strong sense of the past making possible the setting of one's present within a stabilizing framework. True fulfilment will never come from "progress", but only from contentment - personal peace. Ford's poem "Coda" embodies his life's work, his fight for clarity of thought, sensitivity, and the enrichment of existence. He managed to find his personal peace with Janice Biala and Cap Brun.

It is certain that we must have patina and dust.
 We are the sort that must, because our brain
 Will not work in atmospheres of the perfect drain
 And cellophane ... And we must
 Have irregular perspectives drawn in crumbling stone
 Dying upwards into times long past
 And yet so passionately here ... We must
 Have Names and Affairs and Past Passions by which to adjust
 The mind and get some sort of perspective
 Into this era of plumbing and planes,
 And the maniacal passion of invective,
 The gigantic monotone,
 Of execration passing between nation and nation.²

1. Basil Bunting, ed., Selected Poems. Ford Madox Ford, (Cambridge, 1971), page 124.

2. Ibid, pages 128-129.

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