MAKING UP MADNESS IN THE NOVELS OF FORD MADOX FORD

by

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Abstract

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) was an important writer in a period of exciting changes in the way that madness was conceptualised. He lived through the development of psychology and psychiatry as new medical disciplines and the emergence of psychoanalysis and participated in the literary shift towards representing individual consciousness, putting the mind on the page. The First World War challenged both medical professionals and writers to find new responses to madness. Ford was at the intersection of these changes, with a personal history of mental breakdown, a preoccupation with insanity and direct experience of serving at the Somme in 1916.

Ford wrote about people who were mentally or emotionally disturbed throughout his writing career, in letters, essays, autobiographies and fiction. The novels he published between 1892 and 1939 leave a rich repository of depictions of madness which acknowledge but are not constrained by its increasing medicalisation. This valuable collection of literary representations of madness has been under-explored. The most comprehensive and influential accounts are biographical and interpret the novels largely as an expression of Ford's own psychological needs and problems.

This thesis addresses the question of what Ford's novels have to say about madness, rather than about Ford himself. It considers how he represents madness, charting continuities and changes over his oeuvre, and to what effect. Methodologically the thesis takes a hybrid approach. It uses quantitative analysis to explore Ford's language of madness; archival and empirical research to shed new light on how his treatment for a nervous breakdown in 1904 impacted on his fiction; and close readings of thirteen novels from across the oeuvre which exemplify different aspects of his depictions of madness. It offers sustained readings of some of Ford's less studied novels, such as *The Benefactor* (1905) and *When the Wicked Man* (1931), alongside re-examinations of those already extensively discussed: *The Good Soldier* (1915) and the *Parade's End* tetralogy (1924-28).

The thesis demonstrates that the theme of madness in Ford's novels traces a trajectory of explanations for it from the personal, to the interpersonal, and to the societal and systemic. Ford's novels produce progressively nuanced and complex explanations for who is labelled as mad and why, with the power of language and the literary central to this. They unsettle distinctions between the rational and irrational, the imagination and delusion, and ultimately the sane and the mad. Increasingly his novels implicate readers in ways which destabilise any sense of their own immunity from madness, showing it to be more ordinary than exceptional. Ford's insights into how madness is created and experienced remain relevant today.

Key Words: Ford Madox Ford, Madness, Modernism, First World War, Psychology.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) was a major writer in a period of foundational changes in both literature and medicine. Medicine slowly shifted from privileging physical explanations for mental or emotional problems towards acknowledging the role of the mind, with the emergence of experimental psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis as distinct disciplines. In parallel, literature increasingly sought ways to represent individual subjectivity, consciousness and the mind. The First World War accelerated shifts in attitudes and treatment and created its own fault line for many writers. This was particularly true for Ford who had recovered from one breakdown in 1904 to have a second in 1916 following his experiences at the Somme. He left a record of these experiences in his letters and autobiographies. However, Max Saunders finds 'insanity' to be one of the 'central' preoccupations in his fiction too.[1] It predates either of his breakdowns and continues through into his post war writing. This signals that Ford was exploring madness at a point of cultural transition in the way it was perceived. The word 'madness' is chosen because it is not, as Andrew Scull observes, a 'medical term'.[2] Its history predates its medicalisation and madness better aligns with 'literary and historical scholarship' than with the 'narrower clinical focus […] implied by terms such as "mental disorder" or "mental illness"'.[3] As such, it holds open a broader set of possibilities for how it might be perceived and represented in Ford's fiction.[4]

[1] Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life, Volume I: The World Before the War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 105.
[2] Andrew Scull, *Madness – A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 2.
[3] The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Madness and Literature Network project (2008-10) <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/mental-health/old-site-content/projects/madness-literature.aspx> [Accessed 12 October, 2024]. This network was active in the early stages of my research and, taken together with Scull's argument, informed the choice of word.
[4] This positioning is further refined and discussed in section 1.3.

Ford's 'greatest gift' is said to have been for fiction, and his publications on either side of the war, *The Good Soldier* (1915) and *Parade's End* (1924-28), have become regarded as his masterpieces.[5] They attract much of the critical discussion of Ford's fiction, but many of his lesser novels reward attention, particularly where they facilitate consideration of recurring subjects such as madness. Ford's novels contain a rich repository of stories of madness which acknowledge but are not constrained by its increasing medicalisation. They display a sometimes symbiotic, sometimes antagonistic discourse between medicine and literature. The impression the novels leave of how madness was conceived of and responded to in Ford's lifetime is under-explored. This thesis will show that Ford's novels have much to contribute to an understanding of how madness was regarded in the early twentieth century. It addresses the question of how Ford represents madness across his novels and to what effect.

This introductory chapter maps the territory in which the thesis is located, outlining first the cultural and personal contexts relevant to Ford's writing about madness. It moves on to demonstrate the existence of the theme of madness across Ford's novels before considering how it has been evaluated, biographically and critically. It reveals a tendency for Ford's interest in madness to be seen as reflecting his life circumstances and personal history of mental breakdown. It argues that this, combined with a critical discourse privileging a narrow range of Ford's novels, obscures the significance of the topic of madness in its own right. The chapter closes with an outline of the approach taken to test the hypothesis that Ford's representations of madness have something to say about the subject matter, not just his life.

[5] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 102.

1.1 Contexts

Ford was writing during a period of fundamental shifts of approach towards mental illness. The following summary of the transition away from purely physical explanations provides a general backdrop to discussions throughout the thesis.[6] A tension between physical and psychological explanations for madness was not new, for as Roy Porter shows, 'inherited […] models of madness' had long juxtaposed supernatural causes against naturalistic explanations.[7] During Ford's lifetime, established theories and practices co-existed alongside newer ideas and approaches. It was a contested space with challenges to the predominant viewpoint from both within and outside the medical profession. The developments relevant to Ford's writing are best approached thematically.

Firstly, the belief that an individual, or a whole family, was predisposed to madness was longstanding and prevalent. Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) offered the first cohesive account of evolutionary processes [8] when he published his theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.[9] Fifty years later Charles Darwin (1809-1882) rejected heredity in evolution, arguing that traits were randomly acquired, but as the full title of *The Origin of the Species* suggests,[10] his theories lent themselves to arguments that some people were less well equipped for life than others. However, it is Bénédict-Augustin Morel's (1809-1873) *Treatise on the Intellectual Moral and Physical Degeneracy of the Human Species* (1857) which is generally credited with making the link to madness.[11] Morel held that

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[6] It is impossible to do justice to the complex histories of medicine and madness in this thesis, so the summary offered is necessarily a selective account which focuses on issues relevant to subsequent analysis of Ford's novels.
[7] Roy Porter, *Madness - A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 123.
[8] <https://evolution.berkeley.edu/the-history-of-evolutionary-thought/1800s/early-concepts-of-evolution-jean-baptiste-lamarck/> [Accessed 17 October, 2024].
[9] Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, *Philosophie Zoologique* (Paris: Librarie F. Savy, 1809).
[10] Charles Robert Darwin, *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859). A subsequent edition in 1872 dropped 'On' from the title.
[11] Andrew Scull, *Madness in Civilization – From the Bible to Freud. From the Madhouse to Modern Medicine* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2015), p. 243.

behavioural disorders were rooted in constitutional deficiencies, were inherited, and worsened across generations. His work was highly influential across Europe and in North America for generations.[12] In Britain, the renowned psychiatrist Henry Maudsley (1835-1918) did much to disseminate theories of degeneration.[13] Cesare Lombroso (1839-1909) in Italy used degeneration theory to argue that criminal psychopathology was inborn and anatomically identifiable. By the time Ford was eighteen Lombroso had published the first English edition of *The Man of Genius*,[14] proposing artistic genius as a form of hereditary insanity. Four years later Max Nordau was asserting that degenerates were 'often authors and artists'.[15] Thus the literary was coupled with madness in ways which worried and inspired authors, including Ford. Medically, the conviction that the roots of madness were physical gained traction when such theories were combined with experimental practice. For instance, Antoine Bayle's (1799-1858) autopsies on deceased mental patients, whose symptoms he named 'paralysie génerale', revealed a handful with characteristic 'lesions' on the brain.[16] Despite obvious limitations, the study and the term 'lesion' [17] reinforced the idea that 'mental illness was rooted in the brain'.[18] Work by Paul Broca in France, Karl Wernicke in Germany and David Ferrier and John Hughlings Jackson in Britain contributed to establishing localisation of function in the brain as a 'physiological fact'.[19] Maudsley's conviction that 'mental illness had biological causes' was widely disseminated through his publications in Britain.[20] In Germany, Wilhelm Greisinger's (1817-68) claim that people

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius* (London: Walter Scott, 1891).
[15] Max Nordau, Dedication in *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1913), p. vii. First publication was 1895 but references cited are from a later English language version.
[16] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 218. In English it became known as General Paralysis of the Insane and accounted for around twenty percent of male asylum admittances in both Europe and North America by the end of the nineteenth century.
[17] The term 'lesion', denoting an area of abnormal or damaged tissue to an organ caused by injury, infection, or disease clearly locates the problem physically.
[18] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 218.
[19] Janet Oppenheim, *"Shattered Nerves" Doctor, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 30.
[20] Laura Otis (Ed.), *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 364.

with 'so called "mental illnesses"' in fact had 'illnesses of the nerves and the brain' [21] became a 'guiding principle for the next generation'.[22] Note the longevity of these ideas which persisted alongside developments anticipating the specialisation integral to modern medicine.

Whilst today, and certainly in literary criticism,[23] Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is considered a central figure in the development of psychiatry, Richard Bentall makes a case for Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) as more significant.[24] He claims a 'near revolutionary impact' [25] for Kraepelin's 1883 *Compendium of Psychiatry*,[26] in which he presented his classification of disorders. Kraepelin's division of mental illnesses into those caused by external conditions and considered treatable, and those with biological causes, including brain damage and hereditary factors, which were regarded as incurable, raised the stakes, especially as diagnoses proliferated with successive refinements of the *Compendium*.[27] That some of his diagnostic terms remain in use today [28] attests to the long-term impact of his work.[29] More immediately, the new classifications created a shared language about mental illnesses and became 'the foundation stone around which a scientific psychiatry could be built'.[30] This framing of psychiatry as scientific was essential to establishing it within a medical profession where it had to establish its credentials against organic and neurological disciplines.[31] However, the scientific

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[21] Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997),* p. 76.
[22] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 262.
[23] See later discussion.
[24] Richard P. Bentall, *Madness Explained – Psychosis and Human Nature* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 10.
[25] Ibid.
[26] That it was intended as a textbook is signalled by the full title, *Compendium der Psychiatrie: Zum Gebrauche für Studirende und Aerzte* (*Compendium of Psychiatry: For the Use of Students and Physicians*).
[27] There were nine editions of the *Compendium* between 1883 and 1927, with the final running to four volumes.
[28] Notably, manic depression and paranoia.
[29] Bentall, *Madness Explained*, p. 19.
[30] Ibid.
[31] The development of psychiatry is argued to have been led by the aspirations of medics, with the needs of their patients sometimes subsidiary to this (Scull in *Madness in Civilisation*, Shorter in *A History of Psychiatry* and Oppenheim in *"Shattered Nerves"* for instance). Elements of this surface in the thesis, notably in Chapters 2 and 5.

rationalism which came to underpin medicine met challenges from outside its ranks, as Janet Oppenheim's research on the contemporary influence of spiritualism and psychic research illustrates.[32] Frederick William Henry Myers (1843-1901) of the Society for Psychical Research (S.P.R.) is a key figure whose work on consciousness proves significant to Ford's novels.[33] It is important, therefore, to note Myers' interface with medical approaches to madness, best illustrated by presentations he made first to his own Society on the value of hypnotherapy and the use of 'suggestion' to help the insane, and subsequently to the British Medical Association (B.M.A.).[34] The medical literature at that time generally attributed 'entranced states' such as those achieved through hypnotism with 'abnormalities of the nervous system'.[35] After the 1888 B.M.A. meeting, at which Myers was a contributor, Charles Tuckey declared that there was 'no longer any prejudice against hypnotism in the best medical circles'.[36] When Kuhn states that this was 'probably correct', he dates a shift of emphasis in medical thinking.[37] Tuckey is credited with 'bringing medical hypnotism to the UK' and he authored the first English language textbook on it: *Psycho-Therapeutics: or, Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion* (1889).[38] Tuckey's encouragement to restrict its use in spiritualist séances and by stage performers is a significant delineation. Oppenheim attributes it to the desire to decouple science from 'an occult past' [39] which had included, for example, mesmerism and phrenology [40] and to protect the economic interests of the medical profession against those, such as

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[32] Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World – Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 2.
[33] It surfaces first in Chapter 4 and then in Chapter 6 in relation to *Parade's End*.
[34] Philip Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain, 1893-1913: Histories and Historiography* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2016), pp. 31 and 33. Presentations given in 1897 and 1898.
[35] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 244.
[36] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. 35.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Gordon David Lyle Bates, 'Charles Lloyd Tuckey and the "new hypnotism,"' *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 214 (1) (2019), p. 19. The book ran to seven editions between 1889 and 1921.
[39] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 233.
[40] Phrenology, most associated with Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828), was based on the claim that the formation of the skull was indicative of mental faculties and traits. Although his assumption of the localisation of brain function was later proved right, phrenology itself was scientifically disproven and so viewed as a 'pseudo-science' by the nineteenth century. Mesmerism, developed by Franz Mesmer (1734-1815), was based on a

'faith healers', who might claim to 'do the physician's work with […] less expense'.[41] Many medical practitioners and historians identify Tuckey's book as the 'birth of the British Psycho-Therapeutic Movement'.[42] It introduced the term 'psycho-therapeutics' two decades before Freud's work appeared in English translation.[43] Indeed, Kuhn cites Freud's own acknowledgement in 1904 that there were 'many ways and means of psychotherapy' and attests to the variety in Britain, augmented by the 'adaptations and modifications' offered by a 'plethora of practitioners, qualified and unqualified'.[44] Alongside Myers and Tuckey, Kuhn identifies the distinguished Harley Street doctor Alfred Taylor Scholfield (1846-1929) and Daniel Hack Tuke (1817-1895) [45] as significant figures using forms of psychotherapy, which they would probably have referred to as 'mind healing'.[46] The variants of 'mind healing' offered by medical practitioners and others included hypnosis, suggestion and persuasion in different combinations.[47] The consensus that all these practices were explained by 'suggestion',[48] despite being unsure what it was or how it worked, became the dominant medical theory, embraced also by faith, psychic and spiritual healers.[49] Freud's psychotherapeutic methods filtered into this context gradually and it is worth noting that his later repositioning of his method as 'analytic' can tend to obscure that it emerged out of his 'previous uses of hypnosis and suggestion'.[50] Accordingly, when Freudian psychoanalysis arrived in Britain, around 1908, it was seen as simply

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belief in a vital living force, an invisible fluid which could be manipulated to support healing, but was scientifically discredited when blind trials showed a placebo effect. A practice involving inducing a trance-like state, mesmerism was a forerunner of hypnotism, explaining medical wariness.

[41] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, pp. 226-7.

[42] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. 161.

[43] Bates, 'Charles Lloyd Tuckey and the "new hypnotism'.

[44] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xiv-xv.

[45] Son of Samuel Tuke who pioneered 'moral management' of insanity at the York Retreat. Moral management was a humane approach to confinement of the insane which restricted the use of restraint and forbade the physical punishments regularly used in asylums. It offered personal attention focused on restoring a patient's self-esteem and self-will.

[46] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xiv.

[47] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xv.

[48] Today known as clinical hypnosis.

[49] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xv.

[50] Ibid.

another form of psychotherapy which aligned with the 'prevailing mind-healing climate'.[51] British psychotherapists adopted a 'mix and match' approach and when they used the term psychoanalysis it usually meant a melding of techniques which might include hypnotism, suggestion, Jungian word association, Breuer-Freud's original cathartic treatment, free association and dream interpretation.[52] This somewhat confused environment shows a growing acceptance of the role of the mind in mental illness and a gradual destabilisation of materialist assumptions. It was a shift already underway when the emergence of 'shell shock' in the First World War accelerated it.[53] This term is generally attributed to Dr. Charles Samuel Myers (1873-1946) who used it in describing his first patient case in *The Lancet* in 1915.[54] Myer's attribution of the trauma symptoms to '"molecular" commotion in the brain' [55] reflects still dominant materialist assumptions, as does William Tyrell's interpretation of it as an exhaustion of a man's reserves of 'nervous energy'.[56] The fact that the label shell shock was quickly used to 'describe almost every sort of nervous breakdown, trauma or anxiety neurosis' confronting military medics signals the bafflement caused by the sheer number of cases which could not be explained by, for instance, degenerative inferiority or brain lesions.[57] Ultimately it led to the recognition that 'under sufficient stress, even the strongest minds gave way'.[58] When Scull states that Freud's 'notions of unconscious conflict and the transformation of mental troubles into bodily symptoms seemed […] partially borne out' by the phenomenon of shell shock, he indicates why

[51] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xvi.
[52] Ibid.
[53] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to comprehensively reprise the considerable literature on the First World War and shell shock. Instead, it provides a brief contextual summary directly relevant to this thesis. Scull's *Madness in Civilisation*, Taylor Downing's *Breakdown: The Crisis of Shell Shock on the Somme, 1916 (London: Abacus, 2016)* and Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago Press Limited, 1987) offer complementary and differently nuanced accounts.
[54] Taylor Downing, *Breakdown: The Crisis of Shell Shock on the Somme, 1916* (London: Abacus, 2016), p. 81. Downing records that shell shock was a term already in use by soldiers, borrowed by Myers.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Downing, *Breakdown*, p. 98.
[57] Downing, *Breakdown*, p. 82.
[58] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, pp. 296-7.

Freud's theories gained credibility.[59] W.H.R. Rivers' (1864-1922) use of an adaptation of Freudian therapy at Craiglockhart War Hospital is well documented and known.[60] However, the take up of Freudian approaches is only part of the picture. Whilst Scull credits Rivers with a sympathetic stance, this was not necessarily integral to the new psychological approaches. Scull describes some treatments as 'meted out' by psychiatrists who displayed a sadism indicative of support for the military view of shell shock as a sign of cowardice deserving punishment.[61] The use of hugely painful electric shocks, accompanied by authoritarian commands to give up symptoms, was widespread.[62] Lest it be assumed that the psychiatrist famous for the 'talking cure' [63] averred, it is worth noting that Freud testified on behalf of Wagner-Jauregg at his subsequent trial for war crimes, 'absolving his colleague of wrongdoing'.[64] Scull's positioning of this as a closing of ranks between colleagues does some injustice to Jauregg's defence that he had been trying to help. After all, the job of psychiatrists was to return soldiers to the Front rather than to prioritise their 'long-term psychological health'.[65] Jauregg's claim, effectively, is to have practised in good faith. It highlights the importance of evaluating medical approaches towards mental health as they were understood at the time, rather than with the benefit of a later vantage point.

It is important to consider, therefore, Meghan Hammond's observation that critical conversation about the work of modernist writers, including Ford, has been dominated by consideration of Freud's

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Pat Barker's Regeneration Trilogy: *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993), *The Ghost Road* (1995), for instance, brought it to wider public attention.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Scull records its use in Britain by Lewis Yealland (1884-1954), in France by Clovis Vincent (1879-1947), in Germany by Fritz Kaufmann (1875-1941) and in Austria by Julius Wagner-Jauregg (1857-1940). Patients might be asked to perform military drills during treatment, have their fear deliberately heightened, have the currents applied to highly sensitive parts of the body, or be forced to watch others undergo the treatment as they awaited their turn.
[63] A phrase coined by Breuer's patient, Anna O. See Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies in Hysteria*, authorised translation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1937), p. 20.
[64] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 299.
[65] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 297.

influence to the exclusion of other developments in psychology.[66] Sara Haslam suggests one reason for this when she highlights the inherently literary nature of Freud's endeavours, both in the formulation and communication of his ideas.[67] This hints at a synergy between the two disciplines. Indeed, Haslam finds Freud part of a 'medico-literary' collaboration dating back to Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) and describes him both as a 'true child of literature' and 'emblematic of modernity'.[68] In this reading, Freud and modernist literature become intertwined. However, in Ford's oeuvre, only *The Good Soldier* and the tetralogy *Parade's End* are generally referred to as modernist and as Haslam points out, Ford 'foraged for material alongside (and ahead of) Freud'.[69] This is not to deny Ford's awareness of Freudian ideas. Jenny Plastow places him at prewar social venues where the 'contemporary fascination with the unconscious' was discussed,[70] and in 1922 Ford himself wrote that before the war he had known 'a great many ladies' who 'possessed and gloated over a volume of dream-interpretations by a writer called Freud'.[71] However, as the 1923 New Stateman article cited by Haslam points out, it was by then as 'difficult for an educated person to neglect the theories of Freud' as it would have been for the previous generation to ignore Darwinian theory.[72] As Ford's writing spans a period in which Darwinian and other pre-Freudian concepts were common currency, the question arises of whether and how they surface in his fiction. Section 1.3 begins to address this question.

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[66] Meghan Marie Hammond, *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 13.
[67] Sara Haslam*, Fragmenting Modernism – Ford Madox Ford, the Novel and the Great War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 21.
[68] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, pp. 21 and 28 respectively.
[69] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 66.
[70] Jenny Plastow, '"If We Shadows Have Offended": The Metaphor of Shadow in The Marsden Case', in Laura Colombino (Ed.), *Ford Madox Ford and Visual Cultures*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 8 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), p. 164.
[71] Ford, Ford Madox, 'Ulysses and The Handling of Indecencies', *The English Review*, 35:12 (December 1922), p. 544.
[72] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 58.

Ford's writing, of course, was shaped not only by the macro environment but by more immediate and personal contexts. He was no stranger to ill health and its associations with mental instability. His father, who 'everyone had thought […] merely hypochondriacal' died suddenly because his 'heart was wrong'.[73] Ford was told by his mother that he too had 'a weak heart', something he would later claim doctors overlooked in attempts to prove him nervously ill.[74] Living with Ford Madox Brown exposed him to stories of the destructive alcoholism of his godfather, Algernon Charles Swinburne, the grief of his grandfather at the loss of his only son, and the mental instability of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. As a young adult he began an intense friendship with Joseph Conrad whom Saunders describes as a writer for whom the process was 'an existential struggle' [75] and a man 'ever on the verge of depression, disaster and madness'.[76] Ford witnessed the 'extent of Conrad's creative depressions',[77] alongside which he struggled with his own 'repeated intense depressions'.[78] Ford's wife, Elsie Martindale, was 'chronically ill' for several years with a recurrence of childhood tuberculosis, and Ford believed their marriage to be in difficulty.[79] Then, his father-in-law committed suicide by poisoning, leaving a note which read 'Thank Ford'.[80] Saunders highlights the ambiguity of meaning in this, unlikely to have helped an already depressed Ford.[81] The combination of factors leading to Ford's breakdown in 1904, extensively examined by his biographers, are discussed in section 1.4.

When Saunders observes that Martindale's suicide letter could be interpreted as a genuine appreciation of his son-in-law or a caustic reference to the plotline of *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892), he suggests a sometimes porous boundary between life and fiction.[82] This was particularly true for

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[73] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 38.
[74] Ibid. Discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to Ford's 1904 breakdown.
[75] Max Saunders, *Critical Lives - Ford Madox Ford* (London: Reaktion Books, 2023), p. 21.
[76] Saunders, *Critical Lives*, p. 30.
[77] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 129.
[78] Saunders, *Critical Lives*, p. 30.
[79] Saunders, *Critical Lives*, p. 31.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.

Ford who needed only to be in company with other writers to acquire models for madness which might find their way into his novels. For example, he probably became acquainted with degeneration theory through Conrad, whose novel *The Nigger of Narcissus* (1897) attracted praise from Max Nordau who is then directly referenced in *The Secret Agent* (1907), for which Ford supplied the plotline.[83] As shown in section 1.5, degeneration is a theme which critics find at work in Ford's own writing. The point here is to highlight the same kind of medico-literary collaboration Haslam identified in relation to psychoanalysis and modernism, an interplay which recurs throughout Ford's writing career.[84] The medico-literary factor is not peculiar to Ford but is perhaps simply a reflection of the fact that, as Lillian Feder's book illustrates, 'Madness has been a continuous theme in Western literature'.[85]

Ford's writing, therefore, is not only shaped by the medical and personal contexts outlined but is also part of a literary tradition. This raises the question of what literary models for madness might have coloured his treatment of the theme. The breadth of Ford's reading is evident from his late-career tome, *The March of Literature* (1939).[86] Helen Chambers, whilst acknowledging the impressionistic nature of Ford's reminiscences of childhood reading, records an early attraction to 'Greek literature and myth'.[87] He certainly draws on this to support his depictions of madness.[88] Much of ancient Greek

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[83]Cedric Thomas Watts, *R. B. Cunninghame Graham,* Twayne's English Authors Series (Boston MA: G. K. Hall, 1983), p. 27-8. Watts' research shows that Nordau wrote to Cunninghame Grahame to ask that his praise be passed on to Conrad. A letter between Cunninghame Grahame's wife and Conrad confirms that it was, with Conrad asking if he could keep Nordau's autograph.

[84] Instances are discussed, where relevant, in the chapters dealing with Ford's novels. Saunders' *A Dual Life* offers the most comprehensive account of the circles of writers with which Ford interacted at different phases of his life.

[85] Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 3.

[86] Published in America as Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature From Confucius' Day to our Own*, (New York: Dial Press Ltd., 1938) and in Britain as Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature From Confucius' Day to Modern Times*, (London: George Allen Unwin, 1939). All other citations in this thesis are to a 1998 edition: Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature from Confucius' Day to Our O*wn (Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998).

[87] Helen Chambers, 'Ford's Reading', *Last Post – A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*, 1:1 (Autumn 2018), p. 33.

[88] See discussion of *The Benefactor* in Chapter 3 and of *Mr. Apollo* in Chapter 4.

literature assumed divine causes for madness whilst, in parallel, medics were developing naturalistic explanations.[89] The unresolved tension between 'ghosts, telepathy and evil on one hand' and 'madness on the other' is central to Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898).[90] Saunders argues that *The Benefactor* (1905) sees Ford emerging from 'under the Conradian shadow' with James a more 'dominant influence' on his work.[91] Certainly, a cluster of Ford's Edwardian novels, discussed in Chapter 4, reveal this same exploration of supernatural and material explanations for disrupted mental states. Saunders argues that *A Call* (1910) follows James in making 'acts of restraint […] expressive of the conflicts they are designed to hide'.[92] *The Good Soldier* is 'Jamesian in its exhilaration of difficulties' but also 'profoundly Flaubertian' in the way that it transforms 'banal repetitions of Ashburnham's affairs' into a narrative pattern of significance.[93] Ford's admiration for Gustave Flaubert is well documented and traces of his influence occur in other novels,[94] and as this thesis will show, *The Good Soldier* can also be read to contain echoes of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774).[95]

In part, what this summary attests to is a natural intertextuality in fiction, where authors learn to write by reading. Ford's learning included the Jamesian and Flaubertian subtlety he infused into his writing. Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (1845) has been argued to 'rest on the idea that what is most open or revealed, most "obvious", may itself be the most deceptive or most concealing'.[96] Poe is also a writer with whom Ford was familiar and with whose stories intertextuality can be found.[97] However, Bennett and Royle's observation suggests a different resonance of relevance to Ford's

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[89] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 26.
[90] Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), p. 198.
[91] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 200.
[92] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 304.
[93] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, pp. 437 and 427 respectively.
[94] See discussion in Chapter 7.
[95] See discussion in Chapter 5.
[96] Bennett and Royle, *An Introduction to Literature*, p. 177.
[97] See discussion in Chapter 7.

treatment of madness. Ford defined the purpose of his Impressionist aesthetic as to 'render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass – through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you'.[98] Laura Colombino likens the image to a Cubist collage which 'depicts the experience of being lured into a space of displacements' where the reflecting glass allows an overlap between the landscape and 'the "person behind" who would remain invisible otherwise'.[99] This intriguing comparison prompts recognition of the need to attend not only to what is obvious in a story but also to the potentially 'invisible'. In Ford's fiction the 'mad' sometimes become invisible, sometimes exist in the margins of the narrative or are, like Poe's letter, hidden in full sight. The next section, therefore, examines Saunders' claim that there is a substantive theme of madness worth researching.

1.2 Entering Ford's World of Madness

Saunders shows Ford's preoccupation with madness to be evident in early unpublished stories such as 'The Last Sowing' with its encounter 'at an inn with a "private mad-doctor" and a patient he never lets out of his sight'.[100] It is also present across his novels.

The most well-known examples fall in the novels which have borne the weight of critical opinion; *The Good Soldier*, Ford's 'saddest story' [101] of a small circle of people, and *Parade's End*, the more

[98]Ford Madox Ford, 'On Impressionism', in Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 277.
[99] Colombino, Laura, 'Ford's Literary Impressionism', in Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes (Eds.), *War and the Mind – Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End*, *Modernism, and Psychology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 67.
[100] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 105.
[101] Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 9. All other references are to this edition unless otherwise stated.

panoramic First World War tetralogy he wrote 'in favour of pacifism'.[102] What is striking in both is the number of characters on the edge of, or falling into, madness. In *The Good Soldier,* Florence, and her lover Edward Ashburnham both despair and commit suicide. Leonora 'completely broke down under the strain' of managing the relationship between Edward and Nancy.[103] Dowell himself is 'simply cataleptic' [104] when he discovers Florence's betrayal, and Nancy ends the novel 'quite mad'.[105] *Parade's End* includes soldiers like Captain McKechnie, with the 'beginnings of a definite, dangerous lunacy', Pitkins who 'drinks because he is shell-shocked', and a Doctor's batman who is 'more than a little barmy'.[106] Yet the madness is not confined to combatants. The Reverend Mr Duchemin is committed to an asylum by his wife, a woman herself judged to be 'a little cracky'.[107] Sylvia Tietjens has 'dim trances' and visions of her 'ghostly friend', the recently murdered Father Consett.[108] Valentine Wannop lets 'her nerves get the better of her and her mind went mad' [109] and Christopher Tietjens' brother Mark ends up mute and immobile.

Given their modernist credentials and the association of modernism with broken minds, these novels might be assumed to be atypical in Ford's oeuvre. Certainly, there is an argument that it is only with the experience of war that the mind takes 'centre-stage' in Ford's novels.[110] This does not mean, however, that it is absent before then. Madness, a condition of the mind, is a central concern in at least eight other novels [111] and is in the background of most. *The Benefactor* (1905) follows the trajectory of the Reverend Brede's breakdown and eventual committal to an asylum. Published five

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[102] Ford Madox Ford, 'Extract from Great Trade Route', in Max Saunders (Ed.), *Ford Madox Ford War Prose*. (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1999), p. 59.
[103] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 95.
[104] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 79.
[105] Ford, *The Good Soldier,* p. 156.
[106] Ford Madox Ford, *No More Parades* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2011), pp. 15, 89 and 70 respectively.
[107] Ford Madox Ford, *Last Post* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2011), p. 74.
[108] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 152.
[109] Ford Madox Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-* (Manchester, Carcanet Press Ltd., 2011), p. 39.
[110] Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes, 'Introduction', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 7.
[111] *The Benefactor* (1905), *The 'Half Moon'* (1909), *A Call* (1910), *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911), *The Marsden Case* (1923), *When the Wicked Man* (1931), *The Rash Act* (1933) and *Henry for Hugh* (1934).

years later, *A Call* centres around the breakdown of Dudley Leicester and his treatment by a brain specialist committed to somatic causes of madness, a therapist who is both a victim of and a specialist in nervous illness, and a Christian Scientist who believes himself to be telepathic. In *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911), Mr Sorrell, following a head injury, awakes in fourteenth-century England, only later to regain consciousness and to be trepanned by doctors. The question of whether his experiences are real or illusory permeates the novel. *The Simple Life Limited* (1911) concerns a commune led by a 'mentally unstable' guru, an author whose breakdown is exploited commercially.[112]

Notably, all of these predate *The Good Soldier* which Ford expected to be his last novel. In that sense it punctuates his novelistic career, especially as it was to be eight years before his first post-war novel, *The Marsden Case* (1923), significant for its overt reference to Freud and a character treated for suicidality by a specialist using Freudian therapy. By the 1930s Ford was living between France and America and his novels reflect this. *When the Wicked Man* (1931) was written in 1929, the year of the Wall Street Crash and four years before the repeal of the controversial Prohibition Act, and engages directly with economic pressure and alcoholism as causes of nervous conditions and suicide. Equally, *The Rash Act* (1933) and *Henry for Hugh* (1934), dealing with attempted and actual suicides, the legacy of war damage, and competing approaches to treatment for breakdowns by English and French doctors, show Ford's continuing preoccupation with his theme. Even his final novel, *Vive Le Roy* (1936), shows how people become entrapped and paranoid within political systems.

This invites an exploration of how madness is manifested across the novels, and whether there is intertextuality between them. The existence of the theme across so many of Ford's novels raises interesting questions about its significance. Does it evolve and if so, how? To what extent is it shaped

[112] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 321.

by Ford's own experiences of breakdown, or by broader factors, such as his reading, literary contacts, or aesthetic concerns? How does Ford use language to depict madness? And, ultimately, what, if anything, is Ford doing with his theme of madness? Pursuing these questions surfaces interesting and important aspects of Ford's work, notably a connection between madness and the literary. Integral to this is an appreciation of the significance of language in his representations of madness.

1.3 The 'language' of madness

Following Franco Moretti's 'distant reading' approach,[113] a numerical investigation of the words Ford uses about madness in his novels proved fruitful,[114] illustrating both a breadth of terminology and shifts in language use over time.[115] The analysis led to the term 'madness' rather than 'insanity' in this thesis because Ford uses it a lot: 104 times across 29 novels in fact. He also uses 'mad' over 400 times, and it features in every novel. In comparison, an equivalent search shows that contemporaries like Conrad, Woolf and Lawrence use it much less. Whilst the absence of the word does not mean that these authors do not represent madness, Ford's extensive use of it is clearly significant. Whilst all Ford's novels include 'mad' or 'madness', 'insane' and 'insanity' appear in only thirteen and seven of the novels respectively. 'Mad' and 'insane' are often used interchangeably, but they are not entirely the same. In a dictionary definition, 'insane' means 'relating to an unsound state of mind; seriously mentally ill' or 'extremely foolish; irrational'.[116] The word 'mad' has a more extensive set of definitions. It can apply to someone who is 'mentally ill; insane', 'extremely foolish or ill-advised', or more informally to someone who is 'frantic' or merely 'very enthusiastic'.[117] Definitionally, therefore,

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[113] Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).
[114] Appendix 1 outlines the method used and provides a summary of findings. It is indicative, not a full report of all analysis conducted.
[115] See Appendix 1.
[116] Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 734.
[117] Soanes and Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 855.

insanity is a subset of madness and is clearly linked with mental illness. By implication, to be mad is not necessarily to be ill. This reflects the fact that madness has a history predating its medicalisation and, Roy Porter argues, has variously been positioned as a reality, an illusion or a convention.[118]

Porter's claim highlights how madness has been conceptualised in different ways. The contested positions within and between the histories of madness, medicine and psychiatry are beyond the scope of this thesis and not central to its argument. If, however, madness can be seen as real or not, or simply as an agreed way of looking at things, then it is important to maintain a broad perspective on how it might be represented in Ford's fiction and to avoid narrowing to a clinical one. However, some definition is needed to ground the discussions of Ford's language about madness. Andrew Scull argues for madness as a 'phenomenon … found in all known societies' and as a common-sense term which has stood the test of time.[119] He usefully suggests that the following categories represent the 'core' of those seen to be 'irrational', those 'for millennia … regarded as mad, or referred to by some analogous term':

> Those who lose control of their emotions, whether melancholic or manic; those who do not share the common-sense reality most of us perceive and the mental universe we inhabit, who hallucinate or make claims about their existence that people around them conclude are delusions; those who act in ways that are profoundly at variance with the conventions of their culture, are heedless of the ordinary corrective measures their community mobilizes to induce them to desist; those who manifest extremes of extravagance and incoherence or who exhibit the grotesquely denuded mental life of the demented.[120]

Madness appears here to be a shorthand for a range of psychological disturbances, and it is in this broad sense that it is used in this thesis. As Appendix 1 illustrates, Ford often used more precise terms alongside 'madness', and a wide range of synonyms, often informal ones such as 'barmy' or

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[118] Roy Porter, *Madness - A Brief History, p*. 4.
[119] Andrew Scull, *Madness in Civilization,* p. 11.
[120] Ibid.

'out of his mind', suggesting it was an umbrella term for him too. A focus on the mind is indicated by repetitive references to mental states, from the 'mentally injured' to those with mental 'deterioration' or 'weakness', through to those with simple mental 'worries' or 'troubles'. The word 'mental' appears most frequently in *The Marsden Case, Parade's End*, *The Rash Act* and *Vive Le Roy*. That is to say that it increases in use from 1923 onwards, when a shift was underway in ascribing problems to psychological rather than somatic causes. Freud is not directly referenced before 1923, but language suggesting distinctions between a conscious and an unconscious mind appears from 1915 onwards. Even from the early novels Ford uses words which sound diagnostic: depression, melancholy, mania, monomania, neurasthenia, hysteria, degeneracy. The most common reference is to 'nerves', with 92 mentions, although there are only 13 to 'nervous breakdown' and half of these fall within *Parade's End*. Use of the words does not necessarily indicate deep engagement with the concept. Indeed, David Trotter found little evidence that any of the writers he studied, including Ford, 'had more than a passing familiarity with the psychiatric literature'.[121] However, he argued that their writing 'about mental illness' stood comparison with that of psychiatrists, and that they knew 'what they were talking about when it came to madness in general'.[122]

Language matters in Ford's writing. His admiration of Flaubert, and his consequent attachment to 'le mot juste', is well documented. Less frequently noted is that he considered 'Christina Rossetti to be the greatest master of words – at least of English words' of the nineteenth century, someone who also 'remorselessly' sought the 'correct expression'.[123] Correct, for Ford, meant using words which were not 'obsolete' or attached to 'ideas forever dead and gone'.[124] Ford elsewhere argued that a

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[121] David Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism – Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 18.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ancient Lights: and certain new reflections being the memories of a young man* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1911), p 54. Books published under the name Hueffer are identified as such and subsequently cited as Ford.
[124] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, pp. 55 and 53 respectively.

writer should ask of a reader 'no knowledge whatever except that of an exact sense of the words'.[125] Taken together, these suggest that Ford chose language about madness which he believed to be current, in common use and with generally understood meaning. Any analysis of his novels needs to take this into account.

Scholars have highlighted that it is not simply Ford's use of a word which is important, but its frequency. For instance, Dowell's repeated use of 'I don't know' in *The Good Soldier* is considered indicative of Ford's engagement with 'the limitations of knowledge, the inability of people to get beyond their own partial subjectivity'.[126] Paul Skinner makes a case for paying attention to repetitive patterns in Ford's language, citing Ford's own comment that writing is made interesting and worthy of multiple readings, by creating a 'constant succession of tiny, unobservable surprises' and avoiding 'too startling words' and 'too just images'.[127] Skinner observes how often the word 'unnoticeable' is used in *Parade's End* to describe variously, a church, Valentine and Tietjens, and argues that its very inclusion, and repetition, makes the subject noticeable to a reader. As Skinner points out, 'A word on the page is there, may be seen and noted, just as an object in the world' and creates an 'associational force' of words used within and across Ford's texts.[128] Saunders illustrates this powerfully in his examination of the use of the word 'case' in *The Good Soldier*.[129] He identifies seventy occurrences, a high frequency in a short book.[130] He argues that Ford was not a 'casual user of the word' citing *The*

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[125] Ford Madox Ford, 'Literary Portraits and Other Essays from The Outlook; XXIV Miss May Sinclair and The Judgment of Eve', in Max Saunders and Richard Stang (Eds.), *Ford Madox Ford, Critical Essays* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2002), p. 149.
[126] Seamus O'Malley, 'Ford and Modernism', in Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes (Eds.), *An Introduction to Ford Madox Ford* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 59.
[127] Paul Skinner, 'Ford Madox Ford and The Unnoticeable Things', in Robert Hampson and Max Saunders (Eds.), *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 2 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003), p. 287.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Max Saunders, 'The Case of *The Good Soldier'*, in Max Saunders and Sara Haslam (Eds.), *Ford Madox Ford's The Good Soldier – Centenary Essays,* (Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2015).
[130] Ngram analysis shows that the rate of usage of this word within novels has not changed much over time, averaging about 0.02%, i.e. 2 in 10,000. As there are 77,000 words in *The Good Soldier* 15 instances would be expected.

Marsden Case and the naming of a Sergeant Case in *Parades' End* as other examples.[131] Saunders' examination of the word's etymology and the different senses in which it is deployed leads him to conclude that Ford is not simply playing language games but using the nuances to specific effect. Two implications flow from these arguments. Firstly, Ford's repeated use of words associated with madness is deliberate and intended to make the theme noticeable. Secondly, if that language carries associational force, then it is important to look across his novels when considering his treatment of madness.

This analysis has shown the theme of madness to be pervasive and potentially to evolve over time. Whilst it supports the idea that a sustained study could provide persuasive answers to the question of what Ford was doing with the theme, moving directly to that would be premature. This thesis is not the first examination of madness in Ford's novels, so some answers already exist. The most extensive surveys have been conducted by Ford's biographers who frequently interpret it as an expression of his own psychological needs and problems. The next section considers these arguments and identifies limitations which open the way for further research.

1.4 Biographical Madness

Within Ford scholarship, Max Saunders' biography, *Ford Madox Ford, A Dual Life*, is a touchstone for many critics. Saunders acknowledges a debt to two previous influential studies: *The Saddest Story* by Arthur Mizener (1971),[132] and *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford* (1980) by Thomas Moser.[133] Despite some differences, there is a layering-up of information across the three biographies, and

[131] A word search of Ford's novels shows 'case' to be a word used frequently, not only in phases such as 'in case of' but to label objects, people and situations. For example, Mr Brede in *The Benefactor* is described as 'a case of aggravated neurotics' and Katya in *A Call* says, 'I am diagnosing my own case'.
[132] Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (London, Sydney and Toronto: The Bodley Head, 1971).
[133] Thomas C. Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980).

scholars who have read *A Dual Life* are aware of its predecessors against which it is, to some degree, written. This signals the familiarity critics have with the background of Ford's life, and with how it is reflected in his writing. It has shaped scholarly conversation about Ford's fiction in ways pertinent to this thesis.

Saunders highlights the effect that accounts of an author's life have in observing that a once 'scandalous neglect' of Ford's work resulted primarily from his personal reputation, in part stemming from Mizener's biography which positioned Ford as dishonest.[134] Mizener acknowledges that Ford's partner, Janice Biala, who gave him permission to use her unpublished material, believed that he had done Ford 'an injustice'.[135] However, as Saunders states, Mizener deserves credit for establishing many of the facts of Ford's life and for his 'critical introductions to many of the little-known novels'.[136] Subsequent studies unearthed new material which prompted challenge to Mizener's assessment. Saunders highlights Moser's discovery of Olive Garnett's diary, which also informed his own work. Yet, despite some indebtedness, Saunders departs from the approach taken by Mizener and Moser because it led them to see Ford's writing as a 'neurotic distortion rather than the conscious elaboration and transformation of reality'.[137] The effect was to 'belittle the writing' by positioning Ford as unable to bear his problems and so constantly 'fantasizing better versions of his life and self'.[138] This claim bears some examination.

Mizener contends that Ford was talented and 'devoted to literature' but weaknesses of character made many of his books 'merely promising or clever'.[139] His assessment of the flaws in Ford's character is noticeably biased. For example, he privileges Stella Bowen's comment on Ford's

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[134] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. viii.
[135] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. xi.
[136] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. ix.
[137] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 9.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. xvi.

'uncontrollable weakness', and Violet Hunt's on his 'native arrogance', but dismisses Jessie Chambers' comment that Ford made her feel interesting as something he could do only when 'he was not distracted by his anxiety to be admired'.[140] Mizener argues that Bowen and Hunt, who he saw as Ford's unjustly treated lovers, naturally held an image of him which deviated from that of a biographer. It is a discrepancy that Ford would have understood because, as a novelist, he used 'the biographer's curiosity about people, to collect material for his fiction'.[141] In effect, Mizener selectively relies on the testimony of women who knew Ford well but claims his own view as more objective and by implication, valid. Notice, however, the claim of equivalence between the art of biography, in which he acknowledges Ford's experience, and that of writing fiction.[142] One involves collecting 'material' to faithfully relate a real life, the other finding inspiration to create something which is definitively not real. Yet Mizener appears not to make this distinction, implying that a fiction writer effectively mines his own life for inspiration and re-presents it, unfiltered by the imagination.

Mizener's method relies on reading Ford into the characters he created. He describes Ashburnham in *The Good Soldier* as a someone 'with the simple man's sense of duties and responsibilities' and Dowell as a commentator who perceives that Ashburnham's 'conception of how he ought to live' was impossible because neither the world nor parts of his own nature would allow it. From this, Mizener proposes that Ford, like Dowell, could see that it was his 'own dream of a life', and that he would be unable to achieve it. He positions Ford as unable to separate what he imagined from what really happened in his life, leading to fabricated accounts which suppressed his internal conflicts to present a flattering version of himself. In effect, Mizener argues that Ford represents himself in his characters, leading him to identify the character of George Moffat in *The Benefactor* as the novel's 'greatest weakness' on the grounds that Ford could 'achieve enough psychic distance from George to describe

[140] Mizener, *The Saddest Story,* p. xx.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

him accurately but not enough to judge him'.[143] Ford 'limits himself to George's point of view, as if he had no better understanding of George than George himself has', perhaps because 'George Moffat is Ford Madox Hueffer'.[144] Ford's limitations become those of George Moffat and vice versa.

Saunders acknowledges that biographical criticism often claims that it 'uses fiction to explain life, life to explain fiction' whilst, in practice, privileging the latter.[145] If Mizener's approach was not unusual, the effect of using 'Ford's writing to support an account of his life' was to give the writing 'biographical rather than artistic or critical significance'.[146] Whilst Mizener, as Moser observes, 'masterfully chronicled Ford's outer life', he had also perhaps set the tone.[147] Moser defined his own project as neither biography nor literary criticism, but as an exploration of the way Ford's personal life 'constantly reappears in his novels' with the women he loved and his greatest friends 'recurrently reflected' in them.[148] Moser is unapologetic about 'violating the critical dogma' [149] of using fiction to explain life and vice versa, in pursuing his aim to indicate 'the relations between Ford's anxious psyche' and his best works.[150] Framing the work thus was always likely to produce Moser's readings of the novels as a 'neurotic distortion'.

If Mizener deals with Ford's outer life, Moser examines his inner life, but equally assumes that Ford takes his life experiences directly into his writing. For instance, he suggests that Ford did not find the happiness he expected with his wife, Elsie, and was soon 'suffering recurrent eye trouble (like Rossetti during his breakdowns) and […] creating a host of stumbling, staggering, half-blind, sick young heroes'.[151] In line with his objective of showing recurrent reflections of Ford's close intimates in the

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[143] Mizener, *The Saddest Story,* p. 467.
[144] Mizener, *The Saddest Story,* p. 468.
[145] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 9.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. xi.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 38.

novels, Moser argues that Ford's early fairy tales, and his first adult novel, *The Shifting of the Fire,* created most of the set of 'stock characters' recycled in subsequent novels. Although there is some evidence that Ford intended Moffat in *The Benefactor* 'as an "extension" of the character of (Ford's) father-in-law, Mr Martindale',[152] Moser takes Olive Garnett's diary entry of a comment by Ford that '*The Benefactor* represents me up to three months ago' as confirmation that Moffatt probably was based on Ford.[153] He argues that the connections are 'obvious and relatively innocent', equating George's wife with Elsie Martindale, and Clara Brede's situation as carer to her mentally disturbed father as 'analogous to Mary's'.[154] An alternative interpretation is that Ford's comment to Olive refers not to Moffatt but to Mr Brede: an oblique reference to Ford's own breakdown the previous year. Whilst Olive's diary from May 1905 suggests that Ford's cure 'came suddenly' with the 'boom of *The Soul of London*' Ford's own recollection was that 'he remained ill at least until his and Elsie's return from America in the autumn of 1906', and this is corroborated by other evidence, including Olive's references to 'Ford's dependence on Dr. Tebb'.[155] If so, the plight of Mr Brede was likely to have been alive for Ford when he made the comment. This is not to dispute Moser's statement, but to illustrate that fiction can be autobiographical in many ways. Both readings are interpretations, not fact, which Moser accepts in framing his account as 'highly speculative'.[156]

This speculative thinking leads to a precarious reversal of fiction and fact. Moser argues that *A Call* 'uncannily foretells Ford's and Violet's crazy mental manoeuvres of 1911'.[157] This relies on a scene in which it is suggested that a couple should meet on the Continent and return to London claiming to have married. Moser stops short of directly suggesting that Ford's fictional narrative shaped his

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[152] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 59.
[153] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 60.
[154] Ibid. Mary was Elsie Martindale's sister, both daughters of a man believed to have committed suicide.
[155] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 59.
[156] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. xi.
[157] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 78.

attempt to marry Violet Hunt in Germany but implies that the idea had been created in fiction and carried out in life. It is perhaps simply the use of fiction to explain life, part of the critical dogma he was willing to traverse, but it can be read as a hint that Ford understood his alleged marriage to Violet Hunt was only ever a fiction. In that sense, it perpetuates Mizener's view that Ford allowed too porous a boundary between his life and his imagination.

Therefore, just as Mizener viewed characters as part of Ford's mental functioning, so does Moser. He writes of Robert Grimshaw in *A Call* as needing 'the perspective of a Dowell' which was four to five years distant for Ford.[158] This is the gap in publication between *A Call* and *The Good Soldier*, suggesting perhaps that Ford needed the period to mature as an author. In claiming the perspective as Dowell's, however, Moser conflates Ford with his character. Inevitably, therefore, when discussing how Dowell relates his 'saddest story', Moser says 'If Dowell looks with anxious, Fordian eyes, he also philosophizes and psychologizes in Fordian ideas expressed in Fordian locutions'.[159] Like Mizener, he dissolves the mental barrier between Ford and Dowell suggesting almost a shared consciousness. Indeed, Moser argues that escape into 'imagination, or oblivion, or into another's consciousness' was a strategy by which Ford managed his mental distress.[160] It is a claim that fiction was therapeutic for Ford. This may have been so, but it is not incompatible with the idea that Ford's talent for fiction depended on this same escape into imagination, an issue discussed in Chapter 1.

Despite the similarities, there is a notable difference between Moser and Mizener. Whilst Mizener perceived an absolute commitment to his art as Ford's primary motivation, Moser argued that passion took precedence. This, according to Moser, drove Ford's deep desire for communication which led to his recurrent romances, the establishment of literary networks and, most importantly,

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[158] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 81.
[159] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 71.
[160] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 143.

his prolific writing. For Ford, writing was his 'most profound, the most personal form of communication' in which he aimed for 'a style that would have the effect of being spoken into someone's ear', much as he had read his drafts to Joseph Conrad.[161] Given Moser's method, the communication he received from Ford's writing was about Ford himself. However, his observation is powerful because it raises the question of what Ford wanted to communicate in his novels, a question at the heart of this thesis.

For both Mizener and Moser, the answer was similar. In their analysis, Ford's fiction is little more than a 'fantastic fictionalising of his own and others' lives',[162] and 'a symptom of mental distress'.[163] Saunders, however, argues that a failure to 'distinguish between subject-matter and technical treatment',[164] and arguments about 'the "originals" for characters, and other fictionalizing of facts' led them to neglect Ford's creative achievement.[165] In particular, in attempts to 'present him as a damaged, deranged psyche',[166] ironically relying on his 'brilliant stories of damage and derangement' to do so,[167] they overlook Ford's skill in story-telling. In his biography, Saunders sought to reverse this focus and to foreground Ford's critical and creative techniques. Nevertheless, he acknowledges Ford as the 'kind of artist who places his own experiences at the centre of his work'.[168]

This highlights a tension in discussing Ford's treatment of madness in his novels. Ford's history of mental breakdown is not irrelevant, but nor is it sufficient reason to sideline critical discussion of his fictional representations of madness. In fairness to Mizener and Moser, any biographer would pay attention to Ford's 'serious and protracted, neurotic illness' at the age of thirty, which left him with a

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[161] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* pp. 144-45.
[162] Moser, Preface to *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. ix.
[163] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 9.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 13.
[166] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 9.
[167] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 14.
[168] Ibid.

'sporadic fear of going insane'.[169] Each successive biography adds to the account of this breakdown and its position in Ford's life narrative, making it an important part of the critical conversation. The challenge in this thesis is to engage directly with that issue but to avoid turning back to Ford the man, instead keeping the focus on how the experience shaped his fictional writing about madness. This necessitates a hybrid approach to the core of this thesis discussed in Section 1.6 below.

1.5 Beyond Biography

As Margaret Atwood observes, 'the fictional writer who writes for no-one is rare', and though Ford's writing may have been a therapeutic expression of his internal conflicts, it was also communicative.[170] Understanding what it has to communicate about madness rests on appreciating how Ford's aesthetics interact with his theme.

It is important first to consider how Ford conceived of the novel. Sondra Stang, in her introduction to Ford's posthumous *A History of Our Own Times*, likens Ford to Balzac and Proust in his belief that a novelist should be a 'historian of his own time'.[171] She cites a 1909 essay in which Ford wrote that 'he is not a proper man who will not look in the face his day and his time'.[172] Stang sees his 'great theme' as 'the historical changes taking place in his lifetime' and his best novels as concerned with 'the painful choices between the private life and the public life at a given historical moment'.[173] If so, Ford's novels can be viewed as a record of how madness was conceptualised in a specific period, and of the personal and social consequences of this. In his preface to the same book, Ford specifies 'our'

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[169] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. ix.
[170] Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 127.
[171] Sondra J. Stang, 'Introduction', in Ford Madox Ford, *A History of Our Own Times* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Limited, 1989), p. xvi.
[172] Stang, Introduction to *A History of Our Own Times,* pp. xvii and xviii.
[173] Stang, Introduction to *A History of Our Own Times*, p. xviii.

times as 'the last 50-60 years'.[174] In other words, the span of his own lifetime. When he writes that a book 'must of necessity reflect the nature of its writer' and that his ambition is to 'record [his] times in [his] own terms letting the reader make what deductions he pleases',[175] he claims the right to a subjective account, not a definitive history. As Elena Lamberti observes, the plurality in *A History of our Own Times*, 'immediately suggests that he is telling just one among the many possible histories'.[176]

It is pertinent that Stang highlights Ford's distinction between 'scientific' historians concerned with evidence or comparison of instances and 'literary' historians who need the power to select, the ability to convey impressions, a sense of the picturesque and a 'genius for falsification for the sake of perspective – all the things that go into the making of an artist'.[177] The aim is to avoid 'mechanical compilation' and impersonality in favour of giving the 'savour of the life' being chronicled.[178] In the same unpublished article Ford suggests that literary historians have 'a sense of responsibility to language in interpreting the observed world as accurately and richly as possible'.[179] This reinforces the need to be attentive to the language Ford uses about madness. It is a language which is selective and personal because Ford's claim to a right to subjectivity is also an assertion that he offers a different kind of truth than that of historians or scientists concerned with proven fact. It is a position congruent with his earlier comment that he has 'for facts a most profound contempt'.[180] It is instructive to consider this phrase in context. It sits within a postscript to the Dedication to his 'Dear Kids' in *Ancient Lights and certain new reflections* (1911) and follows an explanation that his book

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[174] Ford, Preface to *A History of Our Own times*, p. 13.
[175] Ibid, p. 12.
[176] Eleanor Lamberti, 'Writing History: Ford and the Debate on 'Objective Truth' in the Late 20th Century', in Joseph Wiesenfarth (Ed.), *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 3 (Amsterdam and London: Rodopi, 2004), p. 103.
[177] Stang, Introduction to *A History of Our Own Times,* p. xx. She cites an unpublished Ford manuscript held at Cornell University entitled 'Historians Methods'.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ford, *Ancient Lights,* p. xv.

'consists of impressions'.[181] It is an unapologetic response to criticisms of previously published anecdotes from the book which Ford admits are 'full of inaccuracies as to facts'.[182] He adds: -

> My business in life, in short, is to attempt to discover, and 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.[183]

Two other phrases beyond the 'contempt' for facts repay attention. Few scholars would miss the allusion to Conrad's 'chief message to mankind', that the role of a novelist should, above all, to be to make a reader 'see'.[184] 'Seeing is believing for all doubters of this planet', writes Ford, and 'if you can make humanity see the few very simple things upon which this temporal world rests you will make mankind believe such truths as are universal'.[185] Whether this is Ford's addition to Conrad's maxim is uncertain, but it suggests a purposeful aesthetic. Showing rather than telling a reader creates belief in something which might otherwise be doubted. Although probably an allusion to the suspension of disbelief demanded of fiction readers, it also hints that fiction allows some truths to become self-evident. The phrase 'attempt to discover' ties his statement to another aesthetic principle that he developed with Conrad: that the novel was 'the only vehicle for the thought of our day', a place to 'inquire into every department of life'.[186] From this perspective Ford's theme of madness is an exploration, an attempt to uncover how things 'stand' for him and his readers.

Andrzej Gasiorek offers a pertinent perspective when he highlights Ford's belief that personal interests acknowledged in advance allow a reader to assess 'the intellectual grounds on which a given

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[181] Ford*, Ancient Lights*, p. xiii.
[182] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, p. xv.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (London: Duckworth, 1924), p. 168.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ford, *Joseph Conrad,* p. 208.

position is being advocated'.[187] Gasiorek's argument is centrally concerned with Ford's 1915 propaganda books, *When Blood is Their Argument* and *Between St. Dennis and St. George.* He acknowledges that Ford's method in such books is 'not that of his novels',[188] but finds a 'deeper alignment' between the forms in Ford's view that 'in a fragmented world, the only viable viewpoint from which to write was a subjective one'.[189] Gasiorek argues that this is compatible with Ford's resistance to authorial intrusion since it serves his Impressionist aesthetic of creating, from partial and subjective perceptions, a fictional world, an illusion which must remain unbroken. It is precisely the 'confusions, information gaps, lapses of memory, and unanswerable questions' of a subjective perspective which expose inherent biases, and so implicitly advocate tolerance of 'alternative perspectives'.[190] In arguing that holding hard to one's own viewpoint becomes difficult when it is depicted as one among many possible viewpoints, Gasiorek effectively suggests that Ford's fiction does not have to be didactic to destabilise a reader's existing position.

That fiction works differently from advocacy is highlighted by Laura Colombino's description of how repeated readings of *The Good Soldier* destabilised her own position. Like Skinner, she cites Ford's argument that prose should be made 'interesting' in successive readings,[191] and observes that her first reading, primed by the phrase 'the saddest story', attuned her to the emotional tone of the novel. Subsequent readings enriched and revised her initial impressions, leaving her feeling that 'the unsettling vibrations of Dowell's consciousness had combined with those of my own in a sort of fascinating kaleidoscope'.[192] Of course, *The Good Soldier* is a novel renowned for the lacunae,

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[187] Andrzej Gasiorek, '"In the Mirror of the Arts": Ford's Modernism and the Reconstruction of Post-War Literary Culture', in Wiesenfarth, *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, p. 204.
[188] Gasiorek, 'In the Mirror of the Arts', p. 205.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Gasiorek, 'In the Mirror of the Arts', p. 208.
[191] Laura Colombino, 'Ford's Literary Impressionism', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind,* p. 74. Colombino cites Ford from a preface written to Elsie's translation of Maupassant's stories.
[192] Ibid.

circumlocutions, memory lapses and misdirection of its narrator-character and, as Elena Lamberti observes, Ford himself is a conscious impressionist writer who 'consistently treats his readers as many "silent listeners" who, nevertheless, must be alerted that what they are witnessing is but the recollection of a single mind'.[193] In the case of *The Good Soldier*, there is both the mind which created the character and the mind of Dowell, visible in words on a page. Lamberti's comment also draws attention to a word which recurs frequently in critical discussion of Ford, witnessing. For example, Stang claims that Ford 'bore witness' to the century to which he belonged.[194] Lamberti suggests that Ford's readers cojoin in the act of witnessing the mind he has created on the page. To witness something is to be present, to see and to gain knowledge from observation. It is different from being persuaded but suggests that Ford saw a value to novels beyond entertainment. Indeed, he argued for the novelist as 'a giver of news' because 'all art is merely a means of communication between one soul and another'.[195] Again, what does he want to communicate?

Gasiorek points out that although Ford believed the arts to be intrinsically valuable, he also believed them to be socially useful since they help individuals to understand the world in which they live.[196] If Stang made the case for Ford's project as showing historical changes, then Gasiorek gives purpose to it. If Ford sought, as he said, to discover and display the times of which he was a part, then his representations of madness must be viewed in this light, as a kaleidoscopic set of images which resonate differently between people, over time and with each other. On this reasoning, continuities or changes in how Ford depicts madness are germane to this thesis. This requires looking across, as well as within, novels.

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[193] Lamberti, *Writing History,* p. 104.
[194] Sondra J. Stang, *Ford Madox Ford* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), p. 39.
[195] Ford, *Literary Portraits and Other Essays*, p. 146.
[196] Andrjez Gasiorek, 'Ford Madox Ford's Modernism and The Question of Tradition', *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, 44:1, pp. 3-27 (2001), pp. 10-11.

This is where existing literary criticism proves to be limited. Beyond the biographies, many analyses are topic led, rarely consider more than one novel, tend to be comparative and are dominated by discussion of *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End.* For instance, in Chantler and Hawkes' *An Introduction to Ford Madox Ford*, few articles draw on novels other than *The Good Soldier*, unless specifically focused on the First World War or *Parade's End*, and are often comparative.[197] An introductory text on Ford arguably benefits from focusing on his best-known works and placing him in relation to other authors. However, this is not an isolated example. Whilst the relatively recent Routledge Research Companion shows more of a spread in the novels referenced, its index supports the argument.[198] For example, *The Good Soldier* is referenced twenty times, with at least three denoting sustained discussion of between six and ten pages. In contrast, apart from *A Call*, the early and Edwardian novels attract very little attention. These are Ford specific texts. More commonly, Ford is featured among several authors, as in Trotter's *Paranoid Modernism*.[199]

Ford scholarship relevant to the theme of madness reflects the same pattern of single focus, often comparative studies. *Parade's End*, *The Good Soldier* and *A Call* are most often the focus of analysis, and modernist and Freudian perspectives, often in combination, are most frequently used. There is a small cluster of articles which surface degenerationist issues in Ford's writing. For instance, Venetia Abdalla discusses it in relation to early novels like *The Benefactor* and argues that Ford 'deflated anxiety' by attaching the issue to comic novels or eccentric characters.[200] Ashley Chantler finds 'a concern with degeneration' in the way the 'city and its inhabitants' become 'animal-like' in Ford's first

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[197] Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes (Eds.) *An Introduction to Ford Madox Ford* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
[198] Sara Haslam, Laura Colombino and Seamus O'Malley (Eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor Francis Group, 2019).
[199] Other examples include Jerome Boyd Maunsell's *Portraits from Life: Modernist Novelists & Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) and Hammond's *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism*.
[200] Venetia Abdalla, '"That Neurasthenia Joke": Degeneration and Eugenics in the Work of Ford Madox Ford and Violet Hunt', in Laura Colombino and Max Saunders (Eds.), *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 12 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013), p. 143.

city poem, 'The Story of Simon Pierreauford'.[201] More commonly degeneration arises as part of the conversation about Ford's war writing. For instance, in Dennis Brown's argument that the Great War was a 'threat' to a version of English manhood which was 'synonymous with sanity', embodied by Christopher Tietjens in *Parade's End*,[202] or in Paul Skinner's examination of how eugenics finds expression in *Parade's End*.[203] It is a set of precise quite disparate arguments.

Beyond this, the conflation of modernism and Freudian psychoanalysis dominates. Today's critics can be likened to the 'educated people' referred to in the New Stateman in that they cannot unknow Freud's concepts and indeed, think in them. For instance, Martin Stannard's reading of Dowell's narrative in *The Good Soldier* as an avoidance of expressing hatred towards Florence and Ashburnham, coupled with his observation that 'we might detect it as a suppressed emotion' that if acknowledged would 'drive him mad',[204] implicitly references the Freudian concept of repression as a defence mechanism.[205] More explicitly, Vincent Cheng argues that *A Call* anticipates *The Good Soldier* in its representations of a society 'admirable' for its attention to 'good form' but 'tragic' in the consequent emotional repression it engenders.[206] Haslam's *Fragmenting Modernism,* though far from an exclusively psychoanalytic analysis, usefully maps intersections between Freud and Ford. Notably she highlights a connection between sex and madness reading Nancy's madness as connected to her confrontation with the 'truth of human sexual relations'.[207] Saunders, whilst noting Ford's 'wariness

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[201] Ashley Chantler, 'Ford's Pre-War Poetry and the "Rotting City"' in Sara Haslam (Ed.), *Ford Madox Ford and the City*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 4 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), p. 112.
[202] Dennis Brown, 'Remains of the Day: Tietjens the Englishman', in Hampson and Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, p. 164.
[203] Paul Skinner, '"Rabbiting On": Fertility, Reformers and The Good Soldier', in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays*.
[204] Martin Stannard, 'The Good Soldier', in Chantler and Hawkes, *An Introduction to Ford Madox Ford*, p. 78.
[205] See Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, authorised translation by G. Stanley Hall (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920), p. 255.
[206] Vincent Cheng, 'English Behaviour and Repression: A Call: The Tale of Two Passions', in Robert Hampson and Tony Davenport (Eds.), *Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 1 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), p. 105.
[207] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 46.

about Freud', finds that his representations of sex in *Parade's End* have 'much in common with the emerging psychoanalytic view'.[208] Like Haslam, he highlights the connection between sexuality and madness, and extends it to include violence.[209] This enables a reading of Sylvia Tietjens as both sadistic and masochistic, noted in Freud's *Theory of Sexuality* (1905) as the 'most common and the most significant in all perversions'.[210] Such violent undertones have been read as shadowing the combats of the First World War, both national and personal, depicted in *Parade's End.*[211] Yet as Karolyn Steffens observes, the tetralogy is true to Ford's claim to be less concerned with the 'actual fighting' and more with battles of the mind.[212] Naturally, this has led to critical engagement with the psychological impact of war, with Freudian ideas central to much of it. A sustained example is Wyatt Bonikowski's *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination*,[213] which bridges between Freudian theory and writers representing shell-shocked characters, arguing for 'shell shock in literature as a metaphor connected to the concept of the death drive [….] and the artistic dimensions of British modernism'.[214] Ashley Chantler and Rob Hawkes attest to the complexity of organising the diverse but connected articles in *War and the Mind*, which they position as ranged around issues of war trauma, challenges to representing this and 'contemporary psychological and psychoanalytical discourses'.[215] Whilst there

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[208] Max Saunders, '"Sex Ferocity" and "the sadic lusts of certain novelists": Sexuality, Sadomasochism and Suppression in Parade's End', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 18.
[209] Saunders, "Sex Ferocity", p. 19.
[210] Saunders, "Sex Ferocity", p. 24. Saunders cites three essays by Freud, translated into English in 1910.
[211] See, for example, Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II,* p. 265; Elizabeth Brunton, 'Ford and Gender' in Haslam, Colombino and O'Malley, *The Routledge Research Companion to Ford Madox Ford,* p. 414; and Karolyn Steffens, 'Freud Madox Ford: Impressionism, Psychoanalytic Trauma Theory, and Ford's Wartime Writing', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 33.
[212] Steffens, 'Freud Madox Ford: Impressionism, Psychoanalytic Trauma Theory, and Ford's Wartime Writing', p. 33.
[213] Wyatt Bonikowski, *Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction* (Oxford: Routledge 2013).
[214] Charlotte Fiehn, 'Bonikowski, Wyatt, Shell Shock and the Modernist Imagination: The Death Drive in Post-World War I British Fiction' (British Society for Literature and Science, January 17, 2017) <https://www.bsls.ac.uk/2017/01/wyatt-bonikowski-shell-shock-and-the-modernist-imagination-the-death-drive-in-post-world-war-i-british-fiction/> [Accessed 9 November, 2024].
[215] Steffens, 'Freud Madox Ford: Impressionism, Psychoanalytic Trauma Theory, and Ford's Wartime Writing', p. 39.

is certainly a broader consideration of other psychological theories, few articles avoid referencing Freud, if only indirectly. For instance, Steffens argues for 'pairing' Ford and Freud's work within 'the broader context of contemporary trauma theory'.[216] Charlotte Jones' finds a parallel between the soldiers depicted in *Parade's End* and *No Enemy* as mentally creating an 'inviolable sphere' and Freud's term 'stimulus shield' in 'his own war text *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*'.[217] Barbara Farnworth, in contrast, argues that William James' theories of mind were at least as influential with authors as those of Freud, and cautions against assuming that 'the use of terminology associated with psychoanalysis' is Freudian, for similar reasons to those elucidated in section 1.1.[218] Similarly, whilst Saunders accepts that Ford's representations of sexuality appear psychoanalytically inflected, he finds more persuasive echoes of Frederick Myers, William James and Carl Jung in *Parade's End*. If an argument must be constructed to resist Freud, then he is still present, still influencing the conversation. This makes Steffens' identification of 'psychoanalytic overtones' in her own arguments an important reminder that critics are as much a product of their own context as the authors they interpret, and that the choice of perspective colours the analysis.[219] Given the preoccupation with psychoanalysis the interpretation of Ford's contribution to the literature on madness has so far been potentially skewed. His engagement with a broader set of conceptions of madness has been under-explored. Moreover, because psychoanalysis has been better understood by subsequent generations, privileging it risks reading back from an informed position, rather than examining how Ford's representations of madness might have been received in his own time. The existing critical literature of mainly individual and comparative studies, whilst invaluable in the depth of their engagement with

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[216] Ibid.
[217]Charlotte Jones, 'Representing Shell Shock: A Return to Ford and Rebecca West', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 134.
[218] Barbara Farnworth, 'The Self- Analysis of Christopher Tietjens', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 86.
[219] Steffens, 'Freud Madox Ford: Impressionism, Psychoanalytic Trauma Theory, and Ford's Wartime Writing', p. 38.

specific topics and texts, are difficult to marshal into a consolidated account. The patchwork of insights they offer does not stand up to the coherence of arguments made by Ford's biographers, which as previously argued, focus on what we learn about Ford from his depictions of madness. There is space, therefore, for a broader study to assess which contemporary ideas about madness surface in Ford's novels over time and what they signify. This is the focus of this thesis which is the first to consider how Ford depicts madness in his novels, and to what effect.

1.6 Scope, method, and structure

As discussed, there is a tension which the scope and methodology of this thesis must address. It needs to examine the relationship of Ford's own history of breakdown to his fictional representations of madness whilst privileging the fiction over the biographical.

For this reason, the core of this thesis is hybrid. Chapter 2 offers a re-examination of Ford's 1904 breakdown based on original research, extending the biographical accounts and assessing its importance to his writing about madness.

The subsequent chapters are concerned with close reading of Ford's depictions of madness in his novels. The need to read closely whilst tracing continuities and changes across Ford's oeuvre presents a challenge of selectivity, for it is impossible in one thesis to do justice to the number and range of his novels. Given that Ford was offering a record of madness in his 'own times', it makes sense to exclude his historical novels. Also omitted are those co-authored with Conrad because, apart from with *Romance,* it would be difficult to make clear judgements about Ford's own writing.[220] This only

[220] Raymond Brebach, in *Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, and the Making of Romance* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985), identifies the two early sections as largely Ford's work and the latter two as largely that of Conrad.

narrows the field from 31 novels to 23,[221] which is still excessive. Choosing novels from a specific period, such as pre- or post-war, would address the limitations of single novel studies but would preclude an analysis of how Ford develops his theme over time. This thesis, therefore, examines 'exemplar' novels from across the oeuvre which best illustrate different aspects of Ford's engagement with his topic, and subjects them to close reading.

These readings take a historicist stance to language, aimed at recovering the meaning of terminology at the time Ford was using it, and are organised chronologically in five chapters. Chapter 3 deals with the novels predating Ford's 1904 breakdown, *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) and *The Benefactor*, and their engagement with the notion of hereditary madness. Chapter 4, entitled 'The Just Possible Novels', discusses a cluster of novels which interrogate the mind's potential for delusion. It takes *Mr. Apollo* (1908) as an exemplar with a supplementary reading of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* and a brief discussion of how their themes are reinforced in *The 'Half Moon'* (1909), *The Simple Life Limited* and *The Young Lovell* (1913). Chapter 5 discusses *A Call* as a primer for considering how *The Good Soldier* allows access to Dowell's mind to show the interior experience of losing touch with reality. Chapter 6 discusses *Parade's End* and its more systemic and endemic representations of madness. The seventh chapter, 'The Late Novels', considers the extent to which novels Ford wrote in the 1930s, specifically *When the Wicked Man*, *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* echo, extend or revise his previous treatment of the theme.

Presenting the argument chronologically surfaces the way in which Ford's representations of madness follow a trajectory of explanations, from the personal, to the interpersonal and then to the systemic. How this interacts with a notably literary strand running through his treatment of the theme is

[221] Excluding his children's fairy tales.

discussed in a concluding chapter, which summarises what Ford's theme of madness reveals, and how this might shape further research.

2 BREAKDOWN AND 'SOME CURES' [1]

This chapter examines the relationship of Ford's early nervous breakdown to his writing about madness. It builds on what has been established by Ford's biographers, refining the narrative with new information from both desk-based research and a field trip to Germany in 2018. It argues that Ford's exposure to competing diagnoses shaped his sensitivity to the ways in which language can position people as problematic.

2.1 A Biographical Consensus

There is little doubt that Ford was nervously ill in 1904. He wrote that the early months of that year were 'the most terrible period of Conrad's life' and his own.[2] A March entry in Olive Garnett's diary records that both Ford and Elsie were in 'a state of depression & nerves'.[3] By May 'Ford [had] got steadily worse' [4] and, according to Olive, was diagnosed with a nervous breakdown from which recovery might take two years.[5] He was advised to take a sea voyage and avoid work for six months. This being unaffordable, he travelled to Germany to stay with relatives. When he left on 6th August 'his agoraphobia was so bad that he could not get up the ship's gangplank without support'.[6] Notice that Ford's problems are attributed variously to depression, nerves and agoraphobia.

[1] 'Some Cures' is the title Ford gave to the chapter which dealt with this period in Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, published 1931.
[2] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 91.
[3] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 54.
[4] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 93.
[5] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 56.
[6] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 93.

Ford's biographers [7] agree that his problems were psychological but offer different explanations. For Mizener, Ford 'could not endure family life but neither could he bear solitude'.[8] Moser sees the 'guilt of his secret affair with Mary Martindale' as causal.[9] Saunders highlights recent publication failure and doubts about his marriage.[10] Ford seemed less sure, writing to Elsie shortly after arriving in Germany that his problems might 'be nothing but hypochondria' and homesickness.[11] Yet he also said he was 'in a state of hourly apprehension of going mad'.[12] Ford shared a 'sporadic fear of going insane' [13] with Conrad, whose 'horror of mental degeneration' predates their relationship, surfacing in *The Idiots* and *An Outcast of the Islands* both published in 1896.[14] Saunders suggests that the strain of their collaboration contributed to Ford's breakdown.[15]

Ford's uncertainty was hardly helped by confusing diagnoses. When writing taxed his eyes he consulted a Dr. Pagenstecher in Wiesbaden.[16] He wrote to Elsie that Pagenstecher found nothing wrong with his eyes but diagnosed 'gout in the brows – whatever that may have been'.[17] Ford's caveat suggests that he suspects the diagnosis to be an obfuscation but repeats it anyway. Similarly, he is keen to share with Elsie that his agoraphobia, or 'lack of walking power' has a 'regular name' in German, 'platz-angst'.[18] Perhaps it was his writerly love of a precise term, or as Saunders argues, that 'the German attitude to mental illness made him feel at home'.[19] Although the German approach

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[7] This phrase refers to Mizener, Moser and Saunders.
[8] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 93.
[9] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 57.
[10] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 171.
[11] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 94.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. ix.
[14] Martin Bock, 'Secret Sharing: The Talk Cures of Conrad and Lowry', in *Conrad et Lowry: L'esthétique de la fiction*, vol. 26 (Limoges: Société Conradienne Française, 1999).
[15] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 188.
[16] Mizener cites Ford's letter to Elsie on 19th September, 1904. Although Mizener refers to him as Pagensticker, this is a misread of the letter, a copy of which was shared with me by Max Saunders, 24th June 2024.
[17] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 97, citing Elsie's letter
[18] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 97.
[19] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 176.

appeared to privilege physical over psychological reasons,[20] this approach was not necessarily what it seemed. When Ford was making no improvement by September, 'doctors hopefully pulled a number of his teeth'.[21] This makes little sense without the knowledge that it may have been a treatment for mental problems. 'Focal infection theory', a belief that mental illness could be caused by tooth infections, was prevalent by the 1920s. Indeed, Virginia Woolf's psychiatrist, George Savage, recommended that three teeth be removed to address her mental instability.[22] As the idea that the mouth could be a focus of systemic bacterial infection had been around in Germany since 1888,[23] it is possible that Ford's treatment was related to his nervous illness. Whether Ford understood the purpose of the tooth pulling is unclear, but when he wrote to Elsie 'that if I could be back with you my troubles would vanish, but alas they probably would not being deep in my nature',[24] he signals his sense of the problems as not merely physical. The comment that they are part of his nature suggests a deep rootedness, perhaps hinting at a fear of hereditary insanity, something explored in his early novels. Whatever the rationale, the tooth pulling did not help because on 3rd October, when Ford set off on a trip to research Holbein paintings, he was still in a 'morbid state'.[25] Mizener relies on Ford's 1931 description of writing up his research in the home of a bereaved Swiss Professor[26] to argue that 'the gloom, the work and his longing for home were soon troubling him again'.[27] Mizener hints at further treatments, saying that Ford did not like 'the doctor at Basel' and hated 'the baths'.[28]

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[20] Edward Shorter, 'Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe, 1850-1933', *Social History of Medicine*, Volume 3, Issue 2 (August 1990).
[21] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 99.
[22] Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, *Virginia Woolf's Strange Treatment to Cure Her Mental Illness* (May 2, 2012) <http://virginiawoolfblog.com/virginia-woolf-had-teeth-pulled-to-cure-her-mental-illness/> [Accessed 29 January 2019].
[23] Promoted by Willoughby D. Miller, a student of Robert Koch the German physician and the founder of modern bacteriology and microbiology. James l. Gutmann and Vivian Manjarrés, 'Review - Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Microbiological Aspects of Endodontics', *Dentistry Journal*, 6(4), 49 (2018).
[24] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 99.
[25] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 177.
[26] This account is in Ford's autobiography, *Return to Yesterday* (1931).
[27] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 99.
[28] Ibid.

Whatever these were they must also have been ineffective because Ford had another breakdown in mid-October, and went to a Kuranstalt (sanatorium) at Mammern on the Bodensee (Lake Constance).[29] The first doctor he saw advised that his 'only trouble' was that he had been starving himself to death, but the 'cure' only made him weaker.[30] On a postcard to his daughter Katherine on 15th October, Ford described this cure as having to get up 'at 6 o'clock & sit in a bath for an hour: at 11 o'clock … [have] an electric bath & at 3 a cold footbath'.[31] These are important contemporary insights into his treatment, despite which his condition 'fluctuated throughout the month. Sometimes he was well enough to walk over to Stein for tea; then he would fall back into depression and agoraphobia'.[32] His family decided that he needed someone with him. Due to objections from the English doctors and Ford not wanting Elsie there, his mother joined him. Ford wrote that he felt more cheerful once she arrived at the end of October and he immediately decided to leave Mammern.[33] Saunders pinpoints her arrival as 25th October and by the 27th, when the baths were due to close, Ford was 'scarcely better'.[34] Ford wrote to Elsie on 27th October saying that 'the Future begins to exist for me again', but also that he has 'a sort of weight pressing on [his] brain all the time' and that when he tried to write it was 'as if someone else were writing, a long way away, thro' a sort of mist'.[35] This ambivalence about his condition is reflected in a comment that he could not decide 'whether [the doctor's] a quack or a genius: I suppose the two are closely allied'.[36] Although Ford later complained of 'wickedly unskilful doctoring', here he is less definitive.[37] In the next section of this chapter new information about the institution contextualises his comment.

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[29] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 17.
[30] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 179.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 99.
[33] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 100.
[34] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 181.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1999), p. 202.

Any improvement there might have been to Ford's health at Mammern was not sustained for 'by the beginning of November he was back at Boppard and was being treated at the Marienberg Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt'.[38] Ford later described Marienberg as 'the most horrible of all the monstrous institutions that had tortured me'.[39] He sent Elsie a detailed account of his treatment regime,[40] presented below in a timeline format: -

7 a.m. - cold douche

9 a.m. - eye-baths

9.30 a.m. – 9.50 a.m. – walk in the park and then lie down

10.30 a.m. - cold foot bath in iced water

10.40 a.m. -11.00 a.m. – walk alone into the town

11.00 a.m. - have oatmeal gruel and lie down

12.30 p.m. dinner/lunch followed by hot compress on stomach

1.30 p.m. – 3.30p.m. – lie down

3.30 p.m. - cold bath with massage

4. 00 p.m. - walk down to the Goesens, where has milk & Zwieback (rusk) and lie down until

5.30 p.m. - Walk back here and lie down till 7.30 p.m.

7.30 p.m. Supper (presumably) followed by another hot compress

8.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m. – lie down

9.00 p.m. – 9.30 p.m. – walk

Then bed and eyebaths – after which Mrs H reads to me.[41]

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[38] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 100.
[39] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 182.
[40] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 185.
[41] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 185 citing letter from Ford. The list has taken each element and listed them in a timeline according to Ford's description. There is some uncertainty about mealtimes because Ford refers to hot compresses after lunch and supper but gives 12.30pm as 'dinner' time. Given the time allowed, the most substantial meal was likely to have been served at 12.30 p.m., so I have assumed the shorter period in the evening was supper.

Presenting it in this way reveals the oppressive routine and invites the question of what the combination of hydrotherapy, dietary restrictions, exercise and enforced rest was designed to achieve. If the diagnosis is unclear, the effects are better known because in the same letter, Ford wrote of being less troubled by 'dreadful presentiments' but 'hideously weak & deadly stupid' and feeling as he had 'weights hung all over [him] – on [his] arms, on [his] legs, & above all on [his] eyelids'.[42]

It is not difficult to see why Ford described it as a terrible period in his life. Whilst biographers have established the details of where and how he was treated, Ford's diagnosis is less certain, and shifting. Mizener refers to him as both agoraphobic and neurasthenic. His source for the word neurasthenic seems to be Violet Hunt, whom Ford did not meet until 1909.[43] Moser and Saunders had the benefit of Olive Garnett's memorandum, written fifty years later but considered to be 'the best surviving record of Ford's state at the time' of his illness.[44] Olive wrote that in 1904 she thought that she had 'never heard of neurasthenia'.[45] Ford described himself as agoraphobic but not as neurasthenic, yet it has become part of the narrative that he was, and that he created numerous fictional 'neurasthenic heroes'.[46] Why might this be?

Ford's retrospective and beautifully imprecise anecdotes of wandering 'from nerve cure to nerve cure, all over England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium – but mostly in Germany' [47] are described by Saunders as 'vivid, entertaining impressions of the futile and demoralizing regimes at the sanatoria' which 'efface his psychological problems'.[48] This effacement might be 'a matter of

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[42] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 185.
[43] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 192.
[44] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 171.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 108.
[47] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 202.
[48] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 179.

literary – and social – tact' to his readers.[49] Equally his letters to Elsie were not neutral documents but written to 'distract Elsie from her own anxieties',[50] or to address issues in their relationship.[51] Hence, the accounts of his breakdown and treatment rest on managed narratives by Ford, Olive's diary and memoir, and a consensus of interpretation. What is missing is a comparison of these accounts with other contemporary sources.

2.2 New contextualisation

The following original research places Ford's claims about the two hydrotherapy institutions in context for the first time and provides a more fine-grained account of his experiences.

2.2.1 Schloss Mammern

Ford's letters do not identify the Kuranstalt on Lake Constance by name. However, a Baedeker guide from 1903 records the existence of a 'chateau, used as a hydropathic establishment, and a large park on the lake'.[52] It is most likely[53] that this was the Schloss Mammern clinic, which still exists and is located with a large park 'directly on the Untersee'.[54] The Clinic's website includes a brief history with an early photograph, reproduced below, showing its stunning location.[55,56]

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[49] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 180.
[50] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 176.
[51] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 175.
[52] Karl Baedeker, *Switzerland: and the adjacent portions of Italy, Savoy and the Tyrol; handbook for travellers* (Leipzig: K. Baedeker, 1903).
[53] I searched and considered other establishments in the area which did not fit Ford's descriptions.
[54] <https://saez.swisshealthweb.ch/fileadmin/assets/SAEZ/2002/bms.2002.09464/bms-2002-09464.pdf> This article records the history of the building as Schloss, later converted to a hydrotherapy establishment. Originally accessed 16 May 2019, and this link amended 16 July 2024.
[55] <https://www.klinik-schloss-mammern.ch/en/history-2/> [accessed 16 May 2019]. Photo still there 16 July 2024.
[56] A postcard for sale on eBay suggests that the photograph probably dates from around 1895. <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/134681810878> [accessed 8 July 2024].



Figure 1: Undated photograph of Schloss Mammern Clinic

A letter from Ford to Elsie lamenting that he could 'wander about in this lovely scenery & be so full of gloom that I cannot see its beauties' further suggests Schloss Mammern.[57] In the same letter he claims that the doctor had said that 'except for the Great Nerve whatever that may be - & Brain Fag there is nothing the matter'.[58] As Ford repeats the brain fag diagnosis in a letter to his Uncle William, it was probably true rather than simply reassurance to Elsie.[59] Today the slang term 'brain fag' denotes mental exhaustion and contemporary documents indicate that it was understood similarly.[60] A women's column in a 1904 newspaper advised that brain fag was curable only if 'the brain is allowed complete rest from business worries', though a 'change of air and scene' were 'good aids' to a 'complete cure'.[61] A 1904 directory of health resorts lists Schloss Mammern[62] as a climatic air station and hydropathic establishment offering clean air and treatments popularly recommended for a range of conditions.[63] Yet Ford wrote to his uncle that he had become a 'hypochondriac-lunatic' who was

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[57] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 180.
[58] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 181.
[59] Ibid.
[60] *Green's Dictionary of Slang* <https://greensdictofslang.com/entry/xlkm6ki> [Accessed 15 May 2019].
[61] *Evening Express* (16 March 1904) <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4140694/4140698> [Accessed 15 May 2019].
[62] Hereafter abbreviated to Mammern.
[63] B. Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters, climatic health resorts, sea baths, and hydropathic establishments : giving the names of doctors, hotels which can be recommended with confidence, quickest routes by rail, boats,*

getting no better there and had no hopes of doing so.[64] Even if his problem was merely brain fag, that was 'more than enough'.[65] Ford's language about these experiences is revealing, specifically his use of the phrase 'hypochondriac-lunatic'. Edward Shorter found the contemporary terminology describing the various types of institution to be nuanced. The term 'sanatorium', other than for tuberculosis establishments, fell into disrepute as such institutions became seen as 'just luxury hotels for hypochondriacs'.[66] Saunders' reference to 'a Kuranstalt (sanatorium) at Mammern' is significant,[67] especially as Shorter claims the word 'kur' to be an upbeat renaming of sanatoria. Ford's phrase, therefore, anticipates the way he might be perceived and labelled.

The lasting impact of these experiences is signalled by Ford's repetition, in 1931, of the claim that, although his illness between 1903 and 1906 had been 'imaginary', this made it 'none the better'.[68] In these 'lost years' a 'single picture' came back to him of 'trying a nerve cure on the Lake of Constance'.[69] He describes having 'taken ninety cold baths and thirty tepid soda-water douches in thirty days' and being left 'so weak that, even if the so-called agoraphobia had not interfered with [his] walking' he would have been unable to 'get about'.[70] Notice the acknowledgement of a nervous illness but disparagement of the agoraphobia diagnosis he had originally accepted. As he was only at Mammern from mid-October to the 27th, Ford could not have had thirty days of treatments, but the essence of the claims is not invalidated by his exaggerations. Contemporary information confirms that douches were standard equipment in hydrotherapeutic establishments, 'prescribed systematically'.[71] Ford also claimed that he had been fed 'on dried peas and grapes – one grape every quarter of an

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carriages, etc., and other useful information : with a map shewing the stations named, and several smaller maps and plans (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner; New York: Brentanos, 1904), p. 187.
[64] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 181.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe*, p. 164.
[67] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 179.
[68] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 202.
[69] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 203.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. xi.

hour – for sixteen hours out of the day'.[72] This is more questionable. Grape cures were part of the water cure because water is their main constituent,[73] and they were in use at Mammern in 1904.[74] However, patients were prescribed 'four to twelve pounds' of grapes daily.[75,76] Ford's description is at odds with this, but it does not mean that his diet was not somehow restricted.

To understand the treatment regime at Mammern it is useful to know who ran it and how. Bradshaw names the doctor in charge in 1904 as a Dr. Ullmann. This is confirmed by a listing in the Swiss Historical Encyclopaedia which names Oscar Ullmann as an assistant physician at the Mammern water sanatorium.[77] He bought it in 1889 and ran it until 1935.[78] Ullmann studied medicine in Zurich, Paris, Nancy, Leipzig and Strasbourg and was a 'specialist in internal medicine and nervous diseases'.[79] University of Zurich archival records show that an Oscar Ullmann matriculated in medicine twice, in 1882 and 1885 but no specialities are identified.[80] The Clinic's website credits him with turning an 'ailing spa institution' into a 'flourishing international institution'.[81] In 1935 he passed it to his son, Waldemar Ullmann, and when Waldemar died childless in 1944, it passed to his sister and her husband. Their son Alfred Oscar Fleisch took it over in 1958 and continued until 1997. In 2001 Fleisch

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[72] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 203.
[73] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. xii gives grapes as a specific example with 76-84% water content.
[74] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. 187.
[75] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. xiii.
[76] Both Wikipedia and an independent article on the history of the treatment and its resurgence in the early 1900s confirm that high volumes of the grapes were recommended – for example - <https://www.villaserbelloni.com/Bellagio/zh/magazineGHVS/ 46/ampeloterapia_per_molti.html> [Accessed 23 April 2018].
[77] André Salathé, 'Ullmann, Oscar', *Historical Dictionary of Switzerland (HLS)* (15 April 2011) <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D4090.php> [Accessed 21 August 2017]. Translated from German using DeepL.
[78] Although I contacted the clinic's current directors, they did not have the records which would enable them to confirm Ford's stay. Although they were prepared to put questions to the current medical director, Oscar Ullmann's great grand-daughter, she was unable to find the time to answer my queries.
[79] Salathé, *Ullmann, Oscar*.
[80] Matrikeledition of the University of Zurich 1833-1924 <http://www.matrikel.uzh.ch/active/static/ 22429.htm> [Accessed 28 Feb 2018]. Presumably the two dates indicate different levels of qualification, or different types of medicine. This is not made clear on the archival records available.
[81] <https://klinik-schloss-mammern.ch/en/history/> [Accessed 23 January 2018].

published a history of the Clinic, and his account of Ullmann's management offers illuminating insights.[82] Although it is a retrospective account, it nonetheless offers useful corroboration.[83]

Fleisch references two prospectuses for the clinic: one from when his grandfather bought the facility and the other from the beginning of the century. In the second, the clinic is described as 'Wasserheilanstalt Mammern, Sanatorium für Nerven- und innere Krankheiten' (Mammern Hydrotherapy Institute, Sanatorium for Nervous and Internal Diseases).[84] It is clear, therefore, that the term sanatorium, with the connotations previously highlighted, was in use at the time of Ford's stay. More significantly, it was openly advertised as treating nervous illness. This aligns with Shorter's finding that, although hydrotherapy started as an organic therapy useful for a wide range of afflictions, the problems 'water-cure clinics were most apt to cure were nervous diseases'.[85] Indeed this was an 'open secret among doctors, though not widely broadcast to the public'.[86] More specifically, Doris Kaufman records the 'emergence of a profitable neurasthenia business' through the establishment of private clinics, including 'water-cure' and 'spa' clinics, from the 1880s to the First World War.[87] Shorter also attributes the decline of hydrotherapy institutions to the fact that they were 'basically placebo therapy' with the 'close relationship between doctor and patient' counting for more than the cures.[88] He cites Martin Bruck's argument that 'influencing the psyche' through suggestion, and maintaining patient confidence that the treatment would work, was critical.[89]

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[82] Alfred Oscar Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern [History of the Schloss Mammern Clinic]* (Frauenfeld: Druck, Huber and Co. AG, 2001).
[83] In the Foreword, Fleisch states that his sources were 'old brochures, old postcards and photographs, manuscripts of my grandfather's speeches and above all my colourful memories of stories told by my grandparents and parents'. p. 7.
[84] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 32.
[85] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe,* p. 170.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Doris Kaufmann, 'Neurasthenia in Wilhelmine Germany: Culture. Sexuality, and the Demands of Nature', in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter (Eds.), *Cultures of Neurasthenia – From Beard to the First World War*, The Wellcome series in the History of Medicine (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2001), p. 164.
[88] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe,* p. 174.
[89] Ibid.

Fleisch's book, which describes both the treatment regime and Ullmann's approach, casts light on Ford's ambivalence about his doctor.

In terms of physical treatments, there is a match between Ford's description and available facilities. Ford referred to electric baths and cold footbaths. Ullmann was proud of offering the 'latest and best experiences in this field' and Fleisch lists a wide range of water treatments such as 'showers, rain jet fans, […] flowing sitting and foot baths, tumble and wave baths, […] Roman-Irish (hot air) and Russian (steam) baths'.[90] Fleisch also confirms the use of electric baths, 'always under medical supervision',[91] alongside a broader use of electrical therapy.[92] He recalls his grandfather telling him 'how he would go from room to room … with his little galvanizer and faradizer to apply his electrotherapy'.[93] Fleisch's comment that the success of such treatments was 'probably more due to' Ullman's 'personal charm' reinforces Shorter's point about confidence between doctor and patient. Ford's claim to have been placed on a restrictive diet is probably true. Special diets were certainly in use at Mammern, usually for 'cases of obesity, gout and diabetes',[94] and Ford suffered with dyspepsia. His contemporary letter, claiming that he had been starving himself, shows that diet was part of the initial assessment. This matters because Joachim Radkau identifies digestion as 'a main topic of neurasthenic experience'.[95] Taken together, Ford's diagnosis of brain fag, and the association of neurasthenia with mental exhaustion and digestive issues, suggest that he was perhaps viewed as neurasthenic at Mammern. This is supported by the broader medical context.

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[90] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 29.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 30.
[95] Joachim Radkau, 'The Neurasthenic Experience in Imperial Germany: Expeditions into Patient Records and Side-looks upon General History', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, *Cultures of Neurasthenia,* p. 209. Radkau suggests that this connection between neurasthenia and digestion is an under researched area.

For instance, Belle Vue sanatorium, only twenty kilometres distant, was under the directorship of Robert Binswanger, the brother of Otto Binswanger, the author of 'perhaps the most renowned manual on neurasthenia'.[96] Radkau's examination of patient records showed that during Robert's time, 'neurasthenia was produced at the Lake Constance on a major scale'.[97] Why might Ullmann have been part of this? Fleisch records that his grandfather spent semesters in 'Paris, where he studied neurology and psychiatry with Charcot'.[98] Not only does this signify Ullmann's exposure to suggestion therapies, noted by Shorter as part of the 'placebo' treatment in spas, but as Charcot and his students were largely responsible for the dissemination of George Miller Beard's work on neurasthenia from the late 1880s onwards,[99] Ullmann may have developed an interest. This also positions him as someone potentially knowledgeable about more psychological therapies.

In fact, Fleisch argues for him as 'a brilliant psychotherapist' able to determine within minutes whether a patient's complaints were 'organic or psycho-neurotic'.[100] His greatest successes were with 'the mentally ill, neurotics, hysterics, etc' whom he treated with an eclectic combination of sedatives, hydrotherapy and psychotherapy.[101] Significantly, underpinning Ullmann's approach was the theory that 'disturbances' like nervousness, neurasthenia, hysteria, hypochondria were becoming increasingly frequent in that 'cultural epoch' as a result of 'overexertion of the brain by mental work, emotions, professional and business difficulties, sorrow and worries, serious illness' and 'excesses of all kinds'.[102] This has distinct echoes of Beard's description of neurasthenia as 'a disorder of modernity, caused by the fast pace of urban life'.[103] Beard's term itself derives from the distinction

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[96] Radkau, *The Neurasthenic Experience in Imperial Germany*, p. 201. The book was *Die Pathologie and Therapie der Neurasthenie* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1896).
[97] Ibid.
[98] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 37.
[99] Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Introduction', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, *Cultures of Neurasthenia*, p. 1.
[100] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 30.
[101] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 31.
[102] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 30.
[103] Gijswijt-Hofstra, *Introduction*, p. 1.

made by John Brown [104], who separated diseases caused by too much excitability (sthenic) and too little (asthenias).[105] Hence Beard attributed neurasthenia 'literally to nerve weakness'.[106] Ullmann's treatment regime appears to reflect Beard's argument that 'excessive consumption of the "nerve force" in the brain' led to 'fatigue, or various somatic symptoms' best managed by a withdrawal from mentally taxing activities, a balanced diet and electrical stimulation of the nerves.[107] It is probable, therefore, that Ford was being treated as a neurasthenic patient. His ambivalence about Ullmann is best understood through Fleisch's comment that his grandfather had a facility for grasping someone 'as a whole' and when 'he had recognized the conflicts, he tried to cover them up and trivialize them all in his kind, lovable, kind, kind, cheerful and understanding manner'.[108] If Ullmann did minimise issues in this way, then neurasthenia could easily be labelled 'brain fag' and Ford could have felt that he was being told that little was the matter. His uncertainty about whether he was genuinely ill is reflected in his letters. Was Ullmann a medical genius, or a pretender? Ford may have sensed that he was being managed, even manipulated, by Ullmann. It is impossible to know whether it would have worked or proved to be merely the 'skilful handling of neurotic illness that did not require institutionalization' also prevalent in 'London consulting rooms' at the time.[109] Ford was there less than a month, hardly time for any treatment to have succeeded. In the event, any improvements quickly dissipated, and Ford relapsed and was admitted to the institution about which he was much less equivocal, Marienberg Kaltwasser Heilanstalt.

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[104] Ford Madox Brown's grandfather, known for the Brunonian system of medicine.
[105] William Bynum, 'The rise of science in medicine, 1850-1913', in William F. Bynum, Anne Hardy, Stephen Jacyna, Christopher Lawrence, Elizabeth M. Tansey, *The Western Medical Tradition 1800 To 2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 201.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Volker Roelcke, 'Electrified Nerves, Degenerated Bodies: Medical Discourses on Neurasthenia in Germany, circa 1880 -1914', in Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, *Cultures of Neurasthenia*, p. 179.
[108] Fleisch, *Geschichte der Klinik Schloss Mammern*, p. 31.
[109] Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves: Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 9.

2.2.2 Marienberg

Marienberg was the 'last institution of that sort that [Ford] endured' before returning home in December 1904. He described it as 'a vast, gloomy building, the former palace of a Kurfurst of sorts'[110] but, in fact it was a former Benedictine monastery with a chequered history. The largely uninhabitable buildings were bought in 1839, renovated and opened as a cold water cure establishment by Dr Schmitz.[111] The photograph below shows it in the early 1900s:[112]



Figure 2: Marienberg (photograph reproduced from Marienberg Einst und Jetzt by C. E. Hoestermann)

It probably ceased to function as a spa during the First World War when it was used as a military hospital. In June 2018 it stood empty and dilapidated on the edges of Boppard, awaiting redevelopment.[113] Even in June its 'sheer scale' made it 'faintly forbidding' and Ford was there in November.[114] It is now part of the history of the town and in 2016 the Boppard V.V.V.[115] produced a

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[110] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 204. A Kürfurst would be an electoral prince.
[111] <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kloster_Marienberg_(Boppard)> [Accessed 28 August 2018].
[112] Photograph reproduced from C. E. Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt* (Boppard am Rhein: Otto Maisel, 1903).
[113] I visited in June 2018. The building had been sold and in December work began to convert it to apartments, a project expected to take two years. A YouTube video suggests that no progress had been made by autumn 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8poUonNFT9Q&ab_channel=BoppardAktuell> [accessed 8 July 2024].
[114] Gillian Gustar, 'The Journal of a PhD student: Following in Ford's Footsteps', *Last Post – A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*, 1:2 (Spring 2019).
[115] Verkehrs- und Verschönerungs-Verein - a local history, conservation and beautification society in the town of Boppard.

book containing an 1842 poem[116] about farmer Hannickel who participated in the health cure at Marienberg, together with old photographs and historical information. It includes excerpts from an 1841 Prospectus boasting of a 'fresh, crystal-clear',[117] and abundant river water supplying 'full baths', 'wave baths', 'showers',[118] and a device which allowed the jet to act 'in any strength and direction'.[119] The apparent aim of the prospectus was to claim an ideal location and state of the art equipment, and Jürgen and Neubauer identify the high profile figures it attracted. The American author Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was 'one of [its] most internationally renowned patients', the English novelist Anna Sewell spent time there,[120] and Frederika Bremer, a Swedish writer, visited and 'published a 60-page book about her experiences there'.[121] Yet it was not without its critics. Herbert Mayo, a retired professor of physiology and pathological anatomy from King's College London, was treated for rheumatic gout at Marienberg in 1842. He claimed that errors were made and that he had 'seen one or two lives lost … through over-treatment'.[122] A review of his book in *The Lancet* identifies a 'vein of rashness' in his claims, although the authors concede that his medical knowledge 'prevented two or three hydropathic murders at Boppard'.[123] This long predates Ford's stay, but Mayo's claim to have been 'reluctantly led to the adoption of more treatment than seemed … rational' and to have 'suffered through' it echoes Ford's language of 'enduring' his time there.[124]

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[116] As the poem was reproduced in the original Hunsrück dialect, online translation was not possible, but it is claimed to be humorous.
[117] Jürgen Johann and Berthold Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg – Erinnerung an prachtvolle Jahre* (Boppard VVV, February 2016), p. 22.
[118] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg,* p. 28.
[119] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg,* p. 32.
[120] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg,* p. 72.
[121] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg,* p. 68. This was probably *A Few Leaves from the Banks of the Rhine* (*Ett par blad ifrån Rhenstranden, eller Marienberg och Kaiserswerth 1846*; 1848). It was available on archive.org but an online translation of it was so patchy as to make any reading of the evidence unstable.
[122] Herbert Mayo, *The Cold Water Cure, Its Use and Misuse Examined* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1845), p. iv.
[123] Thomas Wakley and J. Henry Bennet (Eds.), 'Book review of Herbert Mayo, The Cold Water Cure, Its Use and Misuse Examined', *The Lancet - Journal of British and Foreign Medical and Chemical Science, Criticism, Literature and News*, No. 5 vol 11 (London: Saturday, August 2, 1845).
[124] Mayo, *The Cold Water Cure,* p. iv.

Despite this, the facility appeared to thrive, and by 1904 it had been led by five different doctors. Dr. Carl Eugen Hoestermann took over in 1882, and Bradshaw's dictionary lists him as one of six doctors working there in 1904.[125] A 1905 advertisement for Marienberg names Hoestermann as 'Leit.Arzt: San-Rat' (Chief Physician).[126] Ford's letters to Elsie in November and December of 1904 show that he was treated by him.[127]

Contemporary advertisements and Bradshaw's dictionary echo the earlier prospectus with a focus on the 'wooded and extremely lovely' [128] and 'climatically very favorable' Rhine valley.[129] Hoestermann is also a key source of information about the facility, having published books on it in 1889 and 1903.[130] The latter describes 'wide airy corridors' and 'numerous, spacious rooms sufficient for every demand'.[131] It offered 'billiards, bowling alley, croquet, lawn tennis, a beautiful concert grand piano and a pianino',[132] making it a 'pleasant place to stay for recreation'.[133]

Why then might Ford have found it 'gloomy?' Saunders records that at a 1912 meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society discussing spa 'habitués', Freud argued that

> Some neurotics … transfer their inner conflicts onto a place such as a spa: 'There are types – obsessional neurotics, in particular, are such people – who have a much more solid relation with

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[125] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. 47.
[126] 1905 Advertisement for Marienberg - in *Daheim Kalender Für Das Deutsche Reich 1905*, <https://archive.org/details/DaheimKalenderFrDasDeutscheReich1905/page/n351/mode/2up> [accessed 16 July 2024].
[127] Ford mentioned seeing him in four letters: an undated letter probably from Nov 1904, and letters dated 12 Nov, [22-24 Nov], and 3 Dec 1904. Information provided by Max Saunders from editing work on Ford's unpublished letters on 24th June, 2024.
[128] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. 47.
[129] 1905 advertisement for Marienberg.
[130] Carl Eugen Hoestermann, *Zur Erinnerung an die Feier des Fünfzigjähren Bestehens der Wasserheilanstalt Marienberg [To commemorate the celebration of the fiftieth year of the Marienberg sanatorium]* (Boppard: Commission Publishing House, Judge's Bookstore, 1889), and Carl Eugen Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt [, Marienburg Then and Now]* (Boppard am Rhein: Otto Maisel, 1903).
[131] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg*. The quotations are attributed to Hoestermann's 1903 book.
[132] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 59.
[133] 1905 advertisement for Marienberg.

> space than with time. In other persons, one sees clearly how they transfer their complexes onto other fields; they copy over their affects, for instance, onto localities – as do those who visit watering places.' [134]

Following this reasoning, Ford's description was a projection of his own sense of joylessness onto Marienberg. It is a possible explanation, but more prosaic reasons might also apply because 'watering places' like Marienberg were not simply 'pleasant places for recreation'. Neither Hoestermann's books nor contemporary advertisements deny that Marienberg was a treatment facility. An undated advertisement in the V.V.V. book lists 'medicinal, electric, … gymnastics, massage, … diatetic', and even 'morphine withdrawal' options.[135] Ford's contemporary account of his time there included a bewildering array of such treatments; douches, baths, foot baths in iced water, eye-baths, prescribed walks, oatmeal gruel and milk with rusk eaten between main meals, and hot compresses on his stomach. His 1931 account adds new detail and offers a rationale:

> I was fed on pork and ice-cream and salad made with lemon juice and white of egg. Oil and vinegar are said to be exciting – sexually. Three times a day I had alternately a boiling shampoo and a fliessende Fussbad – a foot-bath of iced water forced against the feet in a stream running ninety miles an hour. The Dr. Kaltwasser- Heilanstaltiger Medizinrath had by then come to the conclusion that my trouble was due to defective circulation. The blood had to be forced to my head by boiling it and then back to my feet by the reaction from their being frozen. It was a good idea but I lost weight. Then complete sleeplessness came to add itself to my pleasures.[136]

Hoestermann's 1903 book is useful for calibrating these retrospective claims. Although water-based cures remained predominant, Marienberg had become designated as a 'Kurhaus', the word 'Kalt' (cold) having been dropped.[137] Hoestermann explains that the 'strict observance' [138] of early cold

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[134] Max Saunders, 'Introduction', in Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[135] Johann and Neubauer, *Kaltwasserheilanstalt Marienberg,* p. 46.
[136] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 204.
[137] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 48.
[138] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 34.

water forms had been replaced over decades with 'milder forms of temperate baths'.[139] Significantly, an increase in patients with nervous weaknesses is claimed as the prompt for this change.[140] The gap between Ford's account of boiling and freezing temperatures and Hoestermann's claim to 'temperate baths' may be simply one of perspective or perhaps Ford is implying that he was not among the nervous patients needing gentler care. After all, by 1931 he was attributing his problems to an undiagnosed 'slight fluttering of the heart'.[141] Yet his claims again prove to have foundation. Hoestermann, for example, writes of treating 'disturbances of the blood circulation in the different organs', so Ford's statement of the treatment rationale is plausible.[142] His comment that it was a good idea but that he lost weight appears oddly disconnected, unless read as a comment on the whole regime, including dietary restrictions. The early accounts of milk and the later one of ice cream hint perhaps at a milk cure, something listed in Bradshaw as commonly used for a range of conditions, including some forms of heart disease and nervous afflictions.[143] This appears to have been contemporary practice because Charles Sanford Porter's book on the use of the milk diet for chronic diseases, including dyspepsia, ran to several editions from 1905 onwards.[144] Although Bradshaw states that doctors normally insisted on milk alone, Porter highlights 'the mistake … of combining other food, even meat and eggs' made by many physicians.[145] Hoestermann claimed that Marienberg had 'sufficient facilities' to offer both milk and grape cures.[146] Given that he believed it to be 'the duty of the physician' to individualise diets into 'a suitable composition',[147] Ford may have been prescribed

[139] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 43.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 204.
[142] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt,* p. 58.
[143] Bradshaw, *Dictionary of mineral waters etc*., p. xii.
[144] Charles Sanford Porter, *Milk Diet as a remedy for chronic diseases* (California: Burnett, 1911).
[145] Porter, *Milk Diet,* p. 10.
[146] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 57.
[147] Ibid.

an adaptation of the milk cure. The prohibition of oil and vinegar as 'sexually exciting', however, hints at something different and is discussed later.

One curious point in Ford's description relates to his 'complete sleeplessness'. Although Hoestermann links galvanic massage and electric baths to insomnia,[148] the only remedy Ford mentions is that his mother, who had been 'reading all night' to him, was forbidden to do so 'later than ten'.[149] It could simply be an omission by Ford but when he says that 'the doctor forbade' his mother to read, he draws attention to the kind of relationship between patients and doctors at Marienberg. As Saunders observes, the routines appeared to take 'the regulation of convalescence to the point where it reduces patients to helpless children'.[150] Though no published examples of routines were found, the high number of treatments scheduled around six doctors make such timetabling likely. Although baths were located where they could be 'comfortably reached by the guests', they were separated 'only by the width of the cloister' from the doctor's study to facilitate the 'necessary supervision'.[151] Exercise was 'supervised by the Doctors daily' [152] and individual adaptations to the daily menu were 'under the control of the doctor'.[153] Hoestermann's book seems to stress the paramount responsibility and authority of the doctor. Yet his regimes required the co-operation of patients, something made clear by Ford's decision to leave. Ford makes the all-night reading veto the trigger for his decision to return to London. He could not 'face nightly ten hours of sleepless agony'.[154] He appeared to intend a temporary withdrawal 'for Christmas', but was told that he would probably die if he left and that the doctor 'would not again receive [him] amongst his patients'.[155] The sarcasm in

[148] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 51.
[149] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 205.
[150] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 186.
[151] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 47.
[152] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 52.
[153] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 56.
[154] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 205.
[155] Ibid.

Ford's comment that 'even that consideration did not deter' leaves the impression of a problematic relationship with his doctor, but how far this influenced the decision to leave is uncertain. The important point is that continued treatment at an institution Hoestermann describes as 'completely open' and unfit for the mentally ill, required Ford's consent.[156] Hoestermann's statement is intended to delineate Marienberg from psychiatric clinics where people might be detained against their will.

In care of the mentally ill, the spas occupied a transitional space. Shorter uncovered the way in which doctors and patients collaborated to allow those with functional nervous diseases, assumed to have organic roots and usually 'diagnosed at the time as "hysteria" or "neurasthenia"',[157] to opt for the spas as a way to avoid being associated with the 'crazy' people.[158] He implicates Marienberg in this when he cites a table from Hoestermann's 1889 book showing that 'nervous disease predominated' in its patient intake.[159] The table indicates that 52% of patients had neuroses (neurasthenia, hysteria and hypochondria), 9% had psychoses, another 5% had organic disorders of the nervous system, where neurosyphilis accounted for over half of these and 13% were there for the management of substance abuse.[160] Although the 1903 book does not replicate this detailed information, Hoestermann records that diseases 'of the nerve systems in all their forms' continued to be treated, alongside physical conditions such as heart or circulatory disorders.[161] There is no indication that the emphasis had changed, and the line between physical and psychological illnesses is blurred. This perhaps reflected necessity because the spas, in a 'highly competitive' marketplace, offered what they believed 'their medical colleagues and the public demanded in terms of diagnosis and therapy'.[162] It is significant, therefore, that Shorter found over half of the diagnoses to be functional

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[156] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 58.
[157] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe,* p. 170.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe,* p. 172.
[161] Hoestermann, *Marienberg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 58.
[162] Shorter, *Notes on Private Clinics in Central Europe,* p. 159.

neuroses, including neurasthenia and hysteria. In fact, the table shows an upward trend in diagnoses of both between 1883 and 1887, with a slight drop in 1888.[163] Only the year before Ford arrived, Hoestermann advertised the provision of 'psychological treatment in all its forms, including hypnosis for suitable cases'.[164] As hypnosis was widely associated with hysteria, this suggests that it remained a prevalent diagnosis.

Indeed, another of Ford's statements hints at this:

> The director of the Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt was an immense, thin man with a long grey waterfall of beard through which he passed his fingers as if cautiously before he ever made a remark. He usually wore black spectacles. In the effort to prove that my troubles had an obscure sexual origin he would suddenly produce from his desk and flash before my eyes indecent photographs of a singular banality. He expected me to throw fits or to faint. I didn't.[165]

Given Ford's references to him in letters, this is probably Hoestermann. It is a well-crafted image designed to portray the 'wickedly unskilful doctoring' of which he complained.[166] 'In the effort to prove', implies that Hoestermann was working from an underlying theory which he was determined to substantiate. It is an image which evokes Charcot's by then discredited work on hysteria. The phrase 'he would' suggests recurring attempts to prove 'obscure sexual origins' to Ford's problems. Mark Micale found that male hysteria was underpinned by the idea that 'troubled sexuality was a component in the psychological suffering'.[167] Equally, neurasthenia was strongly associated with the question of sex.[168] Kaufman cites Binswanger's observation that male neurasthenic patients loved to 'brood' about their 'sexual emotions' and 'sexual life'.[169] If Moser was right, and Ford's illness was

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[163] Hoestermann, *Zur Erinnerung*, p 29.
[164] Hoestermann, *Marienburg Einst und Jetzt*, p. 57.
[165] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 203.
[166] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 202.
[167] Mark Micale, *Hysterical Men – The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness* (London: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 187.
[168] Kaufmann and Radkau both make this point.
[169] Kaufmann, *Neurasthenia in Wilhelmine Germany,* p. 167.

connected to his guilt about infidelity, this could have been something he or his doctors sought to explore.

To assess the likelihood of this it helps to understand Hoestermann's professional training. He worked first at the 'First Psychiatric Hospital in Vienna' as an assistant to Theodor Meynert, then led a rural Lunatic Asylum in Valduna for six years before arriving in Marienberg.[170] Meynert was a pivotal figure who trained many significant physicians of the age, including Freud. However, the focus of his work was anatomical, on nerves and brains, and he famously disagreed with Freud on the existence of male hysteria and the use of hypnosis. Hoestermann was unlikely, therefore, to have been encouraged in that direction under his tutelage. Valduna is situated close to the border with Switzerland, fifty miles from Belle Vue sanatorium where Binswanger led the promotion of neurasthenia. Binswanger led Belle Vue from 1880 to 1910,[171] and Hoestermann was at Valduna until 1883,[172] so he may have learned about the emerging new disease then. Alternatively, he may have learned of it experientially from his patients, as one of the diagnoses 'demanded' in the way Shorter described. Whatever the diagnosis, Ford's rejection of it appears total. When he says that he was 'expected' to faint but he 'didn't' he completely refutes Hoestermann's theory about his illness. This, as much as sleeplessness, may have influenced his decision to leave.

Either way, the point of Ford's account of leaving Marienberg is that he could choose to leave. It is a subtle way of indicating that, whatever his fears at the time that he was going mad, he was not. Of course, this is the general tenor of his 1931 recollections, not all of which are as grounded in fact. For example, his claim of treatment in Vienna by a therapist who might conceivably have been Freud, has

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[170] Alma Kreuter, *Deutschsprachige Neurologen und Psychiater: Ein biographisch-bibliographisches Lexikon von den Vorläufern bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts (vol.1) [German-speaking neurologists and psychiatrists: A biographical-bibliographical encyclopaedia from its precursors to the middle of the 20th century]* (Munich: K G Saur, 1996), p. 592.
[171] Radkau, *The Neurasthenic Experience in Imperial Germany*, p. 202.
[172] Kreuter, *Deutschsprachige Neurologen und Psychiater*, p. 1516.

proved to be slippery.[173] His sketches were also designed to support his claim to have been misdiagnosed with 'agoraphobia and intense depression'.[174] Instead of focusing on his heart problems, 'everyone diagnosed my trouble as agoraphobia: sixteen or seventeen of them attributed it to sexual abnormalities and treated me for them'.[175] Agoraphobia is considered to be an anxiety disorder which might, as Saunders points out, lead to heart palpitations.[176] Ford's description of it as 'a disease of the will-power' which may or may not be 'attributable to sexual disorders', however, carries echoes of the notion of depleted nerve force and links to sex which were associated with neurasthenia.[177]

What does this recontextualization of Ford's experiences offer beyond substantiating the claim that his impressionistic accounts had a foundation in fact, or explaining why he was 'cynical of mental specialists?' [178]

2.3 Writing madness

As Ford's accounts attest to a perplexing maze of diagnoses, from gout of the brow to brain fag, from circulatory problems to sexual disorders, from the physical to the psychological, it is unsurprising that he became sceptical. As *Return to Yesterday* illustrates, the 'memory of those years' stayed with him, evident in the vividly recreated scenes by which Ford denounced as inept or negligent the 'nineteen specialists, all of them famous in their nations' who had failed him.[179] Traces are also found in his fiction. Vincent Cheng, for instance, reads Ford's depiction of Sir William Wells in *A Call* as 'arrogant

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[173] See Gillian Gustar, 'The Journal of a PhD Student: Research Cul de Sacs', *Last Post – A Literary Journal from the Ford Madox Ford Society*, 1:6&7 (Spring and Autumn 2021) for a fuller discussion.
[174] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 203.
[175] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 204.
[176] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 180.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 186
[179] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 202.

and ineffective' as indicative of his views on psychiatry.[180] In the same novel, Ford's uncertainty about Ullmann can be read into his depiction of Katya, a therapist with 'a very great proficiency' but questionably linked to faith healing.[181] Just as trust in Ullmann was considered a key factor in success with patients, so Dudley Leicester's cure appears to rest on his belief that Katya was 'splendid in the treatment of difficult cases'.[182]

However, the real legacy of Ford's 1904 experiences is not in specific characters or incidents. Saunders' observation that Ford's health failed to improve because his problems were 'obscured in the neurological jargon of the day' highlights something equally significant, language.[183] In essence, the diagnoses were linguistic labels attached to Ford. As Shorter and Radkau's analyses show, diagnostic processes were not straightforward. Illness categories were as much the product of conversation and vested interests as they were medically informed decisions. Trotter identified a similar reciprocity in cases of paranoia, where physicians wanted to enhance their professional standing by confirming their theories, and paranoid patients wanted a diagnosis which recognised their sense of uniqueness, a factor central to the illness.[184] Both parties sought to reinforce identity positions. If a diagnosis creates an identity, the labels attached to someone are not neutral.

Indeed, Ian Hacking argues that classification in the human sciences, including psychology, psychiatry and 'a good deal of clinical medicine', is effectively a process of 'making people up'.[185] It is a provocative position which goes beyond the social constructionist view that language defines people to themselves and others. The effects of the scientific process can be to create new ways of

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[180] Cheng, Vincent, 'English Behaviour and Repression: A Call: The Tale of Two Passions', in Hampson and Davenport, *Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal*, p. 130, footnote 18.
[181] Ford Madox Hueffer, *A Call: The Tale of Two Passions* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1910), p. 22.
[182] Ford, *A Call*, p. 96.
[183] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 187.
[184] Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism*, p. 44.
[185] Ian Hacking, 'Making People Up', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 28 No. 16 (17 August 2006).

experiencing the self, even to create a 'kind of person previously unknown'.[186] He uses the example of multiple personality disorder, a term originating in the 1980s, to propose that after this point people had a way of experiencing themselves and interacting with others which had not previously existed. Its subsequent renaming as Dissociative Identity Disorder reflected its evolution to a 'transient mental illness', one which exists 'only in a certain time and place'. These are, he says, 'easy cases for making people up' because cynics take this transience as an indication that they are not real. There are parallels here with Ford's claim that his illness had been 'purely imaginary' at a point in time when neurasthenia had all but disappeared.

The link between Hacking's paper and Ford, however, lies beyond its ability to explain his experiences. One implication of Hacking's argument is that Ford's search for a nerve cure gave him first-hand experience of how people become positioned in particular ways, and problematised in language. Anurag Jain's observation that Ford's *Between St. Dennis and St. George* (1915) demonstrated an 'unflinching belief in the power of language to bring change' in people's personal and public lives is germane to this argument.[187] It supports an argument that Ford would understand how simply attaching a label might change someone's sense of identity. Hacking creates a bridge to the literary when he observes that the notion of 'making up people', whilst a challenge to the pedantry of scientific and philosophical language, is an 'idea familiar to novelists'. This, of course, is what novelists do. They imagine or 'make up' worlds, situations, places and people to tell a story. In that sense, Ford is 'making up' madness. The way he did this, and to what effect, is steeped in a sensitivity to how people are made up of the words used by and about them.

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Anurag Jain, 'When Propaganda is your argument: Ford and First World War Propaganda', in Dennis Brown and Jenny Plastow (Eds.), *Ford Madox Ford and Englishness*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 5 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), p. 171.

3 THE EARLY NOVELS

3.1 Introduction and Context

This chapter moves from Ford's personal experiences of being problematised in language to examining how he makes people 'mad' in his fiction. It is the first of five chapters offering close readings of exemplar novels in particular phases of Ford's inquiry into madness. The novels in this chapter were written before his 1904 breakdown and illustrate that his preoccupation with madness predated it. They are notable for their engagement with the contemporary issue of heredity and a possible predisposition to madness.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Ford's engagement with psychiatric concepts does not signal expertise. Conrad describes him as 'a man who liked to talk with all sorts of people', who would gather 'illuminating facts at second or third hand, from a crossing-sweeper, from a retired police officer, from some vague man in his club, or even perhaps from a Minister of State met at some public or private reception'.[1] This reinforces the argument that he represents ideas that would have been in common circulation and recognisable to contemporary readers. It is unsurprising that he would explore the issue of inherited insanity, which had been a pervasive explanation since Morel's influential *Treatise* on degeneracy,[2] and was a topic of active debate between medical researchers and writers. Shorter dates it earlier, to William Battie's 1758 *Treatise on Madness*, which refers to 'whole families derived from lunatic ancestors',[3] and claims that it dominated the thinking of the generation which founded psychiatry. Family doctors empirically observed that 'major psychiatric

[1] Joseph Conrad, Author's Note *to The Secret Agent – A Simple Tale* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1907), p. 9.
[2] See Chapter 1 discussion.
[3] Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry,* p. 29.

illnesses tend[ed] to cluster in certain family trees'.[4] Inherited madness became a form of received wisdom, reinforced by those who sought to explain the mechanism underpinning it. As discussed previously, Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics were published around the same time as Morel. Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton developed mathematical models to examine the relative contributions of both parents, and their predecessors, to the inherited makeup of an individual. His 1869 book *Hereditary Genius* investigated 'in what degree natural ability was hereditarily transmitted'.[5] Galton, less concerned with genius in a 'technical sense' and more with 'inborn' natural abilities,[6] argued that Lombroso's position created the kind of thinking in which someone could 'not be a genius because he has never been mad' or not had 'a single lunatic in his family'.[7] Nevertheless, he accepted that there was a 'painfully close relationship between' genius and insanity.[8] His investigations revealed that insanity frequently appeared in the 'near relatives of exceptionally able men'.[9] He reasoned that those with particularly active minds must have brains 'more excitable and peculiar than is consistent with soundness'.[10] Such men might become 'crazy at times' or 'breakdown altogether'.[11] Given Galton's concern to classify abilities and attach them to specific groups of exceptional people, the inclusion of a chapter on literary men is noteworthy. He published only four years before Nordau's positioning of 'authors and artists' as degenerate.[12]

The connection of heredity, art and madness was given sharper focus by Ford's personal history. He had grown up under the shadow of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's mental illness and suicide. In his essay on

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[4] Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry,* p. 28
[5] Francis Galton, Prefatory Chapter in *Hereditary Genius – An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan and Co.,1892), p. x.
[6] Galton, *Hereditary Genius,* p. viii.
[7] Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, p. ix.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, x.
[12] Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. vii.

Rossetti, Ford records how the use of chloral for insomnia resulted in a 'morbid cast of thought',[13] 'dismal hallucinations' and decline into paranoia.[14] His sister Juliet's memoirs of living in her grandfather's home recall their encounters with a Mrs Catlin who 'liked to talk about her husband in the lunatic asylum'.[15] Ford himself remembers Ford Madox Brown exhorting his grandchildren to be geniuses and wondering whether Oliver was 'a genius or mad'.[16] Brown would, Ford says, have been delighted to have a 'mad genius' in his family.[17] Ford's analysis of his own heredity led him to conclude that he 'got … from [his] mother – who got … from her father' a tendency to run up against 'oddnesses'.[18] Ford appears to have internalised the dominant narrative that madness was located within a person and their family and it doubtless contributed to his 'sporadic fear of going insane'.[19] This fear was shared by Conrad with whom Ford's relationship was particularly intense between 1899 and 1904, a period characterised by 'animated discussions … long into the night', and 'frenetic bursts of writing and reading-out' to each other.[20] Moser mentions their 'obsessive concern' for 'each other's physical and mental states' and Saunders identifies an unhealthy co-dependency between them. Ford's familiarity with Conrad's fears and depressions effectively provided him with a living example of how 'a life inventing fictions can be a life on the edge of insanity'.[21]

This combination of a dominant societal narrative about madness and a personal context which emphasised its link with Ford's chosen profession comes together in his early novels, which depict madness as located in a person and question the extent to which this is deterministic. The novels which best illustrate Ford's engagement with these issues are *The Shifting of the Fire* and *The*

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[13] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Rossetti – A Critical Essay on his Art* (London: Duckworth and Co., 1914), p. 71.
[14] Ford, *Rossetti*, p. 74.
[15] Juliet Soskice, *Chapters from childhood: reminiscences of an artist's granddaughter* (London: Selwyn and Blout Ltd., 1921), p. 65.
[16] Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2007), pp. 251-52.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 17.
[19] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. ix.
[20] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 117.
[21] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 105.

Benefactor. Ford completed his first draft of *The Benefactor* in 1902,[22] and revised it continually up to his 1904 breakdown.[23] It is one of the earliest novels he wrote under his own name. The other two published in this period, *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1903), both collaborations with Conrad, in line with the methodology of the thesis, are excluded.[24] *The Shifting of the Fire* engages with questions of character, family resemblance and predispositions to instability, but *The Benefactor* more clearly enquires into hereditary insanity, so is the exemplar in this chapter. First, a brief analysis of *The Shifting of the Fire* demonstrates that the ideas were not limited to *The Benefactor* and identifies aspects of Ford's treatment of his theme which recur throughout his oeuvre.

3.2 *The Shifting of the Fire*

The Shifting of the Fire is an uneven work which has attracted little critical attention beyond Ford's biographies, where it is generally viewed as promising but implausible. Ford denounced it to Olive Garnett as 'one of the most vulgar books' he had ever read and yet, he said, 'it is a bit of life'.[25] That 'bit of life' centres on thwarted passions, misguided altruism and destructive jealousy and ends, as many Ford novels do, with an ambiguous resolution in which any notion of a happy ever after is at best subdued. Leaving aside the implausible plot involving poison given as a love token, sham marriages, pivotal changes of financial fortunes at least twice, and convenient deaths, it illustrates how people are judged or made mentally unstable. Both Andrzej Gasiorek [26] and Rob Hawkes [27] have highlighted how Ford's narratives discursively define characters and identities. As Hacking's argument illustrated, people are made mad through discourse and societal, fictional and medical

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[22] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 153.
[23] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 200.
[24] See Section 1.6.
[25] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 27.
[26] Andrjez Gasiorek, 'Ford Madox Ford's Modernism and The Question of Tradition'.
[27] Rob Hawkes, *Ford Madox Ford and the Misfit Moderns – Edwardian Fiction and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

discourses can be viewed as intersectional. It is pertinent therefore, that Janet Oppenheim found that medical practitioners in Ford's time frequently used 'obscure terminology' which, despite sounding vague, carried connotations understood by patients.[28] This suggests language as a kind of code between doctors and patients. *The Shifting of the Fire* relies on a similar kind of code, using ideas in general circulation as if they are received wisdom, to show how people are judged to be unstable. If, as Oppenheim suggests, the words in which people are described can carry coded meaning, it is important to consider how Ford's characters are made mad through the language used about them.

It is instructive to consider how Ford constructs his heroine and hero. The heroine, Edith Ryland, faced with her fiancé's bankruptcy, marries Mr Kasker Ryves, an old man of fortune, intending to provide companionship until his death and then to marry her true love, Clement Hollebone. That she sees little reprehensible in this is explained by regular reminders that she is 'very young' [29] and likely to experience a 'rough awakening … sooner or later'.[30] At the same time, she has 'much character or determination in her face', something unusual in 'fair girls like her'.[31] This is a less casual reference than it seems, because facial attributes had been used to diagnose forms of insanity. Bucknill and Tuke's widely read *A Manual of Psychological Medicine* (1858) contained photographic plates illustrating types of insanity.[32] Though Darwin's collaboration with James Crichton Browne [33] led him to conclude that photographs of asylum inmates revealed little substantive information, Crichton Browne refused to accept it.[34] The view that madness was, in many cases, 'written clearly' on the

[28] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 7.
[29] Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Shifting of the Fire* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1892), p. 33. All other references list this as Ford not Hueffer.
[30] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 34.
[31] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 16.
[32] Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, p. 13.
[33] Crichton Browne (1840-1938) was a prominent psychiatrist, neurologist and eugenicist.
[34] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves,* p. 65.

'physiognomy' persisted into the 1900s.[35] When Ford's narrator remarks that 'If a comparative physiognomist had thought it worthwhile' to study Edith's face, 'he would have noticed deficiencies in her jaw and eyes', it is a not just a character observation.[36] Added to the description of her as 'somewhat hysterical in character, given to obeying her moods and impulses unduly',[37] it hints at mental instability. The term hysterical was frequently used to denote a female nervous condition,[38] and hysteria was among several nervous disorders seen as strongly hereditary in the early twentieth century.[39] Thus, Edith's mother crying 'hysterically' would evoke such connotations for contemporary readers.[40] Mark Micale observes that a key strand of nineteenth-century thinking linked a 'hysterical temperament' to 'highly negative traits' including impulsiveness, emotionality and deceitfulness, all characteristics ascribed to Edith.[41] The idea that traits themselves were heritable had surfaced as early as 1860,[42] so would have been part of received wisdom. Ford could have left the connection implied. Instead, he makes it explicit that Edith had 'inherited from her father' the characteristic of brooking 'no hesitation in her mind' once she had arrived at a resolution of any subject.[43]

Edith's traits are given as a reason for her fate. Her romantic ideals about marriage to Kasker Ryves arise not only from inexperience but from the inherited trait of acting impulsively. The expected rude awakening comes when Kasker Ryves, having discovered that she loves another, becomes obsessed with 'the mental torture of his wife'[44] until it is 'nothing less than a mania'.[45] Scull points to a long

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[35] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 243 cites Morel's 1857 *Treatise* as influential in this.
[36] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 157.
[37] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 188.
[38] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987), p. 18.
[39] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 89.
[40] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 26.
[41] Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria – Disease and Its Implications* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 24.
[42] <https://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/each-organism-s-traits-are-inherited-from-6524917/> [accessed 16 August 2021].
[43] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire,* p. 295.
[44] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 172.
[45] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 139.

literary tradition of depicting maniacs as the 'embodiment of fury', so Ford's reference to mania emphasises the depth of anger but also alludes to the kind of single-minded focus which could unhinge people.[46] This link between destructive passion and madness recurs throughout Ford's novels, reaching its zenith in *Parade's End*. Here it emphasises Edith's vulnerability because, against her husband's unreasoning rage, true to her nature, she clings to her convictions. Amongst these is the belief that a lady should 'bear tortures without expressing on her face any indication of emotion',[47] which, naturally, Kasker Ryves uses against her. Convinced that she deserves to be miserable, Edith nurses him until his death, an event hastened 'by his own mad hatred' of her.[48] Her sustained self-negation takes its toll and Edith succumbs to a 'brain fever',[49] an 'affliction well known to Victorians',[50] and as late as 1888 still associated with nervous illness.[51] Where Kasker Ryves' mania had contributed to his death, so Edith's determination to 'conceal her feelings', as he forecast, wore her out.[52] Her actions appear as unreasoned as his and raise the question of whether Edith's inherited resolution and predisposition to hysteria made her breakdown inevitable.

One way Ford underlines this possibility is by constructing Edith's original suitor, Hollebone, as a contrast. Though 'apt to make mountains out of molehills', he is 'as a rule easy-going and contented with his lot in life'.[53] So, when his fortunes change and disturb 'his entire equilibrium … spoiling his digestion' he is said to have 'lapsed into a hypochondriacal phase'.[54] Hypochondria and its 'changes

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[46] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation*, p. 113.
[47] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 190.
[48] Scull, *Madness in Civilisation,* p. 276.
[49] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire,* p. 290.
[50] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 118. Now recognised as meningitis.
[51] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 244.
[52] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 184.
[53] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 61.
[54] Ibid.

in mood and behaviour' was frequently 'confounded' with nervous problems, themselves assumed to have a physiological basis.[55] Ford's explanation of Hollebone's state includes both elements:

> The impairing of his digestive organs caused blue vapours to rise therefrom, and roll around in his brain, taking the form of projects and ideas, more or less tragic, but always determinative, comprising suicide, starvation, setting up as a travelling tinker, an usher in a school, or selling himself to Her Most Gracious Majesty, to be shot at or die of cholera, at fifteen-pence a day – with deductions.
>
> The most attractive of his various ideas was the one which prompted him to make away with himself. There is a sort of jingo glamour about suicide that captivates shallow thinkers or people that brood too much. It was, however, mainly indigestion with Hollebone.[56]

This playful passage offering diet as a primary cause of Hollebone's gloom is a good example of Ford's use of contemporary ideas as if they were fact. Medical advice contained in family health books frequently attributed low spirits to digestive or circulatory problems,[57] and the controversial Brunonian system of medicine, which used diet to manage nervous problems, was in general circulation.[58] The effect of the passage is to minimise psychological distress. Any suggestion that Hollebone's solutions reflect a disturbed mind is consistently undercut by phrases such as 'more or less tragic'. Even suicide has a 'jingo glamour', and though linked with people who 'brood too much', Hollebone merely has indigestion. Implicitly, because it results from a manageable physical condition, his despair is not a permanent state.

When Hollebone later doubts Edith's love and experiences 'desolation and utter hopelessness', these too are feelings of 'that day': a phrase repeated more than once.[59] The suggestion is of transient feelings which therefore represent no real threat to him. Even at his lowest, when he envisages

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[55] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 5.
[56] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire,* p. 62.
[57] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 37
[58] See Ford's discussion of John Brown's work and death in Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work* (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans Green and Company, 1896), p. 7.
[59] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire,* p. 131.

deliberately falling from his horse and 'certain death', remembering that it is Edith's birthday persuades him that it would be 'unfair' to die then.[60] It is an exercise both of reason and will. It positions Hollebone as essentially sound because the notion of will was core not only to contemporary ideals of masculinity but to the management of health. Male nervous patients were frequently exhorted to exercise their will as part of the treatment regimen.[61] Despite this admirable control, when his fortunes are revived but he learns that Edith is already married, Hollebone reacts in the only way his 'English nature' permits, by 'blaspheming, abusing everything and everybody, animate and inanimate'.[62] Even he, it seems, is limited in his behavioural range by his English ancestry. The implication, however, is that active anger is manly in a way that melancholic despondency is not. Yet it leaves him asserting that he no longer cares for Edith and feeling 'numb, without a bit of life'.[63]

The difference in their depiction is that Edith's responses appear bound by her character, but Hollebone's feelings are presented as fleeting and amenable to personal control. Thus, Hollebone's indifference does not sustain, and they end the novel together. The heroine, whose stability is in question, has been saved by the hero whose mental resilience is confirmed. It is a gendered presentation reflective of the society it depicts. Yet, notice that both repress their emotions as a form of survival mechanism. They do survive but not undamaged. By the novel's end they have each considered suicide and Hollebone has believed Edith capable of murdering Kasker Ryves with the poison he himself had provided. Feeling responsible, he marries her before learning that he had been wrong. When his belief comes to light, Edith's choice to view it only as an indication of the depth of his love is the kind of implausibility noted by critics. It is hard to imagine that they could live happily

[60] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire,* p. 246.
[61] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 150.
[62] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 140.
[63] Ford, *The Shifting of the Fire*, p. 142.

without recriminations, or the question of Edith's inherited traits re-emerging. Ford's first inquiry into an inherited tendency to madness, therefore, creates uncertainty about its consequences. It raises questions about whether inherited qualities or predispositions to madness necessarily blight relationships and lives. They are questions carried forward into *The Benefactor.*

3.3 *The Benefactor*

The Benefactor is an important benchmark in Ford's treatment of madness. It illuminates his treatment of hereditary madness and establishes his engagement with the power of words to make people mad. It also touches on a theme which becomes increasingly explicit in Ford's Edwardian novels, the fine line between art and life, illusion or delusion.

3.3.1 The Story

The intended theme of the novel is suggested by the title of a draft that Ford sent to Edward Garnett: *The Altruist*.[64] His working title, recorded in Olive Garnett's diaries, was *George*,[65] identifying as the altruist the central character, George Moffat. George, the eldest son of a portrait painter, is a charismatic forty-five-year-old and a renowned poet. His wife, in despair at his unstinting generosity to aspiring writers, has left him. He has given his estranged wife much of the fortune inherited from his father, and his 'few remaining thousands' are said to 'pass steadily into the hands of George's innumerable hangers-on',[66] men who 'invariably dropped' him once they achieved success.[67] Saunders compares George to an artist-patron in the image of Ford Madox Brown who 'beggars

[64] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 531.
[65] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 59
[66] Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Benefactor* (London: Brown, Langham and Co., 1905), p. 4. All other references are attributed to Ford not Hueffer.
[67] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 5.

himself rather than refuse assistance to others, emotionally and artistically as well as financially'.[68] He is among Ford's earliest author figures, notable for never actually writing, and for privileging the role of patron.

Yet his depiction is not straightforward for, as Saunders observes, the novel explores the darker side of altruism, 'inextricable from self-deception and destruction', and the ruin of lives in the process.[69] This encourages focus on the damage done by George, whose sister claims has 'meddlesomeness … at the bottom of his character'.[70] The most obviously damaged person by the end of the novel is the Reverend Mr. Brede. Brede is a bereaved, depressed clergyman who believes that he killed his wife, that he is going mad, and that his madness is heritable. George believes that he can 'by sheer force of words, bring Mr. Brede back to reason',[71] and return him to his former self, a 'Greek scholar of repute' and 'clergyman noted for his public spirit and diligence'.[72]

What each man believes is critical to how the novel unfolds, but as important is the love interest with which Ford complicates their relationship. It becomes increasingly unclear whether George's commitment to Brede constitutes, as one of his protégées suggests, 'carrying on an intrigue with Miss Brede, under pretence of helping her father'.[73] It is a suggestion which comes to haunt George. The relationship between Clara Brede and George follows the classic romance narrative, shifting from antipathy or indifference to recognising their love for each other, whilst facing successive obstacles, the primary one of which is Brede. As in *The Shifting of the Fire*, George loses his fortune to create another obstacle, and then regains one. However, this does not lead to even the muted

[68] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 200.
[69] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 201.
[70] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 9.
[71] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 72.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 309.

happy ending of Ford's first novel. By the end of *The Benefactor*, Brede has been consigned to an asylum, George has renounced Clara, and she is left abandoned.

This ending raises several questions. Was Brede's fate 'retribution for the ignoble events' which gave George Clara's love and 'forced upon him the money' from *Wilderspin*, a novel he considered 'Bad Art'?[74] Or were his rescue efforts hopeless in the face of Brede's predisposition to madness? Is his decision to relinquish Clara an honourable act or one driven by fear of inherited madness? Insights into these issues are gained by examining Ford's treatment of heritable madness and the way he shows language to be central to making people mad.

3.3.2 Heritable madness

The novel's four-part structure makes clear George's centrality to the story: *The Jeweller and his Stones*, *The Gold Circle*, *The Blackening Pearls* and *The Bankrupt Jeweller*. People are 'his' to be assembled and improved, made more valuable, like polished gems. The structure hints at hubris and the self-interested edge of his altruism. Part one assembles Ford's cast, with George at the centre, including the Brede family whom he plans to 'give a lift to' because they have 'had a bad time'.[75] For George's altruism to shine, Brede must be a worthy and serious burden. Thus, he has first to be made mad.

The introduction, and first impression, of Brede is through George's description to his brother:

> "The father," George continued — ("The name's Brede, a good name about here") — "got it into his head that he had killed the mother by his impatience. An effect of grief, you know. A magnificent figure of a man, heavy, ponderous, like a sort of Titan. It's an awful spectacle, one of his fits of depression. The young girl's in love with Thwaite, your editor of the *Salon*." [76]

[74] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 174.
[75] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 24.
[76] Ibid.

In phrases such as 'got it into his head' and 'effect of grief' George conveys that he believes little is substantively or permanently wrong with Brede. The young girl is Dora, Clara's sister, who is 'not in love with Thwaite personally', George asserts, but 'as the author of the "Love Poems of Sidonia"'.[77] Nevertheless he intends to bring them together. The quick switch of topic to Dora reinforces the sense that George regards Brede's depression as a temporary problem unworthy of deep attention. His comments on helping the family and encouraging a romance position him as an authoritative, concerned patron, the Benefactor of the title. Yet George's distinction, that Dora loves not Thwaite the person but his authorial persona, obliquely addresses Ford's deeper theme, the fine line between art and life. Thus, in one short piece of dialogue Ford shows how language positions Brede, how George assumes the role of diagnostician and how illusion might play a role in relationships.

George's opinion about Brede's state of mind is challenged by more sustained contact and Brede's mention of suicide.[78] George begins to fear 'a case of aggravated neurotics' which may overstep 'the bounds of sanity'.[79] The word 'neurotics' signals how Brede should be viewed. The theory that some people had a 'nervous or neurotic' temperament was prevalent in contemporary medical circles.[80] It was a notion 'constructed' from 'ideas of sensibility to external stimuli, excitability, irritability and exhaustibility' signifying incompetence in dealing with the difficulties of life, and predisposing people to 'mental derangement'.[81] Oppenheim's use of 'constructed' reinforces the argument that diagnoses were as much culturally as medically defined. It matters, therefore, that Brede is described as someone who, before his breakdown, went about 'his work with a fierce energy' and an 'impressive harshness of temper'.[82] He worked with 'angry thoroughness' [83] throughout his wife's

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 88.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 73.

illness, 'strenuously' giving lectures in his 'loud voice'.[84] He easily becomes 'intensely angry' [85] and even reads with 'frenzied indignation'.[86] His depiction fits that of someone with a neurotic temperament, disposed to breakdown.

Brede's medical adviser is described variously as a 'Harley Street specialist',[87] a 'brain specialist',[88] or simply 'the specialist'.[89] A Harley Street address is contemporary code for a nerve specialist because they clustered around the Regents Park area of London. His diagnosis, 'a case of complete nervous breakdown' caused by Brede 'doing the work of several men',[90] appears to reflect the prevailing medical explanation for nervous problems at the time: that 'nerve force, power or energy' [91] was drained by 'heedless over exertion, whether mental or physical' leading to 'exhausted nervous systems'.[92] Under this schema, manic symptoms like those of Kasker Ryves were attributed to 'excessive accumulation and discharge of nervous energy', whereas depressive symptoms and nervous breakdown signified a depletion of nerve force.[93] Those with a nervous temperament were deemed 'highly responsive to changing levels of nerve force in the body'.[94] The specialist having 'forbidden' Brede from 'working anymore' suggests this underlying diagnosis.[95] Moreover, it confirms Brede as temperamentally vulnerable and culpable in his breakdown. It is hardly a promising situation, especially when personal culpability could be complicated by issues of heredity.

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[84] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 83.
[85] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 75
[86] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 265.
[87] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 86.
[88] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 73.
[89] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 128.
[90] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 73.
[91] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 79.
[92] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 81.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 88.
[95] Ibid.

The concept of a nervous temperament came to depend 'heavily on heredity',[96] an idea important in the novel and directly associated with the Brede family. The homonym of 'Brede' and 'breed' underlines this. George 'endlessly' argues with Brede over whether his shouting at the stable boy had accelerated the death of his wife, a woman who had 'been dying of a nervous complaint'.[97] As both parents exhibit nervous tendencies, it raises the question of transmissibility, which Brede certainly believes to be likely. When George's machinations result in Thwaite proposing marriage to Dora, Brede opposes it on the grounds that he is 'not the sort of man whose children ought to marry'.[98] Clara explains to George that 'because we are his children, he thinks we shall inherit madness'.[99] Clara's description of them as a 'very selfish family, hopelessly self-centred', something symptomatic of their 'neurotic side', shows that she subscribes at least to the notion of familial traits.[100] However, her attempts to shield Dora, believing that neuroticism was 'in the family' and 'contact would undoubtedly bring it out', complicates the position.[101] The argument that neuroticism might be avoided reflects another strand of contemporary thinking. As late as 1907 it was believed that inheriting a neurotic temperament was not necessarily problematic, if it were not indulged.[102] Only when ignored would it lead to 'some form of nervous or mental affliction, ending, perhaps in madness'.[103] Already exposed to her father's neuroticism, Clara fears that 'talking to herself' is 'a sign that her mind was yielding to a strain',[104] and chides herself for 'morbid self-analyses'.[105] Notice that in all three cases the individual is presumed able to behave in ways that circumvent madness. Brede can avoid putting his nerves under pressure by overwork, Dora can distance herself, and Clara can

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[96] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 89.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 98.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 61.
[101] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 59.
[102] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 90.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 88.
[105] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 90.

limit unhealthy introspection. This is not an inaccurate representation because it was only when heredity came to underpin theories of degeneration that families were assumed to be caught in an 'inexorable spiral' downwards, physically and mentally.[106] Ford's position on degeneration was ambivalent. Sara Haslam identifies his exploration of degeneration theory in *The Spirit of the People* and his finding 'some evidence to support it' in declining birth rates and population movement.[107] However, Ford later writes that even if the 'general opinion' was that displacements from rural to urban areas make for 'what is called degeneration', it 'behoves every thinking man to question the general opinion'.[108]

Ford's representations of Brede's predisposition to madness in *The Benefactor* reflect this stance of uncertainty, reinforced by the differences of opinion between George and Brede which drive much of the novel.

3.3.3 The power of words to make people mad

The two men, each convinced of his point of view, navigate the question of whether Brede's madness is real or imagined, inevitable or avoidable. George's initial confidence in being able to restore Brede to the man he had been before his bereavement wavers in the face of his volatility. He describes engaging with him when he 'was listlessly hopeless; when he was savagely contemptuous; when, as if hunted by Até, he raved with his immense arms waving over his head'.[109] The reference to Até, the Greek goddess of mischief and delusion who led both men and gods to rash actions and suffering, hints at the possibility of this fate for Brede. Yet he is only 'hunted', not caught, signalling

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[106] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 272.
[107] Sara Haslam, 'England and Englishness: Ford's First Trilogy', in Brown and Plastow, *Ford Madox Ford and Englishness*, p. 59.
[108] Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Spirit of the People* (London: Alston Rivers Limited, 1907), p. 60. All other references are attributed to Ford not Hueffer.
[109] Ford, *The Benefactor,* p. 58.

that George continues to believe him rescuable. Brede, however, believes that culpability in his wife's death makes him 'a murderer' marked with the 'brand of Cain'.[110] This is a claim to be cast out from God's love, marked so that no-one will kill him for fear of being 'punished sevenfold'.[111] In an interesting twist, Ford's mythical and biblical allusions come together, for in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Até is presented as an avenger of evil deeds, someone who 'inflicts just punishments upon the offenders and their posterity'.[112] The allusion to Até raises the question of which interpretation applies to Brede. Will he commit rash acts leading to insanity? Or is belief in his own guilt and in divine punishment enough to direct his fate? Brede's conviction is expressed in his fear that he will 'murder someone else', that he is 'possessed by a devil',[113] and is 'going mad'.[114] A man generally defined by his loud voice only whispers that he is going mad, suggesting his difficulty in voicing it. Indeed, Brede subsequently admits that he had not meant to say it. Putting things into words, it seems, is dangerous. It makes them real.

George also understands this danger, offering, against Brede's conviction, constant denials of his madness, at least in the first half of the novel. He 'hastily' counters Brede's claim to be going mad with the words 'Nothing of the sort',[115] and when he claims to be possessed by devils 'George affected a laugh', saying 'You don't believe anything of the sort'.[116] When Brede claims to 'hear voices', George 'cheerfully' declares it to be 'a purely physical delusion'.[117] Such instant denials might be read as indicating George's own fear of madness. George's approach to Brede is curiously redolent of contemporary physicians with a 'cheerful demeanour, unfailing optimism, and persuasive

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[110] Ibid.
[111] Genesis, 4.15 in *Douai Rheims Catholic Bible* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne Limited, 1914), p. 7. This version chosen to reflect Ford's faith.
[112] <https://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Ate.html> [accessed 8 September 2020]. Specifically, in The Choephori by Aeschylus.
[113] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 124.
[114] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 123.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

firmness' towards patients with a nervous breakdown, aimed at 'reviving the patient's inoperative will'.[118] It is a stance reflected in George's determination that Brede 'mustn't be allowed to brood' and his decision, counter to the specialist's advice, to 'lure him back to his real work, as a clergyman'.[119] This strategy sees George putting aside his own work to help Brede recapture his, as if patronage, rather than the writing for which he is renowned, is his real work. Yet he approaches this work as an artist might, believing that he can invoke the magic power of words against Mr. Brede's neurotics to bring him back to reason. Thus, things are made real or illusory in words, a point reinforced by the effect of George's bland reassurances. Whereas the specialist's view that his brain 'couldn't stand any kind of strain' had 'frightened [him] out of [his] wits',[120] George's comforting denials leave Brede feeling that he cannot 'do without' him, for 'George was the only person that understood his case'.[121]

Consequently, Brede increasingly allows George's opinions and words to shape his choices. This too is suggested to be a family trait. George observes in both Brede and Clara 'the same passionate steadfastness', 'a certain imperviousness to outside influence', and 'a persuasibility — a docility when they thought the persuader was to be trusted in'.[122] It feels inevitable that George, with his 'glamour and all',[123] who 'overwhelmed anyone who was new to him',[124] should become this trusted person. However, the word 'glamour' carries a warning. Although colloquially it suggests someone attractive to others, its archaic meaning associates it with enchantment.[125] George's charisma effectively places Brede and Clara in thrall to him, and they suspend their own judgement, much like

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[118] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 140.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 75.
[122] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 293.
[123] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 2.
[124] Ford, *The Benefactor*, pp. 3-4.
[125] *OED online*, Oxford University Press, September 2020 <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 16 November 2020].

readers in thrall to the fiction created by a writer. The word hints at the dangers of losing touch with one's own reality. This is significant in the way the novel ends, discussed later.

Attention to how George's judgement overrides Brede's is illuminating. George's response to Brede's resistance to Dora and Thwaite's marriage on the grounds of heritable madness shows the power of language, spoken or withheld. George first tries words, arguing that even if Brede's actions had caused his wife's death and his own breakdown 'that's not the kind of sin that's visited on the children'.[126] When Brede says that 'isn't it' but that he doesn't 'want to talk about' his deeper reasons, George insists he won't talk about 'anything else', implying 'distinctly enough, that if Mr. Brede would not listen to reason, he, George, would have no more to say to him'.[127] Failing to control the content of their conversation, George then 'resolutely refused' to see him for 'a week' after which Brede capitulated.[128] Where his words had failed to persuade, George's withdrawal and silence prove effective.

George's words sometimes do damage rather than good. When George 'carefully' says 'I think you want work … Something you can get engrossed in',[129] Brede understands that George intends him to 'again take up his priestly functions'.[130] Brede responds that he is 'not fit' to do so 'whilst devils are whispering to him "Had Nimshi peace who slew his master?"' [131] George neither denies nor confirms his intention. Privately he believes that 'if' Brede were able to achieve this, and it might take some

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[126] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 97.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 99.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 125.
[131] Ibid. The Douay Rheims catholic bible referenced earlier locates this quote in Kings 9.31 but uses the name Zambri not Nimshi. Other bibles use Zimri: <https://biblehub.com/2_kings/9-31.htm> [accessed 8 October 2020]. The words are usually attributed to Jezebel addressing Jehu, from whom Nimshi was descended. This is either Ford's error, or Mr. Brede's own error. Somewhat ironically, the Hebrew word Nimshi literally translates to mean '*one who rescues those in danger*' <https://www.definitions.net/definition/nimshi> [accessed 8 October 2020], but can mean ' a fool' <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nimshi> [accessed 8 October 2020]. Tempting as it is to read these as a comment on George, it is a stretch to believe that Ford planted this word deliberately with either significance.

years, 'he would be cured for good'.[132] The 'if' signals doubt, but George persists, advising Brede to engage with his parishioners, if not as a minister of God then at a personal level, because dealing with their concerns would be 'enough to take a man out of himself'.[133] He adds that Brede's 'organising power' is 'desperately wanted' in the village.[134] This artless but disingenuous suggestion prompts Brede to ask if he thinks it would 'do [him] good to mix in these things again?' George 'absently' replies, 'It will save your reason'.[135] When in the next chapter, Brede 'thunder[s]' at George 'I'm going mad. You've said the word',[136] it is clear that the phrase 'save your reason' has confirmed Brede in his madness. If it is negligent of George, the artist who believes in the power of words, to use them inattentively, the same is true of him in the role of patron. His attention having shifted from Brede to Clara, the couple begin to see Brede as an intrusion into their relationship, rather than the focus of it. George increasingly pays less attention to words, and the weight Brede places on them. When Brede declares that he 'ought' to get back to his 'real work' and 'to preach' because George had 'said so',[137] and that he would 'try to be a man' and 'live up to [his] standard', George only wonders 'vaguely which of his many maxims Mr. Brede had got hold of now'.[138] He is more concerned with assessing Clara's interest in her cousin Carew, his rival for her affections.

As a result, Brede's private belief that 'it would kill him' to 'fight Satan, high in the air, from the shining elevation of the pulpit', but it would 'prove to these fellows – George and the rest – that he wasn't shamming', and that there 'had always been that horrible 'something' the matter with him', remains unsurfaced,[139] inaccessible to someone who has tired of listening. When Brede later

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[132] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 125.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 269.
[138] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 270.
[139] Ibid.

announces that he had 'taken a resolution' to accept the Vicar's invitation to give a sermon, George has a 'warm feeling of satisfaction'.[140] He misses cues like the 'heavy firmness' with which Brede spoke, his animated gestures and his comment that he 'hadn't dared to face the idea of officiating again'.[141] It was here that George could have intervened, but instead, he notes only that it was his words to Brede that had decided him:

> What George had said on Monday was one of George's innumerable platitudes — that a man who can't do his work may just as well die. Of all the time and the innumerable words that he had expended in the service of Mr. Brede, this copybook phrase, dropped by chance to fill in a chain of ideas, had proved his salvation!
>
> It seemed to amount to salvation.
>
> "Yes, by Jove," he said, "if I can't do my work, I may as well die. I'm going to do it. I've been malingering and shirking too long."
>
> He straightened his gigantic back, and looked with a certain tenderness at George.
>
> "You're a good fellow, Moffat," he said. "I don't know why you do it.[142]

George 'wondered why he had done it too'.[143] By his own account, his words were 'platitudes', used so frequently that they ceased to have meaning. That his words hit their mark is enough for him. He does not qualify Brede's statement that he has been 'malingering and shirking', confirming to him again that he is problematic. George is too keen to believe his words have been Brede's salvation, because this success stands against the recent discovery of his own financial ruin. He determines, once Brede is 'safely through' his sermon, to leave on the last train,[144] but a 'certain look' in Brede's eye and 'certain similarity of … tone' remind him 'overwhelmingly of Clara'.[145] This forces him to

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[140] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 291.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 292.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 292.
[145] Ibid.

acknowledge that he is seeking excuses to delay his parting. The observation of their similarities is also a reminder that Clara may have inherited Brede's predisposition to madness, so the outcome of the sermon is pivotal.

The sermon is the device by which Ford appears to resolve the war of convictions between the two men. Any satisfaction George felt at having 'carried through a difficult' but not 'thankless' service disappears on discovering that 'Mr. Brede had gone mad in the middle of his sermon'.[146] His belief that Brede's return to work would be his salvation has proved ill-founded. Brede's determination to prove that there was something fundamentally wrong with him perhaps played a part, as did his belief that he deserved punishment. Yet, the conclusion that his madness was inevitable, either because he was predisposed or his delusions tipped him into it, is complicated by his actions being a response to George's exhortations and negligence. It suggests at least some culpability on George's part.

The specialist, whose advice had gone unheeded, was unequivocal. 'That man says that we did it,' Clara tells George, 'it was the preaching … he thought it was fighting with devils up there'.[147] She also relays that Brede will 'never speak consciously again',[148] and 'would never hear a word again'.[149] The aftermath of this damning verdict is laid bare:

> George said: "Yes, it was that." He paused. "You couldn't reproach me more bitterly than I."
>
> She put her hand on his arm imperiously to stop him.
>
> "No, I did it," her voice came. "I did it. I knew more than you."
>
> "You couldn't have stopped my meddling," George said, bitterly.

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[146] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 331.
[147] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 334.
[148] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 335.
[149] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 334.

> Her eyes dilated, and she spoke breathlessly: "I ought to have sent you away. I had been warned. I had seen him before." She began to speak in a brooding monotone: "Yes, I had been warned. I ought to have known if anyone did, how bad -"
>
> George said, harshly: "Don't say that. Don't think that. I forbid it."
>
> She had used the very words, the very tone, that her father had used so often, and George was stung with a terrible dread: the family likeness, the terrible overscrupulousness was there again. He paused, overcome with his sharp fear; he had never been so moved.[150]

Where George had found Brede's opposition to Dora's marriage a 'conscientiousness carried to a logical absurdity' [151], he had always considered Clara's 'Puritanic conscientiousness' comic and quaint.[152] Now this 'overscrupulousness' is 'terrible' and a source of dread. It signals an important shift in perception. In their tussle for accountability George momentarily suggests that the responsibility lies with 'Mr. Brede, his nature' perhaps even 'his God', but instantly retracts 'as if he couldn't keep back a truth', and claims it as his own.[153] 'One kills … those one likes too well', he says, by persuading them to do things that you believe 'will make them more happy, or more honourable, or more serviceable', but 'the strain breaks them'.[154] Brede's 'nature', or predisposition to his madness, is in George's view less powerful than his persuasion, what he said or did not say to Brede. The allusion to Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), therefore, is significant. In the poem, prompted by the execution of Charles Thomas Woodridge who murdered his wife then handed himself in to the police, 'each man kills the thing he loves', perhaps 'with a bitter look' or a 'flattering word' and yet 'each man does not die / he does not die a death of shame'.[155] It raises the question of who pays the price for George's actions. Most obviously, this is Brede whose descent into

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[150] Ford, *The Benefactor*, pp. 334-35.
[151] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 98.
[152] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 69.
[153] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 335.
[154] Ibid.
[155] <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45495/the-ballad-of-reading-gaol>, stanzas 5 and 6 [accessed 25 February 2022].

madness George equates with death. As he takes him to the asylum, he describes Brede as just 'a presence', a 'deeper blot in the gloom, a more intense silence, a void more empty than if there had been no one'.[156] A void emptier than a person's absence places them out of reach in the same way as the dead. It suggests madness as the death of the self. Instead of death, which would have brought rest, Brede faces 'continuing misery, a long blackness'.[157] George's 'final treachery' [158] is to hand him over to a 'palpable gaol'.[159] For George it is 'unthinkable' that 'no words ever again' would reach Brede, 'hearten him, make him speak or smile'.[160] There must, he felt, 'be some secret words, some open sesame, that would touch the springs of his brain'.[161] The effect of this is to connect madness tightly to language. Mr. Brede has lost his voice, and language has lost its ability to touch him. This sense of madness as inherently linguistic, as signalled in outbursts or silences, by being in command of or at the mercy of words, is a thread which runs throughout Ford's novels, becoming increasingly significant to his treatment of the theme.

It is also pertinent to the way in which the novel closes, as Brede is not the only casualty. Although on leaving the asylum, George thought 'there was no-one now between himself and Clara', he ultimately rejects her.[162] When he reaches her, he had wanted to say 'I love you; come with me', but the 'words seemed shocking, as if they must wound her ears'.[163] Putting thoughts into words gives them a different power for George. He 'Suddenly' sees 'contemptuously' what he is doing as 'seduction', and steps back from the promise he had made over her father's prone body that he would not desert her.[164] Clara is incredulous that 'her attraction would not hold him',[165] and cannot

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[156] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 338.
[157] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 339.
[158] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 340.
[159] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 339.
[160] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 338.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 340.
[163] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 344.
[164] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 345.
[165] Ibid.

'trust herself to speak to this man who had thrown her away'.[166] Clara's incredulity hints at the shattered illusions of the woman who had 'wondered if George could love as tenderly as his hero loved his heroine' [167] in the novel he considered 'nauseatingly sentimental' and Bad Art but which to Clara 'was real'.[168] Her incredulity finds expression in being unable to trust herself to speak, as if she would be unable to control her words, that in some way they would be dangerous. What prompts George to announce that it would be a 'calamity' [169] for him to stay are words he imagines, 'men's voices' which say 'Oh, Brede. He's in a lunatic asylum, and his daughter ran away with a married man'.[170] Words do not need even to be spoken to have power. Those in George's mind shatter the illusion of a romance, recalling perhaps Thwaite's accusation that it had been a mere intrigue, and undermine any sense of a happy future together. Nor is the sense of the 'black and tremendous figure of her father' and the same 'weariness' that he had felt whilst dealing with Brede's 'long troubles' unimportant to his decision.[171] A calamity for whom is unstated, but given that Brede and Clara are already damaged, it is probably George's own. Although George positions his unilateral rejection of Clara as a 'sacrifice' they must both make, his earlier dread of her similarity to her father suggests another factor in play. Where in *The Shifting of the Fire*, youthful Hollebone seemed not to anticipate problems from Edith's inherited disposition, George has reason to be more wary. If a neurotic temperament does not inevitably lead to madness, it certainly demands a great deal of those on the edges of it and, as argued earlier, George seemed to carry a fear of madness in himself.

[166] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 348.
[167] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 180
[168] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 173
[169] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 347.
[170] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 346.
[171] Ford, *The Benefactor*, pp. 346-47.

3.4 Madness, language and belief

Both novels discussed in this chapter show Ford's use of contemporary explanations of madness as a predisposition which can be carried forward through generations. His method of juxtaposing characters or their opinions forces readers to engage with different perspectives, preventing them from settling into comfortable conventional truths. This is most evident in *The Benefactor*, where the views of Brede, George and the medical specialist collide and compete. This promotes the questioning stance Ford advocated towards generally accepted ideas. This is why it must be far from clear that Brede's madness was inevitable. It prompts reflection on the contributory factors.

One such factor is language, used about or by people. Ford shows how words shape how people perceive themselves and others. His characters are defined as mad in words, silences and the narratives they create. George's narrative of Brede's madness first positions him as depressed, then neurotic and later, by dismissing Brede's own realities, as perhaps delusional. George's narrative becomes increasingly self-serving, and his view of himself as a disinterested benefactor is put under pressure, becoming perhaps illusory towards the end of the novel. By placing Brede's clearly labelled madness alongside George's self-delusion, Ford unsettles the reassuring distinctions between the mad and the sane. This is reinforced by Brede having his own story. He believes in divine punishment, gods and devils, and in his own madness. When he goes mad, therefore, he lives out the story he has created. Whether, as the reaction of the medical specialist implies, those beliefs were symptomatic of his illness or the cause of it is impossible to gauge because Brede, beyond the reach of words, has no voice after the event.

Whether Brede's beliefs were irrational markers of madness depends on perspective. His madness is one of the more absolute cases in Ford's novels. Yet it is entirely constructed from beliefs: his own, the medical specialist's view that he had worked himself to the edge of it, and George's view that he

could be walked back from that edge. Whose beliefs are reasonable, and so presumably sane, is a question suggested but not resolved by the novel. It is one which Ford took forward into a cluster of novels discussed in the next chapter.

4 THE 'JUST POSSIBLE' NOVELS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 examined Ford's engagement with hereditary madness, illustrating the power of language to shape the identity of the mad and intimating that the mind could confuse the real and illusory. The idea that the mad do not inhabit the same 'common sense reality' as other people, 'hallucinate' or 'make claims about their existence' which seem delusional, is longstanding.[1] Being someone described as 'almost an halluciné',[2] Ford was bound to explore the questions of who decides when someone has lost touch with reality, and whether it is problematic.

It is an issue he takes into a cluster of novels involving apparent disconnections from reality: *Mr. Apollo*, *The 'Half Moon'*, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes, The Simple Life Limited* and *The Young Lovell*. They approach the question in different ways. *The 'Half Moon'* and *The Young Lovell* use supernatural elements such as witches, goddesses and fairies. The hero of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* improbably travels back in time to 1327, and *Mr. Apollo* centres on an implausible visit by the Greek god Apollo to Edwardian London. *The Simple Life Limited* parodies 'Edward Garnett's circle and the Limpsfield Fabians',[3] presenting a fictional community creating its own realities. These novels share the idea that the events they depict might be, as Ford's subtitle for *Mr. Apollo* claims, 'just possible'. They explore what is considered rational, normal and real, versus the irrational, extraordinary, and based in fantasy or delusion. Although critics sometimes describe novels like *Mr. Apollo* and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*

[1] Scull, *Madness in Civilization,* p. 11. See the full definition guiding this thesis in the Introduction, section 1.3.
[2] Ezra Pound, 'Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford: Obit.', in Brita Lindberg-Seyersted (Ed.), *Pound/Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship* (New York: New Direction Books, 1982), p. 172.
[3] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 212.

as fantasies,[4] this chapter focuses not on generic classification but on how fantasy proves helpful to Ford in exploring psychological issues.

Ford wrote and published these novels during a period of active debate about the limits of scientific rationalism, a philosophy that permeated medicine, where nervous illnesses were predominantly attributed to physiological causes. The early twentieth century saw psychology develop as a separate discipline, and its current definition as the 'scientific study of the mind and how it dictates and influences our behaviour' [5] reflects the struggle to establish its credentials against more materialist disciplines such as physiology and neurology. Not until 1901 was psychology established as a professional association, and even then physical sciences dominated its development. Those seeking a career in it were virtually obliged to study in Germany where laboratory-based research was already underway.[6] There were deep disagreements about foundational issues such as 'the existence of a separate psychological self' and the appropriation of categories used in the physical sciences.[7]

Medicine was part of a post-Darwinian society in which the certainties of religion had been undermined, and where the debates between disciplines were not confined to the profession. Oppenheim highlights the growth in spiritualism and psychical research and the opposition they represented to the materialistic philosophy advocated by science. The spiritualists and psychic researchers had a clear position on the psychological self. They asserted the existence and functioning of spirit, and by psychological experiences they meant 'the presence of psyche', not something which might exist only in the mind.[8] Spiritualists believed in survival after death, the

[4] See discussion at 4.2.
[5] British Psychological Society, <https://www.bps.org.uk/public/what-is-psychology> [accessed 28 February 2022]. Although the current website, accessed 13 July, 2024 expresses this in a less formal way, in the essentials it is unchanged.
[6] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 238.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 240.

possibility of disembodied spirits and communication with the dead and were inclined to interpret phenomena in this light. Psychic researchers, equally interested in proving immortality, were more critical of 'allegedly spiritualistic phenomena' and aimed to research the 'mysteries of the human mind'.[9] At the turn of the century, the London Spiritualist Alliance, the Society for Psychic Research and the Ghost Club were all active and influential.[10]

That their challenge was robust is reflected in the vigour with which parts of the medical profession defended its stance. W. K. Clifford's comment that the brain 'is made of atoms and ether, and there is no room in it for ghosts' feels like a direct address to such groups.[11] Clifford's view gained widespread support, with many publications denouncing spiritualist and psychical research. One form of denunciation is particularly significant: the argument that 'many of the phenomena associated with spiritualism were manifestations of psychopathological conditions'.[12] Oppenheim attributes this to E. Ray Lankester, 'an expert on the brain and nervous system',[13] adding that much medical literature from the late nineteenth century 'related hallucinations, clairvoyance, automatism and entranced states in general – including somnambulism and hypnotism – to abnormalities of the nervous system'.[14] Those experiencing alternative realities, in other words, were ill.

Against this stance stood people like Frederick Myers, a leading figure in the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), who argued that 'multiple levels of consciousness' are simply part of a person's equipment for life, much like fingers and toes.[15] The Society's membership included eminent British 'psychologists and medical doctors who specialized in treating the mind', Pierre Janet of France,

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[9] Ibid.
[10] They continue to exist today, the latter two in their original names and the Spiritualist Alliance as the College for Psychic Studies.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 244.
[13] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 241.
[14] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 244.
[15] Ibid.

Caesare Lombroso of Italy and William James of the USA.[16] There were different positions within the Society, but a shared distaste for mechanistic approaches and a concern to prove the inadequacy of explanations of mental phenomena as 'strictly deterministic'.[17] Parapsychology was a 'very serious business to some very serious and eminent people', some of whom were known to Ford.[18] William James, whom Ford admired for having 'all the faculty of analysis of a novelist' [19] was a pivotal figure. He lived in 'the epicentre of the mind-cure, or faith healing',[20] was involved with the American Society for Psychical Research from its inauguration in 1884,[21] and was President of the London SPR in 1894-95.[22] He did much to popularise psychical research in publications such as *Forum*, *Johnson's Universal Encyclopaedia* and *American Magazine*[23] something he acknowledges in a letter to Myers.[24]

Ford himself had an interest in the topic and was well informed. He was a close friend of C. F. G. Masterman who 'knew and worked with Frederick Myers at Cambridge'.[25] There is no record that Ford joined the SPR or attended its public meetings,[26] but he was in social contact with Oliver Lodge, the Society's President.[27] Ford met Lodge in 1909 but his interest in the paranormal, and the

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[16] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 245: The same page also records that Sigmund Freud became a member shortly before the First World War.
[17] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 246.
[18] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 3.
[19] Ford Madox Ford, *Henry James, a Critical Study,* (London: Martin Secker Ltd., 1913), p. 97.
[20] Emma Sutton, *William James: radical empiricist* (London: Wellcome Library Blog Guest Contribution, 19 September, 2016) <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2016/09/william-james-radical-empiricist/> [Accessed 27 April 2019].
[21] Carlos S Alvarado, 'William James', in *Psi Encyclopedia* (London: The Society for Psychical Research, 2015) <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/william-james> [Retrieved 29 April 2019].
[22] Sutton, *William James*.
[23] Alvarado, *William James*.
[24] Henry James (Ed.), *Letters of William James: Two Volumes in One* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926). Letter to Myers 30th January 1891, p. 305. The editor in this case was William James' son.
[25] Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism,* p. 25.
[26] The Society for Psychical Research had no record that Ford had been a member when I contacted them in February 2019. As they did not maintain lists of attendees at events, it was not possible to verify whether he had attended lectures.
[27] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 276 cites from a list compiled by Ford for Elsie of the people he had seen that week, including Lodge.

counterbalance it offered to materialist stances, probably predates this.[28] Ford first met Henry James in 1896 and was in contact with him for the subsequent five years.[29] Like his brother William, Henry knew Myers. He wrote to Myers in December 1898 responding to a question about *The Turn of the Screw*.[30] James gives little indication of the question, other than saying he was not quite sure what it meant, but given the novella's theme it is reasonable to infer that it related to paranormal phenomena. This was not a new topic for James: *Professor Fargo* (1874) pits a 'self-styled medium's talent for hypnosis' against a 'colleague's scientific talents',[31] a juxtaposition which chimes with the debate about scientific rationalism and more metaphysical ways of knowing. Ford, therefore, belonged to a social circle in which conversation and writing about the paranormal was prevalent.

Ford was not a disinterested observer of the debate. He declared 'impenitently' that he had 'always been superstitious'.[32] He argued that it was not 'foolish' to pay attention to superstitions because, however irrationally, 'ill omens will depress you' and shape your behaviour.[33] This suggests that cold rationality is not enough for psychological comfort, a point also made by his brother Oliver.[34] His position on superstition allies Ford with the challenge to materialist ideals, especially when taken together with his arguments about the limitations of fact discussed in Chapter 1. Ford also justified his superstition in artistic terms. 'A novelist had better share the superstitions of, than high-hat, humanity' Ford writes, because they 'play such a great part in human motives that a novelist who does not to some extent enter into those feelings can hardly understand and will certainly be unable to render to perfection most human affairs'.[35] This subtly reshapes the territory by making Ford's

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[28] For instance, Ford discusses the normality of witchcraft in rural communities in Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Heart of the Country* (London: Alston Rivers, 1906). See pp. 16-17 and 159 for examples.
[29] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 132.
[30] Percy Lubock (Ed.), *The Letters of Henry James 1843-1916 Vol. 1* (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 307.
[31] Sophie Geoffroy-Menoux, 'Professor Fargo (1874): Henry James's Spirit-Rapper and Body-Snatcher', *Journal of the Short Story in English*, 28 (Spring 1997) <http://journals.openedition.org/jsse/97> [Accessed 12 July 2024].
[32] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, p. 299.
[33] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, pp. 228-9.
[34] Oliver Madox Hueffer, *The Book of Witches* (New York: John McBride Co., 1909), p. 7.
[35] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, pp. 302-03.

interest in metaphysical issues part of his literary aesthetic. Discussion of Ford's 'just possible' novels will illustrate how materialist and metaphysical perspectives surface in ways which examine whether losing touch with material reality is, as Lankester argued, pathological, or as Myers asserted, normal.

As suggested above, Ford's use of fantasy genres helped him to explore such issues. The genre, therefore, is worth brief discussion precisely because novels are often evaluated in terms of realism. Laurence Davies draws on Samuel R. Delaney's typology to identify *The Inheritors*,[36] *Mr. Apollo,* and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* as 'speculative fictions whose events either "have not happened" (as in science fiction) or "could not have happened" (as in fantasy) rather than naturalistic fictions which "could have happened"'.[37] However, Davies observes that Delaney's categories take a 'materialist stance that is by no means "universal"',[38] and that what one reader considers 'superstitious or deliciously improbable' another could find 'truthful'.[39] He points out that to someone believing in 'the metaphysical reality of the fourth dimension' depicted in *The Inheritors*, the categories of speculative fiction would make no sense.[40] This is as true of the novels discussed in this chapter. If events are not probable, they might be at least possible from a metaphysical viewpoint. Read not as fantasy novels but as explorations of how belief shapes interpretation and response, they raise provocative questions about what is real or unreal, rational or irrational, normal or problematic. Robert Hampson suggests as much when he observes that fantasy novels require the reader, and often characters, to hesitate between natural and supernatural explanations.[41] This is certainly a feature of the novels discussed in this chapter, most overtly in *Mr. Apollo* – subtitled 'A Just Possible Story'.

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[36] A collaborative novel with Conrad not discussed in this thesis.
[37] Laurence Davies, 'Ford's Early Fiction and "Those Queer Effects of Real Life"', in Colombino and Saunders, *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, p. 185.
[38] Davies, *Ford's Early Fiction*, p. 200.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Robert Hampson, 'Travellers, Dreamers and Visitors: Ford and Fantasy', in Hampson and Davenport, *Ford Madox Ford: A Reappraisal*, p. 31.

4.2 *Mr. Apollo* – rationalism and other ways of 'knowing'

Hampson likens *Mr. Apollo* to H. G. Wells' *The Wonderful Visit* in that both open with the 'arrival of the supernatural into a materialistic nineteenth century culture' and place social realities and the transcendent in tension.[42] The critical consensus is that *Mr. Apollo* participates in the debate about scientific rationalism, which the god Apollo is used to satirize.[43] Hampson's observation that Ford foregrounds 'the conflict between scientific and visionary modes', however, introduces literary considerations.[44] After all, synonyms for 'visionary' include creative or imaginative, terms which could apply to a novelist who visualises a world that does not exist. Saunders develops the thread, arguing for Apollo as 'a figure for art and the artist',[45] and the novel as reflecting Ford's fascination with how art strikes 'at the heart of a person's being, through disturbing the sense of sanity or normality'.[46] It is not unusual, therefore, to conjoin the literary and madness in this phase of Ford's work. What the link signifies for Ford's inquiry into madness is addressed in this chapter.

Certainly, *Mr. Apollo* is concerned with the question of what is considered normal or sane. It has some continuity with *The Benefactor.* Where Brede believed himself to be possessed by devils and facing the punishment of an unseen Christian God, in *Mr. Apollo* characters meet in person a man claiming to be a classical god. If Brede was deemed delusional, how might the claim to be a god be met in a society dominated by materialist thinking? David Trotter points out that 'the basic understanding of what constitutes a "Delusional Disorder"' has changed little 'over the last 200 years or so'.[47] It is pertinent that the conditions labelled 'grandiose' in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*

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[42] Hampson, *Travellers, Dreamers and Visitors*, p. 41.
[43] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 140 and Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 234 for example, plus Hampson.
[44] Hampson, *Travellers, Dreamers and Visitors*, p. 42.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 386.
[47] Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism,* p. 15.

(DSM) include delusions not only of being a prominent person, but of a special relationship with them.[48] At a time when paranormal experiences or beliefs were pathologized, it would be a brave person who accepted as fact Apollo's claims to be a god.[49]

It is in the determination of characters to find Apollo anything but a god that Ford shows the dominance of materialist thinking. This is done linguistically, through labels. People construct Apollo according to their personal frame of reference, often denying the evidence of their senses. He is variously described as 'foreign royalty', an 'unknown prince', a 'composer', 'a parson', 'a medium', and 'a Russian Jew escaped from a massacre'.[50] Wavering from these naturalistic narratives results in being deemed unsound. The constable who witnesses Apollo's descent into a London square sees him as 'something black and apparently winged' but quickly translates this into 'a man in a gibus hat and opera cape'.[51] Warned by Apollo of the 'inexorable law' that if he looks too closely at his face he will die, he arrests him for threatening behaviour.[52] In court, his justification that Apollo had 'behaved unusually' [53] is found inadequate and he is forced into repeating that Apollo had 'come sailing down through the air'.[54] When his descriptions of a man in evening dress do not fit with Apollo's 'morning coat' the magistrate decides it cannot be the same man.[55] The constable's inability to explain in rational terms what he had seen leads the magistrate to conclude that he has 'incipient brain trouble'.[56]

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[48] *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th Edition (New York and London: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), p. 91. The American Psychiatric Association Handbook is used as an authoritative guide to diagnosis of mental disorders in much of the world.
[49] The character of Apollo is referred to throughout without the Mr. attached to distinguish it from the book title.
[50] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Mr. Apollo, - A Just Possible Story* (London: Methuen and Co., 1908). pp. 26, 28, 64, 110, 112 and 117 respectively.
[51] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 5.
[52] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 9.
[53] Ford, *Mr Apollo,* p. 16.
[54] Ford, *Mr Apollo,* p. 20.
[55] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 22.
[56] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 23.

A policeman and a magistrate, both concerned with provable fact, might reasonably be expected to think in this way. That a Christian minister cannot escape materialist ways of thinking is more intriguing. Ultimately it leads to the Reverend Mr. Todd being punished not by his God but by a pagan god in whom he does not believe. When Todd meets Apollo, he constructs a theoretic person who fits the facts available, an amalgam of material reality and cultural understandings. Apollo introduces himself as 'Phoebus Apollo', and Todd dimly recalls the name from his student days, a member 'of the Greek Royal House' who 'claimed descent from prophets, deities, or queens of Sheba'.[57] The plural 'queens', a playful allusion to the multiple legends about the Queen of Sheba in both religious and literary texts, is a caution that people should not believe everything they read. When Todd remembers reading in a newspaper that the King of Hellenes was an elected prince of 'some vague German family', so could not 'claim descent, however shadowily, from heathen deities of the Greek mythology',[58] Ford achieves two effects. The implication that Todd might have believed that his new acquaintance was descended from a pagan god if the lineage had been right both mocks the character of Todd and critiques his choice to believe a newspaper rather than Apollo's own statements. The irony of Todd being so close to the truth but discounting it is one way that Ford illustrates the limits of rationalism. Todd rationalises the experience but, like the magistrate, is limited to his own reference system, choosing to believe Apollo is 'a prince in exile' whose 'incognito' he will honour.[59] When Apollo cites a natural law that a man cannot 'entertain a divinity and be as he was before',[60] Todd interprets it as a joke which fits his impression, because only someone 'very royal indeed could so gravely play the fool'.[61] To believe otherwise would necessitate 'doubting the

[57] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 29.
[58] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 31.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 32.
[61] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 34.

stranger's sanity'.[62] In the materialist worldview either the person claiming to be god or the one accepting the claim is delusional.

Those who believe Apollo, therefore, are problematic. For devout Catholic Margery Snyde, witnessing Apollo's creation of sunlight at night is 'wicked' and feared as the 'work of devils'.[63] Her sobs 'bore witness to the fact that *she* fully believed' that she had seen 'true sorcery'.[64] Apollo reassures her that she has committed no sin and forecasts that her confessor will interpret her account as a sign that she is 'overwrought'.[65] This indeed happens, so readers must also choose between natural and supernatural explanations. Is Apollo, as he claims, omniscient? Or does he simply know that the predictable response to wild assertions by a young woman is to label her hysterical? Along with recommendations to ask her doctor for a bromide, Margery's confessor observes that 'too rigid fastings and too harrowing introspections', whilst praiseworthy in the abstract, were sometimes unfitted to the individual.[66] It is both an evaluation of Margery and an allusion to the dangers of deep introspections such as those alleged to have unhinged Brede in *The Benefactor*. The implication is that she should stay firmly tethered to reality.

The tension between what is real and what is not, central to the debate in which the novel participates, is laid bare through the character of Mr. Clarges. He prides himself on being part of the discovery that there was 'no immortal principle' because 'evolution accounted for all things upon a natural basis'.[67] He disparages Professor Jay Edge, the world's greatest biologist, for supposedly 'communicating with the spirit of Nelson',[68] and claims as indicative of 'your modern scientist' whose

[62] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 33.
[63] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 137.
[64] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 139.
[65] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 138.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 108.
[68] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 104.

'liver is all wrong', that they mistake the real, in this case a 'sheet in the dusk' for something unreal.[69] Clarges could almost be Clifford, with his insistence on the physical and his dismissal of ghosts. He represents orthodox science, so derides 'modern' scientists who 'keep an open mind' but 'don't know' things definitively.[70] The young scientist to whom these remarks are addressed responds with 'the one word – Science … pronouncing it rather as if it were spelt "saïence"', which phonetically reads séance.[71] It hints that the young men are psychic researchers rather than spiritualists, because they claim a scientific approach. However, the single word reply has the quality of an invocation or a spell, hinting that Science is as much an act of faith as the supernatural phenomena it disparages.

The significance of the exchange between Clarges and the young men lies in their polarised views on what constitutes knowledge and how to create it. The younger men decry Clarges and his generation as 'always hiding [their] heads in dust', reading 'Bacon's *Novvum Organuum*',[72] and wanting 'to *know*'.[73] The reference to Bacon associates Clarges with a scientific approach, working from specific instances to general concepts as a basis for theory, which permeated much medical practice, a point that becomes important later in the novel. Clarges responds by labelling his opponents 'incompetent muddlers' who have 'destroyed knowledge' by substituting the 'open mind'.[74] This focus on the open mind is responsible for 'Professor Edge talking to Nelson' and the resurgence of 'stuff of the dark ages'.[75] The phrase 'open mind' has two resonances here. It captures the premise that any scientific experiment should be open to its hypothesis being disproved, with theories considered provisional and liable to be overturned by subsequent findings. Equally, it implies that the mind itself is a more

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ford, *Mr Apollo,* p. 105.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Bacon's text established a methodology based on processes of reduction and inductive thinking which became core to empirical scientific methods.
[73] Ford, *Mr Apollo,* p. 106.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

open organ, capable of perceptions and understandings discounted by orthodox thinking. The tension between Clarges and the young scientists brilliantly portrays the conflicts described above, with Ford capturing the zeitgeist through their characterisation.

However, the twist which Ford works into this debate is the most significant. Clarges fails to notice the arrival of a 'stranger' standing in the shadows, Apollo.[76] When Apollo speaks, something in his voice leads Clarges to mistake him for a parson. He becomes disturbed by his 'presence, invisible, and almost minatory', something not quite menacing but a 'symbol of power that lurks in the darkness'.[77] An idea suggests itself to Clarges from 'an image that he had'.[78] He professes not to care 'what' Apollo is or whether he 'stands for Ra, the Cat god, or the Sun God of the Egyptians'.[79] Clarges clearly senses that Apollo is more than he seems, even allowing that he might be a Sun God, one descriptor attached to Apollo.[80] That this idea emerges from an image is intriguing, perhaps a remnant of the classical education for which the young scientists deride him. Unlike Todd who combined remembered teaching with newspaper snippets to form a view, Clarges' understanding comes instantly and visually, less reconstructed from memory than retrieved from the subconscious. It is an evocative image which Clarges does not appear to process. Thus, even when Apollo repeats to him his own words from a dream, Clarges refuses to believe he is anything more than a fraudulent 'medium' or 'psychic phenomenon'.[81] He warns the others against this 'deuced clever fellow' and congratulates Apollo, who he imagined had heard him tell the story of the dream, dismissing as the forgetfulness of age his sense that he had never 'told that dream to anyone'.[82] He clings to the

[76] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 110.
[77] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 111.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Apollo Greco-Roman Mythology' <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Apollo-Greek-mythology> [accessed 6 June 2022].
[81] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 112.
[82] Ibid.

narrative that there is no such thing as a ghost or a god. Yet, as he leaves 'his hand brushed the shoulder of the invisible being in the chair' and he 'snorted as if he had touched a loathsome reptile'.[83] It is a vivid image of disturbance. An 'invisible being' suggests something beyond the corporal, a spirit perhaps. On some level Clarges knows something that his conscious mind rejects. It is an early usage by Ford of Myers' concept of the subliminal mind. Myers argued that the 'waking self of daily life' was only a small part of the 'streams of consciousness associated with a single physical frame'.[84] Not a person, but a physical frame, a description which allows for a non-material self. Myers adopted the term 'subliminal' to describe the part of the mind below the threshold of waking consciousness, able to receive information, including clairvoyance and telepathy, inaccessible to its counterpart, the supraliminal mind.[85] From this perspective, Clarges' image of the Sun God is evidence of just the kind of knowledge he denounces.

If Clarges frames Apollo as a 'dangerous impostor',[86] Lord Aldington, a newspaper magnate, desperately wants to believe him a 'real specialist in telepathy'.[87] He wants a better story than that of the Krakoffs: 'a pair of thought-readers, having come – with rumours of disgrace, undue influence and alluring mystery from the Russian Imperial Court'.[88] For contemporary readers this might evoke Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, whose *Isis Unveiled* (1877) claimed that exposure to an ancient wisdom had given her 'a range of psychic powers including astral projection' and 'telepathy'.[89] Though highly influential, her reputation was damaged when the SPR, which had initially given her organisation the 'benefit of the doubt', published a derogatory report

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p, 256.
[85] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p, 257.
[86] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 174.
[87] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 245.
[88] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 173.
[89] Charlie Connolley, 'Helena Blavatsky: The idiosyncratic occultist who divided opinion', *The New European* (5 May, 2022) <https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/helena-blavatsky-great-european-lives/> [Accessed 30 Sept 2023].

which led to an exodus of educated people from the Theosophical Society.[90] Although retracted a century later, when Ford was writing Blavatsky's authenticity was in question.[91] In evoking Blavatsky, therefore, Ford brings into question what information, even in print, can be trusted. This is the point of Aldington. He wants to believe Apollo is 'immortal!....omniscient! ….omnipotent!' and capable of curing his illness, but knows that publishing Apollo's claim to be a god would risk professional ruin.[92] Accordingly, he chooses to run the fraudulent Krakoffs' story, unable, as Apollo observes, to 'save his life by faith'.[93] Aldington's storyline highlights the power of the written word to create or destroy reputations and recalls *The Benefactor* in its insistence on the importance of words used about and by people. Ford constantly changes the labelling of Apollo to illustrate that underlying beliefs drive opinions, and actions. If characters like Margery believe he has divine power, they fear him. If they believe his claims to be fake, or simply metaphorical, they do not. Neither position is secure, as the case of Arthur Milne illustrates.

Milne reveres rather than fears Apollo. At their first encounter, his wife says he 'calls himself Prince Phoebus Apollo' but 'we are to call him Mr. Apollo'.[94] Though Milne points out that 'Phoebus Apollo was a god',[95] he does not take the idea seriously. To the couple, living in impoverished, hopeless circumstances this man, 'merely wonderful', seemed like a 'gift from the gods'.[96] It was enough that he had the 'tangible' attributes of being a composer, musician and prince.[97] Milne's wife more willingly accepts that he may have intangible gifts, that Apollo might 'possess a new light, a new truth', but also assumes that 'without doubt he spoke allegorically'.[98] Notice that none of the gifts

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[90] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 178.
[91] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Helena Blavatsky Russian Spiritualist', <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Helena-Blavatsky> [accessed 22 April 2022].
[92] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 297.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 83.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 85.
[97] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 86.
[98] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 129.

Apollo brings them are material. He is valued instead for his creativity and insight. Like Aldington, Milne understands the power of language, and that understanding costs him his health and almost his life. He tells Apollo that Aldington 'would be mad to print' his claims,[99] that he has always thought him to be 'speaking figuratively' and that he cannot support his 'impostures'.[100] He announces that he cannot have him in his house but in distress at giving up the man he venerates, exclaims 'God help me!' [101] The irony here lies both in his professed atheism and in the invocation of one God's pity in denouncing another. It is a cry from the heart by a man who reveres Apollo for all the things he thinks he is, but who cannot accept as supernatural the things he has witnessed and admired. Faced with this cognitive dissonance he becomes ill.

The doctor who attends him is unusual in Ford's novels in that he denounces any expertise, declaring to Mrs Milne, 'we know nothing: absolutely nothing' and the specialist 'knows nothing either'.[102] The specialist has 'a thousand instances in his head' and if the illness coincided 'exactly' with one of these he might be able to make 'a prognosis of a sort' or be 'fairly certain' if it coincided with ten or twenty.[103] This, in essence, is the criticism of Clarges' empirical approach. It allows no space for judgement or leaps of imagination. Although, the doctor says, they are no longer in the business of 'bamboozling patients' friends', they are 'no nearer anything else'.[104] He is reduced to listing symptoms of a 'case like this', including 'nervous reaction', but has nothing to offer beyond prescribing fresh air and light.[105] Only when told that his prescriptions are incompatible with the Milnes' living circumstances does the doctor mutter as if it 'was a little unmentionable' that they must find his friend because they did 'know at least that a breakdown caused by a quarrel can be

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[99] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 297.
[100] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 299.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 301.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 302.
[105] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 301.

cured by a reconciliation'.[106] It is an acknowledgement of the limitations of orthodox medicine and an admission of the importance of psychological factors. It also requires belief in more intangible things. Where Aldington's lack of belief failed to save his health, Milne's recovery happens because of a shift in belief. In his feverish state he repeatedly dreams of Apollo, eventually crying out 'I believe!' [107] What was 'unthinkable' to his conscious mind becomes possible in dream state.[108] Similarly, light and fresh air become available in the Milnes' cramped flat when Apollo destroys the smoke-belching building overshadowing it. The price is the destruction of its residents. One way of reading this is symbolically. For new beliefs based on acceptance without concrete certainty to prevail, old structures must collapse. As Davies argues, 'Apollo is a god of transformations' whose 'justice is stern'.[109] He will not allow the Milnes to hold to their comfortable narrative about him, itself a fiction. Apollo is there to disrupt and defy settled societal narratives. As Saunders suggests, he personifies the way that art can defamiliarize, unsettle and raise questions about what is normal or rational.

Mr. Apollo explores alternative realities by juxtaposing rationalism and belief, proof and faith. It raises questions about the extent to which reality is created in the mind, singly or collectively. Ford illustrates how one person's reality is another's illusion but that beliefs contrary to dominant 'common sense reality' lead to the judgement that someone is mad.[110]

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[106] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 302.
[107] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 305.
[108] Ford, *Mr Apollo*, p. 298.
[109] Davies, *Ford's Early Fiction,* p. 192.
[110] Part of the definition of madness guiding this thesis, see Introduction.

4.3 *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* – Common and Uncommon Sense

In *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* the hero not only has his sanity questioned but doubts it himself. It depicts a character living between two realities and illustrates how Ford presents the boundary between reality and illusion as at least blurred, and possibly permeable.

The plot involves the real or imaginary displacement of William Sorrell, a 'modern business man' and publisher, to the fourteenth century following a railway accident.[111] On the train Sorrell had agreed to help a stranger, Mrs. Lee Egerton. As security for a loan to her son to pay off his debts, she entrusts to Sorrell the 'Tamworth-Egerton crucifix', a gold cross of 'unknown antiquity' which had been in her family 'ever since the thirteenth century'.[112] The cross comes with a legend: Sir Stanley Egerton of Tamworth had died immediately on his return to England from Palestine, and the cross was returned to Tamworth by a 'converted Greek slave' [113] said to have 'weird gifts of prophecy'.[114] In the accident immediately after this conversation, Sorrell's legs are crushed between two seats, and he is left 'hanging head downwards in a rush of steam'.[115] From the beginning, therefore, the accident and legend are coupled. The first chapter ends with Sorrell's crushed legs and a 'great pain in his temples' and the next opens with him dizzy from 'long walking' in the sun on 'blistered feet'.[116] It is as disorienting for readers as for Sorrell. Although he initially assumes this to be a dream from which he will 'wake up', he slowly comes to believe that he is in the fourteenth century.[117] There, he falls in love with the Lady Dionissia. In the final part of the novel, he returns to the present. Having been twice surgically trepanned, he is believed by some to have died, and by others not to have been 'cured of

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[111] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes – A Romance* (London: Constable and Co., 1911), p. 84.
[112] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 17.
[113] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 19.
[114] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 21.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 22.
[117] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 23.

the effects of his accident' or to be 'on the verge of madness'.[118] As he recovers, he meets Nurse Morane, who had attended him until the first trepanning but had 'broken down the day before … the second time'.[119] Her first name is Dionissia. The story stretches credulity yet, in Ford's hands, is presented, like *Mr. Apollo*, as 'just possible'. It also introduces doubt from the outset. Sorrell's accident happening in a train is not incidental. Sara Haslam links trains to trauma in Ford's fiction and observes that train accidents became connected to what 'eventually became known as male hysteria'.[120] The question of Sorrell's state of mind, therefore, is always in question.

Significantly, Sorrell is not only in another time but is part of another story, the 'touching legend' of the cross.[121] Legends, handed down through generations, are of uncertain status because they are unverifiable, like Sorrell's story. Doubt exists from the outset, both for Sorrell and the reader, as to whether he is simply recalling the story he had heard. Yet as the narrative is largely focalised through Sorrell, readers remain close to the way he discounts a succession of explanations for his experience: that it is a dream, that he is in a vivid pageant where he is mistaken for the Greek slave, even that it is an illusion caused by his own delirium. Narratively, the more consistently people behave as if he is the Greek slave, the more Sorrell assumes the role, and the harder it becomes for him to separate pretence from reality. Ultimately, 'with the slightest queer start' he realises that 'he could not get away from the feeling that they were just living their normal lives'.[122]

He felt, he says, 'like Rip Van Winkle'.[123] Washington Irving's well-known *Rip Van Winkle* has come to be seen as an American legend,[124] so often has it been adapted and retold.[125] It is itself believed to be

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[118] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 346.
[119] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 348.
[120] Sara Haslam, 'Ford's Training' in Hampson and Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*, p. 39.
[121] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 19.
[122] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 82.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Kathy Weiser, 'Legend of Rip Van Winkle', *Legends of America* (January 2020) <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ny-ripvanwinkle/> [Accessed 5 October 2023].
[125] Apart from its publication, it had been staged as a play, and then was released as a film in 1905.

based on a German folktale.[126] It is worth reprising Irving's original. Rip Van Winkle is a workshy man who goes hunting in the Catskill mountains to avoid his wife. He comes across a group of strange men in ancient Dutch dress, accepts a drink from them, falls asleep and wakes twenty years later to find himself old and the world he knew changed. Initially disbelieved, Rip gains support for his tale when the oldest inhabitant of the village cites a past ancestor who maintained that the Catskills had long been 'haunted by strange beings',[127] and that 'Hendrick Hudson' had 'kept a vigil there every twenty years with his crew of the Half Moon'.[128] His own father had 'once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins'.[129] What does it signify that Ford references a story containing folklore about his subject in *The 'Half Moon'*, beyond suggesting that Irving's tale may have been a source for his recreation of Hudson's voyage? It is noteworthy that Rip's story is validated by an unverifiable legend passed down through generations, and that after this legitimisation he goes on retelling it, much as Irving's story has been retold. Some 'gave … full credit' to it, but others 'insisted that Rip had been out of his head'.[130] When Sorrell feels like Rip it is in recognition that his own experience, however real it feels, will be considered a tall tale. Yet there is another parallel between Rip's story and Sorrell's: both awaken to something new, to a different world.

The reference to Van Winkle marks the point when Sorrell turns from natural to metaphysical explanations, for instance that the people he encounters are 'just ghosts',[131] that he had a 'mental shock' which 'knocked him clean back through time',[132] even that his 'soul had been shaken out of his body' in the accident and wandered back through time until it chanced upon the Greek slave and

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[126] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Rip Van Winkle Short Story by Irving' <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rip-Van-Winkle-short-story-by-Irving> [accessed 22 October 2023].
[127] Irving, Washington, 'Rip Van Winkle', in Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (London: John Miller, 1820), pp. 53-93. The quotation is from p. 89.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Irving, *Rip Van Winkle,* p. 92.
[131] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 82.
[132] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* pp. 99-100.

'entered [his] body'.[133] Finding no difference in his appearance or physical sensations, he speculates that it is 'to do with the transmigration of souls'.[134] Perhaps his soul had previously been in the body of the Greek slave and has now returned to it: 'Something like that must have happened'.[135] The notion of souls transmigrating is associated with theosophists who argued that successive lives were necessary for people to live out their purpose, and to give 'human life … meaning'.[136] It begs the question, addressed later, of whether Sorrell's life was given new meaning. Ford's allusion to the contemporary theory signals that Sorrell's metaphysical speculations, in counter-orthodox thinking, would have been 'just possible'. Sorrell himself is prepared to believe that the 'knock' or mental shock which sent him back in time had its foundation in such ideas:

> He had not any doubt that one or other of the Christian Scientists, New Homeopathists or Psychics that he met at his aunt's, could explain the matter in some seemingly nonsensical but probably quite true method. And he felt vaguely that if the ghosts from the past could come into the present, why in the world should not ghosts of the future be able to go back into the past. That was all it would amount to.[137]

Such speculations and beliefs are also implicated in whether Sorrell, like Rip Van Winkle, is out of his mind, literally or figuratively. One answer to this question is suggested by his return to the twentieth century, in 'such pain as makes one cry out that no Destiny has the right to inflict it', aware of 'distant voices, … a bare white room', and 'an overpowering, hateful odour'.[138] He cries to be allowed to go back. 'It's as if there were a curtain' and he wants it 'drawn away!' [139] When the nurse calls to the Doctor, readers are firmly back in the recognisable environment of a hospital, suggesting that Sorrell's experiences were not real but products of his mind. His trepanning appears to support this because,

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[133] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 100.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 101.
[136] Oppenheim, *The Other World*, p. 170.
[137] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* pp. 99-100.
[138] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 333.
[139] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 336.

although historically it was used for epilepsy and mental illness, by the nineteenth century it was generally reserved for cases of head injury. In this reading, Sorrell sustained a head injury in the accident and has been treated for it.

Yet the scene is not so simple. Trepanning had a mortality rate so high that the first requirement to perform it was said to be that the surgeon should first have experienced it.[140] Although by the late nineteenth century the risks had been mitigated by improved understanding and infection control, they still existed, so the fact that Sorrell was trepanned twice is significant. Two other points in the scene suggest an alternative to the natural explanation: his pleas to 'go back' and the reference to a curtain. The latter recalls the point immediately before the accident when Sorrell sensed an invisible curtain through which he might be able to pass into the fourteenth century. It is unlikely that this is a reference to a literal curtain around his hospital bed because they were not common until the 1930s.[141] If metaphorical, the curtain may symbolise the veil between this world and the spirit or other world, that beyond death. The second trepanning implies that the first attempt failed. Nurse Morane's distress at the idea of a second attempt is pertinent here. In explaining the first attempt to Sorrell she says, 'you went back, and it was almost too much for me'.[142] If Sorrell went back through the curtain to the other world, then he technically died. If so, his experiences are of an after-life in which his soul travelled. This allows for his experiences to be real, just not materially so. The second surgery brought him back, like Rip Van Winkle, to a different world, not because it had changed but because he had.

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[140] Charles G. Gross, 'A Hole in the Head: A History of Trepanation', *The MIT Press Reader* (June 2021) <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/hole-in-the-head-trepanation/> [Accessed 15 May 2022].
[141] Cubicles and their curtains became more common with the advent of organised healthcare after the 1930s. <https://history.physio/cubicle-curtain/> [accessed 20 June 2023]. In addition, photographs of early hospitals show patients in large, open rooms and a search of images of male surgical wards in 1910 showed none with curtains. Photographic images of early hospitals and World War I rehabilitation centres also show patients in large open rooms, with little concession to privacy.
[142] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 349.

He changed when he met Dionissia. So real was his experience of falling in love with Lady Dionissia in the fourteenth century that when he meets Dionissia Morane in the twentieth, he determines to spend his life with a woman who, as far as Mrs Lee Egerton is concerned, he had known for little 'more than seven hours'.[143] Unsurprisingly, she finds it 'a little mad'.[144] That Sorrell had not told 'a single soul of his experiences' whilst recovering from surgery illustrates that he knew he could not persuade anyone else that they were 'real'.[145] Even to him, at times, it feels like it 'was a dream' and that he is 'mad'.[146] He can't, he tells Dionissia, 'make it all fit together'.[147] Either he 'went back to the fourteenth century' because she wanted him to, or the 'fourteenth century is still here behind a curtain', or it was her reading him old tales 'that just put the thought into [his] head'.[148] To his claim that it is 'awfully mysterious' Dionissia simply replies that 'there have got to be mysteries, so we can take it one way or the other'.[149]

Readers too can take Sorrell's experiences as real or imagined. What matters is that they were real to him. The significance of Dionissia is that she can, in Sorrell's words, 'make you feel anything she pleases'.[150] As Saunders notes, Dionissia is an invocation of Dionysus, a god 'like Apollo … associated with visionary rapture and metamorphoses'.[151] To the extent that she is an invocation of a god, Sorrell's love is a form of worship. Bertrand Russell argues for worship of Dionysus as a recovery of 'an intensity of feeling which prudence has destroyed',[152] a reaction against caution in favour of a wholehearted appreciation of the delight and beauty of the world. The final scene carries these echoes, where Dionissia tells Sorrell that there are 'things [they] can't take precautions about' and

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[143] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 350.
[144] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 351.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 345.
[147] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 359.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 358.
[151] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I,* p. 310.
[152] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946), p. 36.

commands him 'imperiously' to 'say that it's a beautiful world'.[153] The effect of such worship is that 'the imagination is suddenly liberated from the prison of every-day preoccupations'.[154] From this perspective, Sorrell has been freed from being a 'modern' man, 'excellently schooled in worldly practicable things', whose 'mind immediately accepted' rather than questioned things.[155] His comment that Dionissia can make him feel 'anything' speaks both to the power of the imagination to make something feel intensely real and to the sense of possibility it creates. This is why a 'modern business man',[156] who initially dismissed 'Literature' as merely 'fanciful',[157] ends the novel believing that his business must 'do something for' it.[158] This is the sense of new meaning acquired by Sorrell. He symbolises the way a fiction author needs to lose touch with reality in order to create, demonstrating how fine the line between reality and illusion becomes in that process. The point of Sorrell inhabiting stories is that it places him in a liminal state between the material and the imaginary, making the boundary between the two porous.

If *Mr. Apollo* presented a scenario which contemporary readers could comfortably consign to the category of fantasy, in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* Ford takes ideas considered real by at least part of society to suggest a 'just possible' scenario. Significantly, he departs from his tendency to have characters with competing views advance the debate, instead placing it within Sorrell's own mind. By focalising through Sorrell, he enjoins readers in the disorientation in ways which foreshadow *The Good Soldier*. The effect is to make a case for the imagination as a space at least as real as anywhere else, if not easily accessible. It is a case which questions whether losing touch with concrete reality is necessarily pathological.

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[153] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 362.
[154] Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 36.
[155] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* pp. 99-100.
[156] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 84.
[157] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* p. 7.
[158] Ford, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, p. 338.

4.4 Other Novels

There is neither space nor need to offer close readings of each novel in the cluster to show how Ford presents disconnects from reality and their consequences. It is useful, however, to briefly consider how the novels work together to reinforce the ideas already discussed.

For example, *The 'Half Moon'* and *The Young Lovell* also blur the line between the real and the imaginary. Set in the seventeenth and fourteenth centuries respectively, they are historical novels so are less relevant to a consideration of Ford's representations of madness in his own time. However, they act synergistically with the contemporary novels in this cluster in their treatment of the tension between concrete and metaphysical explanations for events. *The 'Half Moon'* reimagines Henry Hudson's seventeenth century voyage to discover the northwest passage, and the death of a crew member, John Colman, widely attributed to the shot of an arrow by a Native Indian. Into the history Ford inserts Anne Jeal, a woman who believes she has, and is believed by some others to have, powers of witchcraft. Scorned by a fictional Edward Colman in favour of another woman, Anne turns to witchcraft initially to bring Edward back to her, but ultimately to kill him. Some of Anne's visions are remarkably close to the telepathy of *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, and the allusion to *Rip Van Winkle* with its mention of Hudson is an oblique connection between the novels. It could simply signal Ford's re-use of research but, significantly, *The 'Half Moon'* foreshadows the ambiguity found in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* about which reality can be trusted. *The 'Half Moon'*s ending offers two accounts of Edward's death: Anne's claim that she had 'killed him in his sin' [159] by stabbing his waxen figure, or that the arrow of a native 'had struck Edward Colman in the soft part of the neck', as recounted in the epilogue.[160] In requiring readers to choose between the official account of Colman's death and an

[159] Ford Madox Hueffer, *The 'Half Moon' – A Romance Of The Old World And The New* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909), p. 337.
[160] Ford, *The 'Half Moon'*, p. 334.

occult attack, Ford pitches the natural against the supernatural, the provable against the 'just possible'. Ironically, the real Colman's death remains an unproven 'cold case' four hundred years after the event.[161] Meanwhile, readers of *The 'Half Moon'* often conclude, as Saunders does, that he died through Anne's witchcraft.[162] The indeterminacy lies in competing stories, showing reality to be sometimes as illusory as the imagined.

The same softening of the line between fact and fiction is found in *The Young Lovell*, generally read by critics as a tale of a 'much travelled' and 'unusually cultivated' man who is 'put into a trance for three months by a goddess'.[163] As with *Mr. Apollo* and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, whether his visions are considered real or not depends upon perspective, and belief. The most notable point of value to this discussion, however, is that Lovell ends the novel with his 'body immured as a hermit' and 'his spirit … sporting with Gods "in a very high valley of Corsica"'.[164] It is another depiction of a spirit free to travel and, like Sorrell with Dionissia, Lovell ends up living with his goddess. He never thinks of 'Northumberland' or how his 'mortal body lived in the little hermitage not much bigger than a dog's kennel'.[165] The simile hints at the smallness of a life confined to material realities and raises the question of whether the rewards of living in the imagination outweigh the dangers.

The novel standing slightly apart from the others in the cluster is *The Simple Life Limited,* which deals not with the paranormal but with an alternative community attempting to live outside the norms of mainstream society. The 'Limited' of the title makes clear that the community is not, perhaps, what its participants believe it to be. It is financed and run for profit by Horatio Gubb, a fact he masks by

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[161] Sam Roberts, 'New York's Coldest Case: A Murder 400 Years Old', *New York Times* (5 September 2009) <archive.nytimes.com/2009/09/05/nyregion/05murder/html> [accessed 12 May, 2021].
[162] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 266.
[163] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 485. See also Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 383 and Paul Skinner, '" Pretty Big and Serious": Ford Madox Ford and *The Young Lovell*', in Colombino and Saunders, *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, p. 238.
[164] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 383.
[165] Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Young Lovell – A Romance* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), p. 310.

presenting Simon Bransdon, an author who has suffered a breakdown and is presented as 'mentally unstable', as a figurehead.[166] Bransdon wavers in and out of periods of 'depression and of almost imbecile apathy', and when 'in sound mental health' writes stories that Gubb can sell for a 'gratifying' price, but at the price of diminished work for and 'allegiance to the rules of the Simple Life'.[167] The unquestioning way in which Simple Life followers accept Bransdon as a guru whose 'moral prophecies' have value, effectively reverses *Mr. Apollo*. Apollo was a real god whose followers risked being called mad. Bransdon, in his own words, is a 'a sick man!' who should have been allowed to 'hide his folly in a lunatic asylum'.[168] Instead, Gubb had 'dragged [him] like a beastly image of a heathen god' around the world.[169] If Bransdon is an 'image' then he is a mere likeness, not the genuine article, a point underscored by his comparison to a 'heathen' god, such as Apollo.[170] In the Christian frame of reference,[171] heathens are understood only in opposition, as unbelievers, effectively denying the existence of any gods they might follow.[172] Following this logic, Bransdon is an imitation of something which is itself not real. His iconic status, therefore, is an illusion maintained only by the belief of his followers. It is the same exploration found in *Mr. Apollo* of how belief creates reality, but more clearly illustrates that illusions can be collective. Of course, the illusion depends on Bransdon's lunacy. Once he recovers, he denounces the community to return to mainstream society and more worldly concerns, such as resurrecting his literary reputation. As part of this he destroys the 'disgusting sicky prose' [173] which had been the basis for the collective illusion in which they had all

[166] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 321.
[167] Ford writing as Daniel Chaucer, *The Simple Life Limited* (London and New York: The Bodley Head, John Lane Company, 1911), p. 239. All other references to Ford, not Chaucer.
[168] Ford, *The Simple Life Limited*, p. 249.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Apollo is referred to as a heathen deity several times in *Mr Apollo*.
[171] And other major religions including Islam and Judaism.
[172] Heathen and pagan spiritualities are polytheistic, in the same way as Hinduism for instance.
[173] Ford*, The Simple Life Limited*, p. 247.

participated, shattering the co-created myth. What Ford shows in this satire is a form of collective madness, created when people collude to create their own version of reality.

4.5 Imagined realities

The novels discussed here illustrate how Ford's inquiry into madness moved to new ground. The concern of the early novels with individual predispositions to madness is not entirely displaced. Bransdon's intermittent rages predate his breakdown, hinting at a temperamental instability like that of Brede. However, the focus moves to the kind of mind likely to make someone susceptible, or to be judged so. It is generally characters prepared to countenance the 'just possible' scenarios whose sanity is questioned, by themselves or others. Sorrell is the best example, illustrating how accepting as possible something unproven relies on the imaginative faculty. This phase of Ford's work explores whether being imaginative is close to being mad, and if living in the imagination and being delusional are different expressions of a similar experience. It is intimately connected with the role of stories, and of storying the self, a theme which becomes increasingly important in Ford's novels. Whether illusions are protective or damaging is shown to depend on perspective, with some illusions socially sanctioned and others negated. The potential for people to co-create a reality around which they can coalesce raises the question of whether madness is similarly a collective construct, perhaps even happening between as much as within people. This slant to the relational and to the role of personal narrative shapes the way Ford continues his inquiry into madness in the novels discussed in the next chapter: *A Call* and *The Good Soldier*.

5 *A CALL* TO *THE GOOD SOLDIER*

5.1 Introduction

It is not novel to couple *A Call - The Tale of Two Passions* with *The Good Soldier*. Each of Ford's biographers has drawn the connection, generally regarding *The Good Soldier* as a better expression of what Mizener calls the 'essential idea' [174] underpinning both: the necessity of balance between passion and honour for social order to sustain. Moser argues that *A Call* 'foreshadows' *The Good Soldier* in dealing with the 'sense of pain that passion can inflict',[175] and Saunders reads it as anticipating the repression of passion, and its potential destructiveness.[176] Both novels certainly revolve around the turmoil of deep passions and their consequences, but they were not the first to do so. Chapter 1 shows how Ford's early novels link emotional repression to harmful behaviours, and ultimately to madness. The damaging passions of later novels, therefore, reflect its continuity as a destabilising factor. *A Call* is a bridge between the earlier novels and *The Good Soldier* and merits discussion for how it shapes Ford's inquiry into madness in his final pre-war novel.

5.2 *A Call*

5.2.1 Madness and Medicine

A Call, published alongside novels dealing in preternatural propositions,[177] initially appears less concerned with Ford's inquiry into the limits of rationalism. However, the subtitle a 'tale of two

[174] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 482.
[175] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 81.
[176] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 304.
[177] 'Just Possible' novels in Chapter 1.

passions' hints otherwise. Like 'legend',[178] a 'tale' carries connotations of being untrue, or at least difficult to believe. Ford's peers regarded *A Call* as 'profoundly and hopelessly untrue to life' and 'more art than life'.[179] The implication of implausibility and artifice aligns it with the 'Just Possible' novels which require readers to accept unlikely propositions. Like *The Simple Life Limited*, it deals in the everyday, but rather than in a community with alternative values *A Call* is set firmly in mainstream society, a recognisable world of inherited estates, broken engagements, marriages, bereavements, separations, reunions, and friendships. Yet the characters' motives and behaviours often appear strange.

The story concerns a 'small circle', like that curated by Moffat in *The Benefactor*, coalescing around Robert Grimshaw, whom Mizener identifies as resembling Moffat.[180] Grimshaw is caught between an honourable obligation to his ex-fiancé Katya Lascarides and his love for Pauline Lucas, whose marriage to Dudley Leicester he arranged. Pauline is in love with Robert, not Dudley. Katya is torn between her passion for Robert and a point of principle. She determines to live, as her mother had, in a partnership outside marriage. Grimshaw considers marriage the only viable option. Leicester believes himself happily married until a chance meeting with the 'red-lipped … scented and utterly uncontrollable Etta Stackpole'.[181] It is as tangled a web of relationships as those in *The Good Soldier* but with important differences: nobody commits suicide, no-one goes irrevocably mad, and Leicester, whose nervous breakdown is central to the plot, is ultimately cured.

Yet it is a novel as much about madness as any other in Ford's oeuvre, signalled in the first chapter where multiple characters are depicted as mentally unstable. Ellida Langham's six-year-old daughter

[178] Also discussed in Chapter 4.
[179] Arnold Bennett and D. H. Lawrence respectively, cited in Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 304.
[180] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 481.
[181] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 52-53.

Kitty is said to be 'mentally afflicted' [182] because she refuses to speak. Grimshaw describes Leicester as an 'obtuse hypochondriac'.[183] Grimshaw is said by Ellida not to have 'changed a bit' since he was an 'odd boy'.[184] Katya had 'behaved in the strangest possible manner' and was 'sent abroad under restraint, though her friends gave it out that she was in Philadelphia working at a nerve-cure place'.[185] The first of several doctors also appears in Chapter 1. Like Ullmann's attempts to reassure Ford,[186] Dr. Tressider's assurances to Ellida that there is 'nothing to be fundamentally anxious about' with Kitty simply raise other fears.[187] Ellida cannot recall 'exactly how to put it', but understands it as 'a form of obstinacy', something which 'runs in the family'.[188] Her sister Katya and their mother are cited as examples, suggesting the heritability of traits found in Ford's earlier representations of madness.

A Call is littered with patients and their doctors: Kitty, treated by both Dr. Tressider and Katya; Pauline's mother, who has angina pectoris and dies from pneumonia, attended by 'a doctor and a specialist' and 'closely-lipped nurses';[189] Mrs Clement Van Husen and her mother in law, both treated by Katya; and Leicester whose carers include Sir William Wells, 'the best man of the kind in London',[190] a 'gentle … youth called Held' who is 'put in by Sir William as if he were a bailiff in possession' [191] of the patient, an unnamed doctor invited for a second opinion, and Katya, herself the sufferer of a 'species of nervous breakdown' which saw her spending months in 'a hydropathic establishment on the Continent'.[192] Katya's position as both a victim of and specialist in nervous illness is indicative of Ford's purpose in *A Call*. As 'one of the first psychotherapist-characters in

[182] Ford, *A Call*, p. 3.
[183] Ford, *A Call,* p. 14.
[184] Ford, *A Call*, p. 16.
[185] Ford, *A Call,* p. 9.
[186] See Chapter 2 and Ford's experiences at Mammern.
[187] Ford, *A Call*, p. 12.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ford, *A Call*, p. 44.
[190] Ford, *A Call,* p. 148.
[191] Ford, *A Call,* p. 194.
[192] Ford, *A Call*, p. 22.

English fiction',[193] Katya stands in opposition to conventional medicine and is part of how Ford continues the debate about scientific rationality. It signifies, therefore, that she effects the cure on Leicester.

Leicester, like Brede in *The Benefactor*, is both a facilitator and an obstacle to Grimshaw's relationship with the woman he covets. Pauline is to Grimshaw as Clara was to Moffat, unattainable if honour is to be preserved. Just as Clara was a 'portrait' for Moffat to admire,[194] so Pauline is a 'small, light bird' that Grimshaw wants to put 'in a cage … chirrup over' and simply 'watch'.[195] As Ellida observes, however, Grimshaw can only watch his 'bird in Leicester's cage'.[196] Leicester, the more marginal character, is crucial to Ford's theme of madness.

5.2.2 Dudley Leicester – Passive Vacuum or Imaginative Impressionist?

In the novel's cast of characters Leicester is easily overlooked. Against stronger characters like Grimshaw he appears little more than an intensely passive foil. When he came into his inheritance, it was Grimshaw who 'set his estates in order', improved his income to a level that 'in other circumstances Leicester would have found intolerable', and 'provided' him with Pauline, a wife 'likely

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[193] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 301. Mark Micale in *The Mind of Modernism – Medicine, Psychology and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880-1940* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 9, identifies Marcel Prévost's *L'automne d'une femme* (1893) as the first known novel to depict a practitioner of the 'new, more sensitive psychological analysis'. In his earlier book, *Approaching Hysteria, Disease and Its Interpretations* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 197, Micale identifies the physician character as a Dr. Daumier, believed to be 'a portrait of Pierre Janet' who 'conducts long and psychological analyses of several neurotic patients beset by depression, lovesickness and various hysterical stigmata'. Ford may have known of this depiction. Prévost is one of a series of French authors reviewed in early editions of the Times Literary Supplement by Mary F. Robinson <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/mcvea-treglown-times-literary-supplement-first-1000-issues-1902-1921> [accessed 4 January 2024]. The Robinson family home in London was a central location for Pre Raphaelite painters including Ford Madox Brown (Wikipedia cites the source as Patricia Rigg's biography, *Agnes Mary Frances Robinson* (McGill Queens University Press, 2021)) and Ford himself refers to a party 'given by Miss Mary Robinson' on p. 103 of *Ancient Lights*. Ford may have read her review or, as it includes a woman in an arranged marriage who desires someone other than her sick husband, *L'automne d'une femme* itself.

[194] Ford, *The Benefactor*, p. 271.

[195] Ford, *A Call*, p. 17.

[196] Ford, *A Call*, p. 18.

to be the making of him'.[197] Though Grimshaw considers himself Leicester's 'best friend', the impact of his actions suggests more nuance.[198] Leicester, who wanted only 'enough to satisfy his simple needs', finds his surplus cash the 'most worrying' fact of his existence.[199] His affairs are sorted so comprehensively, he is left with 'nothing in the world to do. Nothing whatever!' [200] Mizener was right to see parallels between Moffat, who polished people like jewels, and Grimshaw who bequeaths 'what was dearest and best' to him, Pauline, as he might a pet, to the man he wants to fix.[201] If *A Call* reaches back to the early novels, it anticipates *The Good Soldier* where John Dowell also has 'nothing in the world to do – but nothing whatever!' [202] The repetition of the phrase across the two novels creates the 'associational force' [203] highlighted by Skinner, and primes recognition of other similarities. For example, Leicester 'perceived absolutely nothing' of the jealousies and passions permeating his 'particular world of deep idleness', foreshadowing Dowell's apparent ignorance of the undercurrents in his own leisured society.[204] Understanding Leicester, therefore, suggests ways to engage with Dowell.

It is not simply that Leicester is passive or unperceptive that signifies, but that he is presented as vacuous, empty of thought and intelligence, and in need of management. This quality of emptiness makes Leicester a vacuum into which others project their own aspirations and desires. Ford hints, however, that it would be wrong to write him off as an empty container by giving him the status of a 'hypochondriac'. The term denotes someone overly anxious about their health, and it is worth remembering that Ford used it about himself and knew it to connote that such concerns are

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[197] Ford, *A Call*, p. 47.
[198] Ford, *A Call*, p. 14.
[199] Ford, *A Call*, p. 47.
[200] Ford, *A Call*, p. 48.
[201] Ford, *A Call*, p. 14.
[202] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 22.
[203] See Introduction for discussion.
[204] Ford, *A Call*, p. 46.

unfounded, imaginary even.[205] From this perspective, Leicester is a character with imagination, able to believe things which may not be real, and vice versa. It is not accidental that his imagination is implicated in his breakdown. Tracing how this happens illustrates its significance.

When the novel opens Leicester has just married Pauline, who sees him as 'a large, pleased spaniel' who is 'so slow that he never seemed to get a word out' and so happy that he 'never made the effort'.[206] For his part, Leicester finds it 'pleasant enough' to listen to his wife as she 'thought aloud', but, like Grimshaw before her, Pauline takes charge, insists that he will become 'tired of her prattle', and extracts his promise to stand for election after a year of marriage.[207] That it is Pauline who might be tiring of Leicester is implied by her having 'ejected him' from her mother's cottage when he would rather have stayed.[208] His tendency to knock over crockery might be 'a constant torture' to her sick mother, but Pauline's 'secret consciousness' of it makes it her issue too.[209] Leicester might not be perceptive but his belief that the nurses had sent him 'quite dismal … back to town' results not from his own inadequacy but from Pauline hiding that 'it was she who did it'.[210]

Alone in town without Pauline to divert him from 'melancholy forebodings',[211] Leicester succumbs to despondency, approaching his day with 'an air of immense indifference', his face 'empty … with an emptiness of depression'.[212] With 'nothing in the world to do', his daily exercise prescription becomes a 'bright spot'.[213] He believes the doctor's advice that if he did not follow the regime exactly, it would have no benefit, and so is obsessively precise. He 'longed immensely' for the promised benefits

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[205] As shown in Chapter 2, Ford's use of the term about his illness carries this connotation.
[206] Ford, *A Call*, p. 40.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ford, *A Call*, p. 45.
[209] Ford, *A Call*, p. 44.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ford, *A Call,* p. 50.
[212] Ford*, A Call,* p. 48.
[213] Ibid.

because of his 'constant panics and ideas of ill-health'.[214] Despite his outwardly vacant appearance, Leicester is a maelstrom of such anxieties. He fears tuberculosis because an aunt had been consumptive; walks the streets with eyes closed, having once read that constant traffic damaged the optic nerve; and dreads attending social dinners alone, where he might be 'taken ill between the soup and the fish' or make a fool of himself by doing something absurd.[215] Grimshaw's assessment of Leicester as a hypochondriac does not seem misplaced. Nor does Pauline's making him 'promise not to be an irrational idiot' in refusing dinner invitations whilst she was with her mother.[216] This is familiar territory from earlier novels where characters are 'made mad' by the opinions and language of those close to them. It is his promise to Pauline which propels Leicester to the dinner where his fear of doing something foolish is realised. Furthermore, a telephone call from Grimshaw proves to be the catalyst for his breakdown. Leicester may have been predisposed, but his breakdown implicates the people who best understood that.

Another of these people is Etta, the first love from whom Leicester had separated following her flirtations with 'a boot-black' and unwillingness to observe the 'dictates' of her own class.[217] Etta, a 'masterful woman' whom he can 'no more control' now than he could then, contrives to have him walk her home against his better judgement.[218] Descriptions of Etta focus on her physicality. Her features are 'long, white, and seductive',[219] her 'subtle and Eastern perfume' [220] envelops them, 'her breasts gleamed',[221] her hair is 'disordered',[222] and her 'deep thrilled voice' takes Leicester 'out of himself, as if into some other plane' until he is unable to 'remember Pauline' without feeling disloyal

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[214] Ibid.
[215] Ford, *A Call,* p. 51.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ford, *A Call,* p. 53.
[218] Ford, *A Call,* p. 61.
[219] Ford, *A Call*, p. 62.
[220] Ford, *A Call*, p. 63.
[221] Ford, *A Call,* p. 70.
[222] Ford, *A Call,* p. 75.

to Etta.[223] There are echoes of Anne Jeal's ability to bewitch men in *The 'Half Moon'*, and Etta has the same self-confidence, telling Grimshaw that no man 'could get out of my having him if I set myself to it'.[224] The sense that Leicester is enchanted emerges because the descriptions are focalised through him. This is the point of him feeling on 'some other plane', much as Sorrell had done in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*. It illustrates how his mind works impressionistically, conjuring up scenarios, losing himself in his imagination.

The spell breaks when Leicester accompanies Etta into her home, the telephone rings, and he is returned to a world where the servants will wake and know he is there unless, as Etta insists, he answers it. This is the 'call' of the novel's title, the incident which destabilises Leicester. The voice which asks, 'Are you 4,259 Mayfair?' is 'peremptory',[225] carrying an authority which makes him 'suddenly afraid', as if he has been 'detected … in some crime'.[226] The caller becomes an 'invisible man' with a 'low, distinct, stealthy and clear' voice, furtive and threatening.[227] At the question 'Isn't that Dudley Leicester speaking?' he answers 'Yes' and in a 'sudden panic' hangs up.[228] Until the call he had 'existed merely in the tide of his senses', but now is returned to his mind and the fear that they may have been seen 'in Regent Street' by Etta's husband or 'some blackmailer'.[229] These fears have the same quality as his health anxieties. They are suppositions, not probabilities. However, they are real to Leicester who believes that, were she to find out, it would 'break Pauline's heart'.[230] This constructed reality becomes dominant. When he surfaces from sleep the following morning to hear a voice asking, 'Are you 4,259 Mayfair?' he almost answers before realising that it is 'only a very vivid

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[223] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 76-78.
[224] Ford*, A Call*, p. 137.
[225] Ford, *A Call*, p. 76.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ford*, A Call*, p. 77.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 76-77.
[230] Ibid.

recollection'.[231] Even so, his 'heart was beating very rapidly' and it is real enough for him to ask his servant, Saunders, whether he had asked the question.[232] Saunders says not and hands over a letter from Pauline. Leicester interprets the bracelet which falls from the letter as 'a symbol, a sending back of his gifts'.[233] Although the letter is simply requesting him to take the bracelet for repair, Leicester's relief is 'momentary' and followed by 'a host of other fears'.[234] The chapter's stark closing sentence, 'For Dudley Leicester had entered into a world of dread', is not mere repetition for emphasis. He has entered a world created within his own mind.

Leicester becomes increasingly paranoid. He imagines Saunders to have 'grown reserved, frigid, disapproving' and to have a 'threatening aspect'.[235] He fears the 'reproach that he imagined would come into Robert Grimshaw's dark eyes' [236] and his conviction that Grimshaw would 'condemn him' if he knew of 'his disgrace' cuts off a key source of counsel.[237] Even his questions, he fears, would 'give him away'.[238] Questions about how soon things might be published in newspapers, and whether servants might spy on them, perhaps should have raised concerns, but instead met with Grimshaw's 'irritation'.[239] Made 'friendless and utterly solitary' by his suspicions, Leicester's imagination runs unchecked. When Pauline notices the change in him, how he is either 'too gay' or 'silent for hours', and might 'suddenly … shudder' or 'cowers' in a corner 'as if he were afraid', she summons Grimshaw.[240] He is, she asserts, 'very ill … mentally; he's quite altered'.[241] She attributes it to whatever had happened when he was alone in town, assuming it to be 'another woman',[242] which Grimshaw

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[231] Ford, *A Call*, p. 79.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ford, *A Call*, p. 80.
[234] Ford, *A Call,* p. 81.
[235] Ford, *A Call*, p. 82.
[236] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 91-92.
[237] Ford, *A Call,* p. 83.
[238] Ford, *A Call,* p. 84.
[239] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 84-85.
[240] Ford, *A Call,* p. 126.
[241] Ford, *A Call*, p. 125.
[242] Ford*, A Call*, p. 127.

concedes. All Grimshaw knows for definite is that Leicester had answered his telephone call to Etta's home, but he confirms Pauline in her belief. Pauline believes herself culpable in having 'perhaps valued [her] mother more' when she had 'turned Dudley out' of her home.[243] She determines to tell Leicester that she knows, not out of malice, but because 'He'll never be himself as long as he's trying to conceal it' and she has 'got to get him well'.[244]

Leicester had almost persuaded himself that if Pauline were going to find out, it would have already happened. The 'whole thing had been a trick of his nerves', and though he has been 'nearly mad', it is 'all over'.[245] A moment later he opens a box with a faint odour recalling the 'sweet, musky cobwebby' scent of Etta and is 'jerked out of his day-dream'.[246] Notice how rational thought has become a 'day-dream', something unreal. This is the last insight into Leicester's mental functioning for Pauline's sudden appearance confirms to him that she 'knows all about it'.[247] The 'insane desire' to ask 'perfect strangers in the street – whether they were the men who had rung up 4,259 Mayfair' returns.[248] Leicester rushes out and is found by Grimshaw in a hat shop asking the owner this question whilst threatening him with an iron. Grimshaw intervenes with a 'cool, firm grip' and Leicester collapses muttering 'I've got cobwebs all over my face … beastly, beastly cobwebs'.[249] After this he 'did not utter another word',[250] and Leicester becomes inaccessible to other characters and to the reader. The story of his madness is told by his friends and physicians.

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[243] Ford, *A Call*, p. 128.
[244] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 127-28.
[245] Ford*, A Call*, pp. 134-35.
[246] Ford, *A Call*, p. 135.
[247] Ford, *A Call*, p. 136.
[248] Ford*, A Call,* p. 135.
[249] Ford*, A Call*, p. 138.
[250] Ford, *A Call,* p. 138.

5.2.3 Making and Undoing Madness

As in earlier novels, the process by which Leicester is made mad is linguistic. Vivid imagery of him sunk in his chair like 'clothes carelessly thrown down',[251] and a 'dissipated scarecrow … gazing upon nothing' whilst his hands beat 'a tattoo on the leather arms' depersonalises him.[252] He becomes someone about whom people talk as if he were not present, with Pauline and Grimshaw arguing, in an adjoining doorway, about whether he is 'mad' and needs a doctor.[253] Grimshaw wants 'facts', such as signs of fever or failure to eat, to brief a doctor. For Pauline, the 'facts' are that her husband has always been 'a little strange' and suffered from 'fits of gloom'.[254] The signs were there, but she had ignored them. Like Clara in *The Benefactor*, Pauline feels culpable but also attributes Leicester's breakdown to his temperament.

Sir Willam Wells, in contrast, hypothesises that a shock was the cause. Accordingly, Grimshaw visits Etta demanding to know 'what had happened on the night' Leicester saw her home.[255] Though he clearly believed that Leicester had been 'carrying on an intrigue' with her, he is disabused of this idea.[256] Etta points out that he knows Leicester as well as she does and that he 'wanted to believe' in his friend's deceit only as an excuse to 'take … Pauline off his hands again'.[257] When Grimshaw relays Wells' hypothesis of a shock, Etta says that Leicester had been 'knocked plumb-centre' by the man on the telephone who identified him.[258] Grimshaw concedes that the 'meddling fool' who made the call, not Etta, carries responsibility, but does not acknowledge it to be him.[259] Wells concedes that the call

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[251] Ford, *A Call*, p. 140.
[252] Ford, *A Call*, p. 142.
[253] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 142-43.
[254] Ford, *A Call,* p. 144.
[255] Ford, *A Call*, p. 174.
[256] Ford, *A Call,* p. 180.
[257] Ford, *A Call,* p. 183.
[258] Ford, *A Call*, p. 184.
[259] Ibid.

constituted the kind of shock he had imagined but it does not help 'towards the cure'.[260] Leicester's only hope is that his 'brain-fibre – what the Germans call the Hirnstoff' is tough enough to aid recovery.[261] This echoes the vague 'Great Nerve' in Ullmann's diagnosis of Ford's 1904 breakdown, subtly casting doubt on Wells.[262] Wells' claim also positions him among the medical profession with 'materialist beliefs that mental diseases, in all their guises, were physiologically or organically determined'.[263] Thus, when Grimshaw proposes that Leicester's 'mania, if it is a mania' is part of his 'ordinary character', Wells loftily declares that 'character's nothing to do with it' and they must 'establish whether there is or isn't a lesion on the brain'.[264] His experience of 'literally thousands – of similar cases' outweighs the 'utterly impossible' suggestions of laymen.[265] Nevertheless, the impossibility of communicating with a man who can neither be made 'to speak' nor 'listen when he's spoken to' leaves Wells no option but to 'wait until he does'.[266] He appoints a companion to 'keep him quiet … and encourage exercise',[267] but promises no cure because he is 'not one of those quacks' but someone who works 'from ascertained facts, not from theories'.[268] This recalls Clarges in *Mr. Apollo* with his emphasis on empirical science and dismissal of spiritualists and psychic researchers. Wells here represents one side of the debate in which medical culture underwent profound change as the focus shifted from brain to mind,[269] and the centrality of suggestion theory to 'Mind Healing' [270] was embraced not only by doctors but also 'theologians, spiritualists, theosophists, and of course "quacks"'.[271] Wells' pretensions to scientific superiority are humorously punctured when he

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[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid.
[262] See Chapter 2 and Ford's doubts about whether Ullmann was a genius or a quack.
[263] Philip Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain,* p. xiv.
[264] Ford, *A Call*, p. 190.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ford, *A Call*, p. 193.
[267] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 191-92.
[268] Ford, *A Call*, p. 193.
[269] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain,* p. xiv.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain,* p. xv.

unwittingly appoints as Leicester's companion, Mr. Held, a Christian Scientist with a belief in telepathy.

As a further irony, the man Wells would denounce as a quack indirectly leads to Leicester's cure. It is Held who calls in Grimshaw when he fears that Pauline is 'approaching a crisis, a breakdown of her personality'.[272] He sensed it 'suddenly' in a way he couldn't explain except perhaps as something to do with 'Christian Science' helping him 'to be telepathic'.[273] It could equally have been the 'mournful but enormous tenderness' he had developed for Pauline which made him responsive, but he wants to believe himself telepathic.[274] His intervention leads to Pauline denouncing Wells to Grimshaw as 'no good' [275], and arguing that had they not been 'letting time slip' because of their feelings for each other, they would have seen earlier that Wells was a 'cold fool'.[276] This replays the negligence of Brede in *The Benefactor* for similar reasons. Grimshaw recognises the truth of Pauline's accusation, recalling Wells and his 'confrère' as 'like vultures'.[277] That this is an acknowledgement of the exploitative nature of Wells' treatment is clear from the observation that his services to Leicester had funded the 'redecoration of his house from top to bottom' and averted potential bankruptcy.[278] If Pauline and Grimshaw had deluded themselves that they acted in Leicester's interests, Wells had consciously acted in his own. Having recognised their neglect, Pauline determines to 'do what's right',[279] to engage Katya, who 'ought to have been asked from the first'.[280]

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[272] Ford, *A Call*, p. 226.
[273] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 226-27.
[274] Ford, *A Call*, p. 226.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Ford, *A Call,* p. 231.
[277] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 227-28.
[278] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 191-92.
[279] Ford, *A Call*, p. 230.
[280] Ford, *A Call,* p. 231.

Held's intervention, leading to the replacement of Wells by Katya, affirms to him that he has the capacity to become a 'Healer without any conscientious doubts' about his capability.[281] His 'discovery' that he could 'synchronize' his mentality with that of another person with whom he was 'very much in sympathy', combined with his belief in 'Mrs. Eddy's doctrine', persuades him that he could become a faith healer.[282] What qualifies a Vicar's son with a 'first in classics', an 'amateur belt for wrestling' and the 'immense' strength which leads Sir William to select him 'for cases of intermittent violence' to be a healer?[283] Simply that he has 'so much faith' and belief.[284] He is the counter to Wells' 'ascertained facts'. There is sufficient ambiguity when Held senses that Pauline's deep distress arises from more than the delay in realising that she needed to appoint Katya, as she claims, to suggest him as possibly telepathic, or simply empathetic. This equivocacy also enfolds Katya when Held implicates her in his belief system. She 'was certain to have imbibed' some of Mrs. Eddy's teaching in the United States.[285] Held knows of Katya because there is a whole 'world of us talking about each other',[286] and in that community she has 'a great professional reputation'.[287] The association of Katya with Eddy's doctrine is not uncomplicated. Eddy was the founder of Christian Science in the United States and her theological adherence to faith healing placed her in tension with both the church and the medical profession.[288] Eddy's sanity was questioned, and differences of psychiatric opinion were publicly reported.[289] Leslie de Bont argues for Sinclair and Ford's therapists as the 'voice of authority', the

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[281] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 234-35.
[282] Ford, *A Call,* p. 236.
[283] Ford, *A Call*, pp. 232-33.
[284] Ford, *A Call*, p. 233.
[285] Ford, *A Call,* p. 236.
[286] Ford, *A Call*, p. 232.
[287] Ibid.
[288] <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-Science> [accessed 13 February 2019].
[289] In 1907, two years before Ford was writing *A Call,* Eddy was the subject of a legal case during which four psychiatrists evaluated her. Although they concluded that she was fit to manage her own affairs, differences of opinion within the psychiatric community were reported in medical journals and The New York Times. She was variously described as hysterical, psychotic and paranoid or as unfairly charged with any form of insanity. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-Science> [accessed 13 February 2019].

equivalent of 'modern day wizards and witches' whose power could not be questioned.[290] Whilst that is certainly how characters respond to her, Ford's creation of a therapist with a history of mental breakdown and an association with Eddy introduces doubt about Katya. It invites the question of how she achieved the results which left patients like Mrs Clement Van Husen claiming that Katya had 'saved her life and reason'.[291]

Katya certainly speaks the language of medicine. She notes that as Tressider found no 'functional' issues with the 'brain or vocal organs' in 'Kitty's case' [292] it must be 'regarded psychologically'.[293] She attributes Kitty's muteness to a desire of which she is not necessarily 'aware' to 'be made a fuss of, to occupy the whole mind of some person'.[294] These are 'very human' motives, not something to put 'down to mental aberration'.[295] This is reminiscent of Myers' refusal to pathologize mental states beneath conscious control. It is worth noting that this diagnosis is made before Katya has met Kitty, so constitutes the kind of 'theories' denounced by Wells. However, Katya's theories appear to work. By maintaining silence and eliciting no speech, she tempts Kitty to talk. Her recognition that the cause of Kitty's 'obstinacy' was effectively a diagnosis of her 'own case' creates uncertainty about whether professional expertise, emotional empathy or a blend of both, much like that of Oscar Ullmann, achieved the outcome. Either way, what distinguishes Held and Katya from Tressider and Wells is that they engage with the person, not just physical symptoms.

When Katya comes to treat Leicester, her first action is to touch 'with the tips of her fingers little and definite points on his temples and brows'.[296] This description is similar to one given by T. W. Mitchell,

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[290] Leslie de Bont, 'From the Priest to the Therapist: Secrecy, Technology and Language in Ford Madox Ford's *A Call* and May Sinclair's *Anne Severn and The Fieldings',* in Colombino and Saunders, *The Edwardian Ford Madox Ford*, pp. 181-2.
[291] Ford, *A Call*, p. 23.
[292] Ford, *A Call,* p. 100.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ford, *A Call,* p. 101.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ford, *A Call*, p. 266.

a physician and psychical researcher, cited in Kuhn: 'I take his head between my hands in such a way that while my fingers rest lightly on the sides of his face and temples, my thumbs can, with ease, be placed on his closed eyelids'.[297] Mitchell used hypnotherapy to substitute unpleasant ideas with more positive ones, whereas Katya claims her actions are 'part of the process' designed to 'get him to like me, to make him have confidence in me, so that I can get to know something about him'.[298] Ford's depiction perhaps relies on his experience of Ullmann rather than specific knowledge of the process, but his description would be enough to imply to contemporary readers that Katya was using suggestion therapy. The final scene makes this clearer. Katya tells Grimshaw that she will ask Leicester to put his question, 'Are you the chap who rang up 4,259 Mayfair?' to him.[299] Grimshaw will say it was, and 'That'll cure him'.[300] Katya stands behind the chair and places her hands on 'Leicester's hair in preparation for bending down to make, near his ear, the suggestion that he should put his question'.[301]

In the novel, this question is not recounted. Instead, the final scene contains the resolution between Grimshaw and Katya, that they will marry. Leicester's question, the response, his cure and his voice exist only between the lines. Not until the epistolary epilogue is it confirmed that 'Dudley Leicester was … cured almost immediately by the methods of Katya Lascarides'.[302] Ford adds that 'it would be absurd to imagine that the effects of his short breakdown would not influence the whole of his after-life'.[303] How could it be otherwise? Leicester's breakdown was instigated by his anxiety, but it was fuelled by the actions and inactions of those around him: Etta who wanted to punish him; his wife and best friend whose belief in his infidelity was merely a convenient projection; 'wickedly unskilful'

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[297] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain,* p. 200.
[298] Ford, *A Call*, p. 266.
[299] Ford, *A Call*, p. 138.
[300] Ford, *A Call*, p. 289.
[301] Ford, *A Call,* pp. 290-91.
[302] Ford, *A Call,* p. 299.
[303] Ford, *A Call,* p. 300.

[304] doctoring by Wells; and a therapist who negotiates with Grimshaw above his head whilst effecting his cure. Most importantly, Grimshaw withheld the one fact which mattered, and its absence left Leicester to the mercy of his own imaginings, his world of dread.

5.2.4 Traversing to *The Good Soldier*

The argument that *A Call* bridges from earlier novels to *The Good Soldier* rests on two things. Firstly, its sense of madness as relational, constructed between people. Leicester's innate anxieties make him vulnerable, but the neglect and ineptitude of those who could help contribute strongly. That they each eventually do the 'right' thing perhaps explains why there is damage but not the destruction of *The Good Soldier*. After all, Etta rescues Leicester's reputation, Grimshaw capitulates to Katya, and Pauline stands by her husband. Little of this has anything to do with love, making, as Ford's epilogue states, any sense of a happy ending 'ugly, superfluous and disagreeable'.[305]

The second way in which *A Call* prepares the ground for *The Good Soldier* depends on examining how Leicester is cured but not unscathed. The betrayal Leicester may have felt once he knew the facts anticipates Dowell's grievances about being duped, misused and neglected. However, the claim to Leicester's sense of betrayal is an inference based largely on the epilogue. Whilst Ford argues that for him, the '"affair" of Dudley Leicester's madness' ended with his cure, this is not true for a reader.[306] The lacuna opened by Leicester's breakdown remains a void. Unlike with Sorrell in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, a reader can never know where Leicester's imagination took him, how Katya's cure brought him back, and how he felt about it. In *The Good Soldier* Ford addresses this by providing

[304] Ford's description of his own experience, discussed in Chapter 2.
[305] Ford, *A Call*, p. 298.
[306] Ford, *A Call*, p. 300.

direct access to the mind of Dowell, a man able to account for his breakdown and to take readers inside the experience.

5.3 *The Good Soldier*

5.3.1 Introduction

The Good Soldier is famously labyrinthine so finding an analytical path through it requires a frame of reference. Whilst in this thesis the frame is madness, in a novel where 'all the chief characters at some point go mad' a more defined vantage point is helpful.[307] This is suggested, in part, by its intertextuality with other Ford novels.

It has similarities with *The Benefactor* and *A Call* in its focus on the intense, entangled relationships in a small circle of people. The core of the coterie are John Dowell and his wife Florence, their English friends Edward and Leonora Ashburnham, and Nancy Rufford, a young girl in the care of Edward and Leonora. Other characters impinge on the group: Maisie Maidan, a young married woman with whom Edward becomes briefly enamoured; a young man named Jimmy who had 'seduced' [308] Florence before her marriage; Rodney Bayham who becomes Leonora's second husband; a 'rather odious Englishman called Bagshawe'; and a series of women with whom Edward has dalliances or fully realised affairs.[309] Beyond the claustrophobic group relationships, there are other similarities. Just as Moffat renounces Clara in *The Benefactor*, so Edward attempts to relinquish Nancy. Pauline's stoic acceptance of Leicester's suspected infidelity in *A Call* foreshadows Leonora's tortured tolerance of Edward's affairs. Leicester, as previously highlighted, shares common ground with Dowell. Yet there

[307] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 175.
[308] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 154.
[309] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 74.

are significant differences. There is not obviously, in *The Good Soldier*, a Moffat or Grimshaw managing other people's lives. Nor do people honourably resist their passions. Instead, they act on them with disastrous consequences. Not only, as Moser observes, do all the main characters go mad 'under the force of passion', but Nancy ends the novel like Brede, beyond communication, Edward and Florence have committed suicide, and Leonora and Dowell are estranged.[310] It is a 'melodramatic story' with readers 'asked to believe' that Dowell was duped by his wife's heart disease, accepted an unconsummated marriage for twelve years, failed to notice her affairs, and continued to 'love the memory of Edward' even when he knew the truth.[311] This questioning of credulity, Dowell's own and that required of a reader, has permeated much critical discussion. Indeed, *The Good Soldier* is deemed an 'exemplary modernist text' in part because of this unreliable narration.[312] The critical consensus that Dowell is an unreliable narrator has generated many interpretations of the novel, perhaps the most challenging being Roger Poole's reading of Dowell as a murderer whose account was designed to disguise his crime.[313] In focusing on the story and its deceptions, however, it is possible to lose sight of the state of mind which tells the story, Dowell's own.

Why might this matter? An essential difference between *A Call* and *The Good Soldier* lies in Ford's choice to make Dowell the narrator of events which intimately concern him. This makes it possible to see inside the mind of a man who, like Leicester, has a breakdown. Dowell also has control of the narrative and, therefore, of who is deemed mad and why. If, as Nagihan Haliloğlu observes, his privileged role allows Dowell to challenge the morals of other characters whilst his own can 'never be questioned', then this is true too of his mental state.[314] It is notable, therefore, that critics have read

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[310] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 175.
[311] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 155.
[312] Saunders, *Introduction* to Ford, *The Good Soldier* (Oxford World Classics), p. vii.
[313] Roger Poole, 'The Unknown Ford Madox Ford', in Hampson and Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford's Modernity*.
[314] Nagilhan Haliloğlu, 'Good People and Chorus Girls: The Notion of Respectability in The Good Soldier and Quartet', in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays*, p. 258.

Dowell as psychologically damaged. Mizener charts a critical tendency to see Dowell's narrative as a 'a systematically distorted understanding' of real events and the novel as 'an ironic portrait' or a 'tragic story of mismatched lives' from which only the narrator emerges 'intact' because he 'understood more of the story than any of the people in it'.[315] Whether Dowell's 'distorted understanding' results from a 'severely neurotic personality',[316] or delirious confusion as Preece argues,[317] is debateable. Whether he can be said to have emerged 'intact' is much less so. As the discussion of *A Call* illustrates, the effects of a breakdown linger. Isabelle Brasme highlights this possibility for Dowell when she observes that he seems 'unwilling' to access his past or is unable to do so, 'as in states of post-traumatic stress disorder'.[318] It is, as Brasme suggests, 'interesting … to adopt' the latter perspective for two reasons: the proposition that Dowell is dealing with the aftermath of trauma, and the implication that what he cannot say might be as important as anything he does say.[319] It is worth reiterating that it is Dowell's own narrative on which these judgements are based. As such, they are signals encoded in how he chooses to tell his story. For this reason, this chapter is concerned less with evaluating whether Dowell's account is reliable and more in uncovering what it signifies in relation to him.

5.3.2 Shaping the Saddest Story

It is useful to consider how Dowell conceives of his role in shaping the narrative. Like an author of fiction who creates a voice and persona to tell a story, Dowell adopts a similar mask. He is not, as

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[315] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 258. Mizener provides a summary of relative positions in footnote 1 to chapter 20, p. 566.
[316] Mizener attributes this to Meixener (*The Saddest Story*, p. 567, footnote 1).
[317] Julian Preece, 'Anglo-German Dilemmas in The Good Soldier, or: Europe on the Brink in 1913', in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays*, p. 226.
[318] Isabelle Brasme, 'From Disfigured to Transfigured Past: Memory and History in The Good Soldier' in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays*, p. 84.
[319] Ibid.

Moser observes, telling the tale 'in a low voice' to a 'sympathetic soul',[320] but is 'writing [it] down … over a period of two years'.[321] Less obviously than Moffat in *The Benefactor* or Bransdon in *The Simple Life Limited*, Dowell is another of Ford's author figures. He makes this clear when he says that imagining his listener by the 'fireside of a country cottage' is a strategy to help him to know how 'best to put this thing down'.[322]

Why he is writing his narrative at all is a question Dowell anticipates and answers:

> You may well ask why I write. And yet my reasons are quite many. For it is not unusual in human beings who have witnessed the sack of a city or the falling to pieces of a people, to desire to set down what they have witnessed for the benefit of unknown heirs or of generations infinitely remote; or, if you please, just to get the sight out of their heads.[323]

The claim to write for posterity and the comparison of the break-up of their 'little four-square coterie' to the sack of a city feels like hyperbole intended to convey the magnitude of the events Dowell intends to relate.[324] Certainly to him they were 'unthinkable', so momentous that any sense of 'refuge' he had has now 'vanished'.[325] His suggestion that writing might remove the images from his mind has led some critics to argue that 'Dowell is really writing only to himself',[326] or that his account is a 'reflective' narrative aimed at 'catharsis and a sense of meaning',[327] effectively a 'personal act of narrative therapy'.[328] However, it would be a false dichotomy to argue for Dowell's narrative as either personal or public for it functions in both ways.

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[320] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 159.
[321] Ibid.
[322] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 15.
[323] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 10-11.
[324] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 11.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford,* p. 159
[327] Cara Chimirri, '"The End is Where We Start From": Spatial Aspects of Retrospection in The Good Soldier and "In Parenthesis"', in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays,* p. 241.
[328] Chimirri cites Kenneth Womack, p. 242.

Whilst Ford claimed to be a 'perfectly self-conscious writer' who knew 'exactly how' he got his 'effects', in Dowell he created a writer who declaims any such skill.[329] Dowell agonises about whether to tell his story 'from the beginning' or 'from this distance of time, as it reached [him] from the lips of Leonora or from those of Edward',[330] then opts to tell it 'in a very rambling way', creating a 'sort of maze' which is difficult to 'find a path through'.[331] He defends his approach as true to the way one discusses a 'long, sad affair – one goes back one goes forward', adding in forgotten items lest their omission creates 'a false impression'.[332] In this way it will 'seem most real'.[333] He is not claiming to offer an accurate and sequentially organised 'report' but, in line with Ford's own aesthetics, a series of 'unordered pictures' reflecting the way he recalls them,[334] to 'produce an illusion of reality in the mind of one's reader'.[335] Saunders highlights how 'like an impressionist critic or novelist' Dowell sounds despite Ford's textual revisions to make him sound 'less literary'.[336] Ford might have wanted to dilute Dowell's literariness, but he did not erase it. It is on the page and so, as Skinner argues, is there to be seen and noted.[337] Dowell's literariness is important to understanding how his mind works. He thinks in stories: those recounted in the narrative and those he tells himself. The ostensible story is that which he prefers not to call 'The Ashburnham Tragedy' but 'the Saddest Story'.[338] Moser argues that a novel in which five characters are destroyed and 'Only … Leonora … thrives, being in the end happily married and pregnant' [339] could as easily be labelled 'the grimmest' or 'The Strangest' story.[340] This presupposes that the sadness lies in the events, but Joseph Conrad recognised it as a

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[329] Ford, 'On Impressionism', in Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical Edition, p. 274.
[330] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 15.
[331] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 124.
[332] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 124-25.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ford, *On Impressionism*, p. 290.
[335] Ford, *On Impressionism*, p. 279.
[336] Saunders, 'A Chronology of the Novel', in Ford, *The Good Soldier* (Oxford World Classics), p. xvi.
[337] See Introduction, Section 1.3.
[338] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 113.
[339] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 155.
[340] Ibid.

tone, writing that in the cadences 'one hears all through them a tone of fretful melancholy, extremely effective',[341] a phrase carrying connotations of distress, anxiety and depression.[342] Where Moser replaced the word 'sad', Conrad seems to want to amplify it, as if it is inadequate. If all the main characters go mad, then Dowell is included, so the tone noted by Conrad is an expression of what happens when, after 'nine years and six months less four days', Dowell's illusion that the life he has is a 'goodly apple' meets the reality that it is 'rotten at the core'.[343]

Dowell's statement about the timing of this discovery, and his claim to be 'horribly alone', prompt the question of when he began writing and what he knew at that point. Vincent Cheng argues that Dowell began writing his account shortly after Edward's funeral and 'worked at it for six months, composing all but the last two chapters' by mid-1914.[344] The final two chapters were completed eighteen months later in 'late 1915 or early 1916'.[345] Saunders refines this chronology, calculating that Dowell began writing immediately after the 'four crashing days' [346] in February 1914 when he learned of Florence's adultery with Edward, and that it may not have been completed until as late as June 1916.[347] The eighteen-month pause claimed by Dowell [348] supposedly happened after he and Leonora were informed by Nancy's father that she had gone mad after reading a newspaper report of Edward's suicide. The gap represents the period when Dowell travelled 'through Europe, Africa and Asia' to collect Nancy and return her to Bramshaw.[349] In this analysis, Dowell wrote his narrative in the full knowledge of all events except for Nancy's madness. However, there is reason to question

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[341] Moser, *The Life in the Fiction of Ford Madox Ford*, p. 194
[342] 'Fretful', meaning distressed or worried, and 'melancholy' deriving from the Greek 'melankholia' meaning black bile, an excess of which was associated with depression.
[343] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 12.
[344] Vincent Cheng, 'A Chronology of The Good Soldier', in Ford, *The Good Soldier*, Norton Critical edition, p. 395.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 11.
[347] Saunders, *A Chronology of the Novel*, pp. 223-24.
[348] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 155.
[349] Cheng, *A Chronology of The Good Soldier*, p. 395.

this. If, as both chronologies agree,[350] Dowell was at Bramshaw with Leonora for six months after Edward's death, why would he describe himself as 'horribly alone' when he began writing? Saunders points out that Dowell claims to have begun Part 3 of the narrative five weeks after Edward's funeral, around February 1914,[351] and calculates that the letter informing them of Nancy's madness arrived in mid to late 1914.[352] Therefore, when Dowell says in the first chapter of Part 3 that from the moment Leonora had said he might marry Nancy, he had thought of nothing else, until her 'worse than death', it jars.[353] The clue that this phrase denotes madness lies in the novel's intertextuality with *The Benefactor* where death is positioned as a better alternative for Brede than his madness.[354] Taken together, these factors suggest that Dowell's story was written in the full knowledge of how it ended, with Nancy incommunicably mad and he therefore 'horribly alone'.

Of course, this analysis rests on the chronology of a novel so convoluted that any attempt to untangle it is open to challenge. However, its importance here is not as further evidence of Dowell's narratorial slipperiness but as a reminder that he is not simply recalling events but is shaping a narrative, a series of overlapping stories replayed from different angles, revised, expanded, and sometimes contradicting each other. They are the stories Dowell tells himself, ruminates over and finally evaluates. That everyone succumbs to madness is the core of each and whilst passion is certainly the crucible in which that madness is unleashed, Dowell's explanations are more nuanced, layering onto the heritable madness found in the early novels, the relational madness of *A Call*, the issue of broader social norms and, crucially, the role of story.

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[350] Cheng, *A Chronology of The Good Soldier*, p. 395 and Saunders, *A Chronology of the Novel*, p. 223.
[351] Saunders, *A Chronology of the Novel,* p. 221.
[352] Saunders, *A Chronology of the Novel,* p. 223.
[353] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 87.
[354] See Ford, *The Benefactor,* p. 339

5.3.3 The Madness of Love

Dowell's narrative aims to show how each of his fellow characters lose the rational parts of themselves to their love entanglements. For love, misplaced, rejected, reciprocated or thwarted is the primary emotion at the heart of the story. Edward's inappropriate liaisons, Leonora's inability to secure her husband's undivided affections, Florence's failed affair with Edward, Edward and Nancy's separation, and Dowell's sense that he is merely 'serviceable' combine to turn love toxic.[355] The lightning rod is Edward, whom all three women loved. To tell his story, Dowell allocates roles to each of the women. Leonora is the faithful but controlling wife and sole survivor of the maelstrom which ensues when first Florence and then Nancy threaten her marriage. Florence, the focus of Dowell's anger, is a vulgar flirt who contaminates the people around her. Nancy, in contrast, is an enigma, presented as almost disturbingly innocent yet dangerously damaged. Considering each in turn shows how Leonora differs from the other two, and why Nancy proves to be the detonating factor.

5.3.3.1 Leonora: Sole Survivor

Dowell depicts Leonora as a woman who can walk to the edge of reason and find her way back. Core to this is her emotional control, made clear in the incident at Marburg when Florence lays 'one finger' on Edward's wrist, and Leonora understands that it presages their affair.[356] She spoke with 'extraordinary passion' and bitterness, and Dowell is unnerved by her, a woman whose distress shows in her face, 'exactly that of a person looking into the pit of hell and seeing horrors there'.[357] He is about to run for a doctor when 'suddenly she stopped' and was 'amazingly, just Mrs Ashburnham again'.[358] The impression is that this behaviour is an aberration. Only five pages later readers learn

[355] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 156.
[356] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 38.
[357] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 38-39.
[358] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 39.

that Leonora had struck Maisie Maidan in 'uncontrollable' rage on finding her leaving Edward's bedroom.[359] Leonora was in 'such a state' that only the arrival of a 'stranger', Florence, prompted her to pull 'herself up wonderfully'.[360] This first meeting, when her control had fractured, however, allowed Florence to get a 'hold over Leonora'.[361] Though Dowell claims to be trying to do 'every justice' to Leonora, he creates the impression of someone struggling to control intense emotions.[362]

Leonora is used to suppressing her feelings in her relationship with Edward. Maisie was only in Nauheim at all because Edward had conceived a passion for her in India and Leonora knew that separating them would increase that. By 'pimping for Edward' and bringing Maisie with them, she hoped his passion would burn itself out.[363] Maisie died before that could happen and a week later 'Florence had become Edward's mistress'.[364] Until this point Leonora had the 'vague, passionate idea that when Edward had exhausted a number of other types of women, he must turn to her', and there were signs that he might.[365] Dowell affects to know this from Leonora, but the phrase 'vague, passionate', with its implication of wishful thinking, is surely his own. Before Maisie, there had been Mrs Basil in India, 'a love affair – a pure enough thing' with a woman Leonora considered an acceptable equal if 'not so well-read … at any rate in learned books'.[366] In contrast, the relationship with Florence was 'a horror – a wantonness'.[367] Florence destroyed Leonora's hopes because she could not imagine how 'Edward could return to her – after a vulgar intrigue with a vulgar woman'.[368] Despite Dowell's pitying distaste at Leonora's acquiescence to Edward's affairs, he holds Florence

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[359] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 44.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 46.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 54.
[364] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 129.
[365] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 124.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 130.
[368] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 129.

responsible. Leonora's 'mental deterioration' had been 'worked' by her because her insistence on confessing the affair had 'forced' Leonora to abandon her 'high reserve'.[369]

Dowell slowly becomes more critical of Leonora. She was wrong not to have told him at Marburg that his wife was 'a harlot' who would become Edward's mistress.[370] Even in 'her madness' she was afraid to do that for fear that they would 'make a bolt for it' and she would lose Edward forever.[371] She did not 'go mad enough' is Dowell's conclusion.[372] Whether waiting outside Florence's door until she sees Edward leave, saying 'nothing' then refusing to communicate with her husband except through Florence is not quite 'mad enough' is debateable.[373] It certainly suggests a desire to exercise any form of control in a situation she is powerless to prevent. This is a key difference between Leonora and Florence. When Leonora feels that she has lost Edward to Florence she reverts to controlling him through his financial affairs. When Florence discovers that she has lost Edward to Nancy she commits suicide. Which of these is the least sane decision is a question implicitly posed by Dowell's narrative, one he answers by making both women mad in different ways. In Leonora, it is her 'incurable' jealousy which drives her periodic loss of control.[374]

Despite Dowell's claim that Florence 'smashed up' Leonora's life, it is Nancy who does the most damage.[375] After all, Leonora's marriage ends because Nancy triggers Edward's suicide but even before that she was the catalyst for Leonora to 'completely [break] down'.[376] This happens when Leonora realises that Edward is not 'breaking up' from desire for Nancy but from his determination not to act on that passion.[377] With that knowledge came the 'slackening of her vigilance' and so 'of

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[369] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 130.
[370] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 129.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 53.
[375] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 129.
[376] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 95.
[377] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 94.

her mind'.[378] For Dowell, it was miserable to see a 'clear intelligence' like Leonora's 'waver' as it did.[379] A wavering mind can suggest instability or, as here, a transient state. This is Dowell's essential thesis about Leonora, that she wavers, goes only 'for [a] moment, mad', or does not go mad enough.[380] In this situation, however, when mental control wavers, she acts from 'her instinctive desires'.[381] Whether this made her 'no longer herself' or 'her own natural self' is a question Dowell raises, but only later answers.[382]

Whilst in the grip of these instincts, Leonora confronts Edward, offering to divorce him so that he can marry Nancy. When Edward responds with a groan, 'something happened in Leonora' which she could not account for to Dowell.[383] What Dowell describes as Leonora having 'upbraided' Edward about their past life whilst he 'sat absolutely silent' is a carefully crafted understatement.[384] Leonora's acknowledgement that his silence had goaded her to say 'a great deal more to him' than she had wanted suggests something more vicious.[385] That she fears 'after what she had said … he must have committed suicide', signals how far Leonora had loosened control.[386] Although Dowell describes her in a 'debased condition', she remains rational enough to check on Edward.[387] When she finds him oiling a gun it 'never occurred to her … that he was going to shoot himself'.[388] Instead, she 'knew' he was doing it to 'keep himself from thinking'.[389] This makes little sense, even as an explanation that Leonora might have given to Dowell. Her admission that she felt obliged to tell Edward that she hadn't expected to find Nancy there feels more like the purpose of her visit, especially as Edward's

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[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 129.
[381] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 137.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 142-43.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Ibid.
[386] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 143.
[387] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 137
[388] Ibid.
[389] Ibid.

response, that he hadn't imagined she had, spurs Leonora to a 'sudden madness', a 'desire for action'.[390] In this madness she confronts Nancy with Edward's love for her, proposing that she offer herself to him whilst simultaneously denouncing him as a philanderer, making the proposition as sordid as possible. Leonora unleashes her emotions and acts on them in ways calculated to do damage, and it does, to Nancy and to Edward. Any damage to Leonora herself is short-lived.

Dowell's explanation for this is that Leonora was a 'perfectly normal woman' caught up in a 'perfectly abnormal situation'.[391] 'All the world was mad around her and she herself, agonised, took on the complexion of a mad woman'.[392] If she took on the appearance of being mad, then fundamentally she is not. Dowell underlines this with an analogy of steel as a 'normal, hard, polished substance' which if exposed to fire becomes 'red, soft, not to be handled' and melts.[393] This is what happened to Leonora, a woman 'made for normal circumstances',[394] who read learned books, not 'novels' with their 'idea of pure and constant love'.[395] Faced with the 'case of Edward and the girl' she 'simply went all over the place'.[396] However, once they were gone, Dowell's 'perfectly normal, virtuous and slightly deceitful heroine', much like molten steel when it cools again, could reset and start again with a new husband.[397] For his own reasons, discussed later, Dowell presents Leonora as fitted to the society in which she lives, and her madness as contextual, not hard wired. In this she is very different from Florence, Nancy and even Edward.

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[390] Ibid.
[391] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 159.
[392] Ibid.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Ford, *The Good Soldier,* p. 126.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 167.

5.3.3.2 Florence: A contaminating flirt

Dowell's presentation of Florence as a 'common flirt',[398] who contaminates both Leonora and Edward, is underpinned by hints that she is mentally unstable. He suggests a familial oddness, perhaps inherited. The reaction of Florence's family to Dowell's marriage proposal is a notable example. Her aunts, in a 'singular interview', ask if he 'had considered such a thing as different temperaments'.[399] When he tells them he intends to marry Florence and take her to Europe, one faints and the other cries 'Don't do it. John. Don't do it'.[400] As Saunders points out, their comment that they 'ought to tell [him] more. But she is our dear sister's child' [401] is a dark hint that there is good reason that he should not marry their niece.[402] Florence herself, 'chalk-pale', asks if 'those old cats have been saying anything against [her]', reinforcing the idea of something hidden. When Florence 'had disappeared' from her aunts' home to that of her uncle and Dowell arrives, he is told that he:

> was not to see Florence; she was ill; she was keeping her room. And, from something that he let drop – an odd biblical phrase that I have forgotten, I gathered that all that family simply did not intend her to marry ever in her life.[403]

Saunders argues that the lie about Florence's health, the determination for her not to marry, and the 'mysterious biblical phrase' suggest a reason 'more sinister' than her affair with Jimmy.[404] He points to the incongruity of Florence retaining her mother's maiden name and argues that it might indicate grounds for anxiety about inbreeding or an incestuous relationship between the uncle and Florence's mother. Another possibility is suggested by the novel's intertextuality with *The Benefactor* in which Mr. Brede resists his daughter's marriage for fear of heritable madness. Ideas of inbreeding and

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[398] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 125.
[399] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 61.
[400] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 62.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Saunders, 'Introduction', in Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (Oxford World Classics), p. xxxi.
[403] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 62
[404] Saunders, 'Introduction' in Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (Oxford World Classics), p. xxxi.

madness need not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Dowell describes the aunts as 'curious old creatures' who seemed 'almost as if they were members of an ancient family under some curse', reinforcing the suspicion of something worrying in Florence's background.[405] Dowell's intention to imply that this was madness is suggested by his account of their elopement. He attributes Florence's demand for reassurance that he is 'not lying about having taken berths',[406] and that they will sail at 4pm, to a natural anxiety 'to get away from the neighbourhood of her apparently insane relatives'.[407] Where might Florence have thought Dowell intended to take her, if not to the ship? Notice too how the family is now 'apparently insane'. Of course, from his retrospective vantage point Dowell is positioning her family to fit his narrative about Florence, the woman who on the night of their elopement suddenly announced that she might 'be ill', that her 'heart is a little like Uncle Hurlbird's. It runs in families'.[408]

It would be contrary to argue that Florence did not lie about her heart condition, but this is not the same as assuming that she did not have an illness. Even Dowell wonders how Florence got 'several doctors' to enter her 'conspiracy'.[409] A clue lies in his account of how he refused to travel onwards from Europe to England, a decision he attributes to Jimmy's insistence that 'Florence would die if she crossed the Channel', and one 'backed up by all the doctors'.[410] Dowell writes:

> I seemed to have had endless interviews with doctor after doctor, cool, quiet men, who would ask, in reasonable tones whether there was any reason for us going to England – any special reason. And since I could not see any special reason, they would give the verdict; "Better not, then." I daresay they were honest enough, as things go. They probably imagined that the mere

[405] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 60.
[406] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 63.
[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 65.
[410] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 67.

> associations of the steamer might have effects on Florence's nerves. That would be enough, that and a conscientious desire to keep our money on the Continent.[411]

Florence's 'special reason' was her desire to go to Fordingbridge, a proposal Dowell rejected with a 'curt no'.[412] Quite why 'doctor after doctor' was necessary is unclear. In contrast it is very clear that Dowell's statement governs their response, something he disguises with speculations on the reasons for their support. He seeds several possibilities: that the doctors were duped by Florence's pretence of heart problems, that they said what they were paid to say, or that they believed her to have a nervous illness. What is unsaid but implied is that Florence flirted, or more, to get the diagnoses that she wanted. However, the proposition that for nine years every Doctor Florence met was duped, seduced or bribed is less tenable than that they believed themselves to be treating a real illness, perhaps not heart disease but, as Dowell lets slip, 'nerves'. There is support for this in Haliloğlu's argument that Dowell's description of Florence as 'an unstoppable talker' is a 'grave accusation', something 'unacceptable' in 'good' circles, akin to 'hysteria' [413] For some doctors, the pretence of being ill to attract 'attentive sympathy' was associated with female hysteria, as was women's sexuality itself.[414] Florence's extra-marital affairs and Dowell's descriptions of her as vulgar, wanton, and a flirt, combine to suggest the promiscuity and emotional excess associated with hysteria.

It is Florence's talk as much as her promiscuity to which Dowell attributes the damage done to Leonora. If Leonora brought jealousy, Florence brought excessive talking, 'nothing would stop her'.[415] Leonora 'detested' her precisely because 'Florence talked' about her affair with Edward.[416] It was this that prevented Leonora from feigning ignorance and waiting for Edward's passion to fade, as she had

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[411] Ibid.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Haliloğlu, 'Good People and Chorus Girls', p. 260.
[414] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 133.
[415] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 125-26.
[416] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 130.

so often before. Dowell presents Leonora as besieged by Florence, with conversations he describes in phrases such as 'would be like this', 'something like', or 'some such proposition',[417] meant to convey that they were recounted to him by Leonora but revealing that they are filtered through his perspective. The claim that Florence proposed to Leonora that they might 'share Edward' if not quite so 'baldly' as that, therefore, is refracted through the two people Florence hurt.[418] Leonora attacked back in 'short, explosive sentences', claiming that she would feel 'defiled' if Edward now touched her.[419] Dowell attacks by labelling Florence a 'contaminating influence' who not only 'deteriorated hopelessly, the miserable Leonora' but also 'depressed and deteriorated poor Edward'.[420] The argument that Florence was responsible for the debasement of a woman already reduced to 'pimping' for her husband, and of a man whose record of affairs exceeded her own, is hardly reasonable and indicates that Dowell himself loses, if not reason then at least perspective, on events. More persuasively damning of Florence is his suggestion of contamination, of something passed between people, as if her instability could destabilise others. Whether Florence was genuinely unstable, or it suited Dowell's story for him to present her in this way is uncertain. The importance of his depiction lies more in the fact that Florence's actions were not independent of other people but relied on their participation. This is fundamental to the way madness is portrayed in *The Good Soldier*, as something created between people. Thus, Nancy had only to be the object of Edward's affections for her to become implicated.

5.3.3.3 Nancy: Vulnerable Innocent

If Florence's role is to be a wicked flirt, Nancy is the idealistic innocent, underscored by the symbolism of the scene implicating her in Florence's suicide. Florence was 'all in black' on a 'very black night'

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[417] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 130-31.
[418] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 131.
[419] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 130-31.
[420] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 125.

with ‘the girl … dressed in cream-coloured muslin’ which ‘must have glimmered’ like ‘a phosphorescent fish in a cupboard’.[421] Nancy is ‘led’ by Edward, not along the allée to the Casino but through the ‘dark trees of the park’ where they sat ‘in the darkness upon a public bench’.[422] Dowell, of course, was not there, but reports that Edward:

> said that they sat, she at one end of the bench, he at the other; he leaning slightly towards her and she looking straight towards the light of the Casino, her face illuminated by the lamps. The expression upon her face he could only describe as “queer.” [423]

Edward claimed to have been unaware of his feelings towards Nancy until that moment, and even then ‘there was no physical motive about his declaration’.[424] Yet the whole scene casts doubt on this. Nancy’s ‘queer’ expression, subsequently interpreted by Edward as her being ‘glad’, is dismissed by Dowell as the response of a girl who ‘had no idea what was happening’.[425] For Nancy to have been ‘intimately and overwhelmingly praised’ by the man she regarded as a ‘cross between a pastor and a father’ would have felt like a reward for ‘good conduct’, not a proposition.[426] Notice that this is Dowell’s deduction, not fact. Indeed, Rob Hawkes suggests that the whole scene could be ‘purely a product of Dowell’s imagination’.[427] When Dowell condemns Edward’s declaration to Nancy as the ‘most monstrously wicked’ [428] act of his life and says that Florence, creeping about in the dark, ‘deserved all that she got’ he makes Nancy their victim.[429]

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[421] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 79.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid.
[424] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 80.
[425] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 81.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Rob Hawkes, ‘“It is Melodrama; but I Can’t Help It”: Dowell’s Melodramatic Imagination’, in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays,* p. 99.
[428] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 81.
[429] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 80.

His narrative about Nancy is double edged because alongside the innocence is something disquieting. She is 'a queer girl' and difficult to describe.[430] She could appear beautiful or grotesque, seem at times 'as old as the hills' and at others 'not much more than sixteen', and was 'a miracle of patience who could be almost miraculously impatient'.[431] He attributes her 'queerness' [432] largely to her childhood with a father who was a 'violent madman of a fellow', and a mother who 'drank' and 'would be incapable for days'.[433] Her father had once given Nancy a 'blow so terrible that she had lain unconscious for three days' when she tried to intervene between her parents.[434] 'One day, quite suddenly' Nancy was removed to a convent school, the mother 'disappeared from her life' and her father went to India.[435] A fortnight later Leonora visited her and 'told her that her mother was dead'.[436] From that point Nancy 'lived herself gradually into the life at Bramshaw Teleragh'.[437] Whilst Dowell says that he believed that from then she lived a 'very happy life', the starkness with which he describes events leaves the impression that Nancy must have been damaged by them.[438] He cements this with a description of the effects of one of her father's 'rare visits' to Nauheim.[439] Just the sound of his voice leaves Nancy 'pallid' and with her 'eyes closed'.[440] She confides in Dowell of 'dreadful dreams' which 'all the sinning in the world' did not deserve.[441] Yet in public she behaved as if he were an 'adored father', determined to 'put him at his ease'.[442] Although Dowell labels this 'well bred' [443] behaviour taught to her at the convent, the more chilling probability is that Nancy was desperate to

[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 89.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 90.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Ibid.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid.
[440] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 91.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 91-92.
[443] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 91.

pre-empt any outbursts of the 'booming' voice which brought about her bad dreams.[444] 'They say the poor thing was always allowed a light at night, even in her bedroom',[445] Dowell adds. Its insinuation stands against his insistence on Nancy's innocence, hinting at a darker edge to her, perhaps to lend credence to the claim that Nancy acceded to Leonora's request that she offer herself sexually to Edward, another father figure.

It is a reminder that whilst Dowell aims to create the impression of reality, he is telling a story. Nancy's role is to be a girl who has suffered the harsh realities of life but thinks in romantic ideals. This is why Dowell claims that she cannot conceive of a married man loving anyone other than his wife and, asked by Leonora if she would like to marry Dowell, responds that she would if she were told to do so. Though she had developed the nature of a woman, 'her phrases were still romantically those of a school-girl',[446] and when she 'began thinking about love', it was in terms of 'chance passages in chance books'.[447] The reason Nancy comes to think of love at all is important to the narrative. After Florence's death and before Dowell's arrival, Nancy is alone at Bramshaw with Leonora and Edward for three weeks,[448] during which two things combine to make her realise that 'Edward did not love Leonora',[449] but loved somebody else, possibly herself.[450] The first factor is a newspaper report of divorce, a different kind of writing from that in novels, which puts into 'black and white' the word 'adultery' which Dowell maintains Nancy did not understand beyond it being 'a thing one did not do'.[451] The second is that she had too much time for 'introspection',[452] which in Ford's novels is often a marker for someone liable to breakdown: Edith in *The Shifting of the Fire*, for

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[444] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 92.
[445] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 91.
[446] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 144.
[447] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 149.
[448] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 148.
[449] Ibid.
[450] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 150.
[451] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 146.
[452] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 148.

instance, another young girl involved with a libertine. Nancy's new realisation that Edward loves 'someone other than Leonora' inclines her to sympathy to her guardian.[453] Until, that is, Leonora confronts Nancy with the fact that 'Edward was dying of love for her'.[454] This forces Nancy to admit something she had suppressed for months, that he was 'actually and physically dying – of love for her',[455] and that 'she was dying of love for Edward'.[456] It is the language of melodramatic novels from which Dowell contends that Nancy's concept of love derives and is designed to underline her immaturity. More significantly, it is a connection that Nancy has with Edward, discussed in the next section. Here the language is designed to support the story Dowell is constructing, one in which Nancy is unequal to Leonora and Edward, who make her 'half-mad' before despatching her to India and the father she fears.[457] Once again Dowell makes talk central to the damage done:

> What had happened was just Hell. Leonora had spoken to Nancy; Nancy has spoken to Edward; Edward had spoken to Leonora – and they had talked and talked. And talked.[458]

Whilst Leonora's verbal assault on Edward might have made him suicidal, and her propositions to Nancy left a weal on her mind, Nancy's words inflicted damage too. She offers herself sexually to Edward, telling him that it is only to save his life and that she could 'never love [him]'.[459] Dowell labels it 'a fantastic display of cruelty' which of course implicates Leonora because she had proposed it.[460] The two women spend 'Night after night … [talking], talking; talking', whilst Edward would lie 'maddened, sweating, seeking oblivion in drink', hearing their 'voices going on and on'.[461] The following day they would share their 'deliberations' as if passing 'sentence upon a criminal'.[462] This is

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[453] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 150.
[454] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 151.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 152.
[457] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 155.
[458] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 135.
[459] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 161.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 159.
[462] Ibid.

qualitatively different from Florence's incessant talking. It is targeted and deliberate, something Dowell claims as intentional and driven by Nancy's 'desire to see Edward suffer'.[463]

It is important to note the shift in depiction of Nancy who is no longer the innocent but an aggressor capable of wounding. Dowell's repeated references to Nancy's odd duality, her innocence against something disturbingly 'queer', is designed to support this change. It allows Dowell to say that 'she had about her a touch of madness' all along.[464] There is also the broader issue of words and their significance in the plot. Nancy's breezy words in a telegram are said to provoke Edward's suicide, and words in a newspaper announcing Edward's death are said to cause Nancy to go mad. If novels provided an escape into romantic stories, newspapers stand for the confrontation of hard facts which strip away illusion. Nancy's madness can be seen as another form of escape from reality. Unlike Brede, she is not left completely mute but only with the phrase '*Credo in unum Deum Omnipotentum*' [465] and the word 'shuttlecocks'.[466] Nancy had once told Leonora that she 'felt like a shuttlecock' tossed between the 'violent personalities' of her and Edward.[467] It is an analogy which captures Nancy's whole story: caught between a drunken mother and a violent father; shunted between her convent school, Bramshaw and Nauheim; and vied for by Edward, who despatches her to India, and Dowell who returns her to Bramshaw. As Dowell puts it, 'Edward wanted Nancy Rufford and I have got her. Only she is mad'.[468]

This strangely combative statement exposes something troubling about Edward. All the women who loved him lost their reason: Nancy irrevocably, Florence enough to take her own life, and Leonora to the point where she was prepared to 'pimp', in Dowell's language, Nancy to him. What was it about

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[463] Ibid.
[464] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 158.
[465] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 156.
[466] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 168.
[467] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 167.
[468] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 158.

Edward that made these affairs so destructive? It is a question Dowell asks himself and answers in a way which is inherently connected to the literary.

5.3.3.4 Edward – Man of Many Passions

Dowell's account of his first meeting with Edward supplies one answer. After an unusually detailed physical description and a list of their inane conversational topics, designed to present Edward as unremarkable, Dowell mentions the 'profusion of his cases, all of pigskin and stamped with his initial E.F.A.', so many that 'it must have needed a whole herd of the Gadarene swine to make up his outfit'.[469] Martin Stannard decodes this allusion as an encounter between Jesus and a 'violent, naked madman',[470] and the casting of devils into a herd of pigs which 'rush headlong into a lake and drown'.[471] He argues that the phrase has come to mean 'involving or engaged in suicidal rush or flight'.[472] As such it hints that Edward's behaviours put him on a suicidal path. It is important to notice, therefore, that Leonora fears that Edward will commit suicide at least twice before he does: at Bramshaw after her outburst,[473] and when he had twice jumped from a troopship in the Red Sea to rescue soldiers who had developed a 'suicidal craze'.[474] Whilst the Gadarene swine allusion appears to highlight Edward's instability, the tale behind it introduces a second possibility, because the madness is cast out of the man and into the swine, and it is they who drown. This begs the question of who the Gadarene swine in Edward's life were. Certainly, the women around him rarely meet happy fates, but nor does Edward. This suggests a contagious madness, either Edward's own or created between him and the women.

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[469] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 25.
[470] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, footnote 9, p. 25.
[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid.
[473] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 143.
[474] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 18.

Germane to this is Dowell's presentation of Edward as recklessly driven by his passions. He describes him in a polo match calculating that a manoeuvre 'Might just be done!' and, on first encountering Florence, having the same feeling, 'like a chap in the middle of the eruption of a volcano' imagining that he could 'bolt into the tumult and set fire to a haystack'.[475] It is an odd simile, followed by two one word questions: 'Madness? Predestination?' [476] Taken together, they are designed to suggest something beyond Edward's control, a point reinforced by Dowell's defence of Edward kissing a servant girl on a train by attributing it to the 'God who created in him those desires, those madnesses…'.[477] Only two paragraphs later, Dowell is claiming that 'finding Leonora cold and unsympathetic' was a factor.[478] It is a slick segue from suggesting that Edward is not to blame to Leonora being at fault. That Edward was 'driven to it … by the mad passion to find an ultimately satisfying woman' is made questionable by Dowell's 'I daresay'.[479]

The repeated linking of passion to madness is central to how Edward, whose passions are not confined to the romantic, is delineated. Edward's decision to allow high rebates to his tenants at a time when farming was difficult is regarded by his father-in-law, Colonel Powys, as 'mad generosity',[480] suggesting irrationality and a lack of restraint in Edward's behaviour. Dowell points out that Leonora later acknowledged that her father had misjudged Edward's more 'far-seeing policy', but it was a source of conflict between them.[481] Her anxiety that Edward was 'extravagant in his largesses' led her to reject his plans to build a Roman Catholic chapel in her honour at Bramshaw.[482] In return, Edward grieved her 'want of sentiment' and judged her 'wanting in imagination … cold and hard'.[483]

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[475] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 27-28.
[476] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 28.
[477] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 42.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Ibid.
[480] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 101.
[481] Ibid.
[482] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 99.
[483] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 101.

Edward's criticism signals that sentiment and imagination are things on which he places value. It was their 'first and really disastrous quarrel' at a time when Edward 'supposed himself to be overworked with his regimental affairs'.[484] The 'supposed' hints at Leonora's perspective, betrayed in the description of him taking 'upon his own shoulders the burden of his troop, of his regiment, of his estate and of half of his county'.[485] Judging it a 'sort of madness', Leonora took over their affairs to 'curb what she regarded as megalomania'.[486]

Edward's labelling as a megalomaniac, associated with delusional self-importance and mood swings, is easily overlooked because Dowell makes Leonora's attempts to 'rule with a rod of iron' central to their growing estrangement.[487] Yet he consistently presents Edward as having huge fluctuations in mood, as almost manic depressive. A good example is Edward's reaction to leaving India, where he and Leonora had been 'very ill in indefinite ways'.[488] He had resigned the army only as a 'duty' to Leonora, to whom he gave 'no thought … at all'.[489] Instead, he had 'no minute's rest' from the thought of leaving behind Maisie Maidan which 'shook him in the burning nights'.[490] On discovering that Leonora had arranged by paying 'the Maidan boy' to take Maisie to Europe with them, Edward swings from indifference to 'automatically' hating her.[491] However, on the journey, the 'cool breezes of the ocean' [492] sweep away the hatred, helped by the money which had 'bought' the companionship of Maisie, and he is soon 'at ease' again.[493] Edward is someone who appears to swing from 'increasing agony' to being 'radiantly happy'.[494]

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[484] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 100.
[485] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 104.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 120.
[489] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 121.
[490] Ibid.
[491] Ibid.
[492] Ibid.
[493] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 123.
[494] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 121.

Indeed, these are his two main modes, mirrored in his affair with La Dolciquita, a Spanish dancer who ignites 'a sudden explosion of the passion that had been bridled all his life'.[495] Whilst she sleeps in his arms, he discovered that he was 'madly … passionately … overwhelmingly in love with her. It was a passion that had arisen like fire in dry corn. He could think of nothing else; he could live for nothing else'.[496] Ironically, despite the affair being supposedly driven by Leonora's coldness, La Dolciquita is a 'reasonable creature without an ounce of passion' who views their relationship as a 'commercial transaction' which has been completed.[497] When Edward fails to persuade her otherwise, he is plunged into despair. 'He spent a week of madness; he hungered; his eyes sank in', he 'drank like a fish' and gambled away a fortune, until La Dolciquita agrees to a weekend with him in Antibes.[498] Edward later describes the affair as a 'short attack of madness like hydrophobia'.[499]

This pattern of high passion and deep despair in Edward is a recurring motif often equated with madness. It contrasts with the self-control of Leonora whom Edward finds 'cold' and 'well behaved'.[500] Whilst the context implies sexually, Edward had already found Leonora wanting in both sentiment and imagination. Dowell's depictions show how Edward's highly tuned sentiment could quickly become self-destructive. As shown previously the ability to create ideas in the mind often signals vulnerability. When Dowell refers to Edward's youthful liking of Literature, and his spending 'hours reading one of Scott's novels or the Chronicles of Froissart', as a 'queer warp of mind',[501] it aligns him with that liability. Leonora, in contrast, read only 'learned books' and 'could not stand novels'.[502] The effect of Edward's reading is that he talked 'like a cheap novelist' or, in fact, like a 'very

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[495] Ibid.
[496] Ford, *The Good Soldier,* pp. 110-11.
[497] Ford, *The Good Soldier,* p. 111.
[498] Ibid.
[499] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 119.
[500] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 214.
[501] An unusual pairing in that Ford described Scott's 'literary merits (as) almost undiscoverable' and Froissart as 'one of the really great writers of the world' (Ford, *The March of Literature,* pp. 211 and 336 respectively). The common ground is that they wrote historical stories of adventure, with heroes and villains.
[502] Ibid.

good novelist' who could 'make you see things clearly'.[503] His account of the affair with La Dolciquita, with its vivid similes, explosions of overwhelming emotion and sunken eyed hungering is the kind of melodrama Hawkes attributes to Dowell's imagination.[504] Certainly Dowell could not have witnessed incidents before he met Edward, but precisely because he describes him as talking like a novelist, the account is an attempt to replicate Edward's tone and language. Dowell goes further to suggest that Edward not only talks like a novelist but behaves like a character from one. He observes that the problem with La Dolciquita arose because Edward was unable to have a mistress 'without falling violently in love with her'.[505] When the affair collapses because she talks to him like 'a solicitor with an estate to sell' and he could not make her 'leave off talking so horribly', Edward's world 'stood on its head'.[506] The implication is that when the romantic script in Edward's mind met reality, he could not deal with it. Moreover, when his sense of obligation to her dissipates after the unsuccessful Antibes trip, Edward's 'sentimentalism required of him an attitude of Byronic gloom'.[507] In other words, he continues to live out the romantic script. This is key to Edward's apparent contagiousness, most evident in the relationship with Nancy, in whom he finds someone willing to enter into fictions with him.

5.3.3.5 A Literary Kind of Love

The point of Dowell's depiction of Leonora as a woman who dealt in real world concerns, well suited to normal life, is that it provided some protection from Edward. Florence, a mere 'personality of paper' who 'represented a real human being' with emotions 'only as a bank note represents certain qualities of gold', was more vulnerable.[508] Dowell presents Florence as living in an unreality of her

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[503] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 79.
[504] Rob Hawkes, 'It is Melodrama', p. 99.
[505] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 110.
[506] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 111.
[507] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 113.
[508] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 86.

own making. It made her better able than Leonora to connect with Edward, who prized imagination, but left her as unable as him to deal with the collapse of her fantasies. Nancy's vulnerability to Edward lay in her tendency to extrapolate, like him, from books to real life and in her willingness to live out the script with him.

It begins with Nancy's recognition of Edward's love from passages in books. Dowell lays this bare: Nancy 'remembered to have heard that love was a flame; a thirst; a withering up of the vitals', that it rendered a 'hopeless lover's eyes hopeless' and that 'lovers' existences were said to be punctuated with heavy sighs'.[509] She recalls a character who took to drink through love, sparking her awareness that 'Edward's eyes were hopeless; she was certain he was drinking too much; at times he sighed deeply', and he 'appeared as a man who was burning up with inward flame'.[510] Like Clara in *The Benefactor* who confuses Moffat with the hero of *Wilderspin* or Gilda Leroy in *Mr. Fleight* (1913) who places Fleight at the centre of the 'romance-novelette world she had created for herself',[511] Nancy projects from fiction to life. This fits Dowell's story of her as an innocent victim in contrast to his self-interestedly mendacious wife. Against Florence's approximation of a feeling person, therefore, Nancy must have real sentiment. Thus, as she plays a 'silly old tune' on the piano, Nancy

> suddenly … found that she was crying. She was crying quietly; she went on to cry with long convulsive sobs. 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 agonising…[512]

This has the same melodramatic quality as Edward's despair. Succumbing to emotion allows Nancy to recognise that they are 'dying of love' for each other,[513] and to conceive of Leonora as a 'cruel and

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[509] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 149.
[510] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 150.
[511] James M. Scannell, 'History or Quickie History: Elections in Anthony Trollope and Ford Madox Ford', in Wiesenfarth, *History and Representation in Ford Madox Ford's Writings*, p. 152.
[512] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 149.
[513] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 152.

predatory beast' whose 'hunger' had 'driven Edward to madness'.[514] Thus Edward must be 'sheltered by his love for her and by her love – her love from a great distance and unspoken' which would envelop and uphold him.[515] He would know 'that she passed no moment without longing, loving, quivering at the thought of him.[516] Her romantic realism means that when Edward, 'as master of the house',[517] insists that she goes to her father in India, Nancy 'felt as if her spirit bowed before him' and like a nineteenth-century submissive heroine, accepts her fate.[518] She becomes the self-sacrificing heroine in a story of her own creation, one fatally shared by Edward who confesses to Leonora that he could 'go on with his daily occupations if – the girl, being five thousand miles away, would continue to love him'.[519] When Nancy writes in her telegram from Brindisi, 'Having rattling good time' it breaks the spell. Reality intrudes and Edward, unable to sustain the fiction, commits suicide.[520] Nancy, in return, goes mad. It is the perfect ending to their melodrama.

This can be read as a parable of the dangers of living in illusions, a motif running through the prewar novels. Yet *The Good Soldier* sharpens the motif to signal a clearly literary kind of madness. This is indicated in the final chapter when Dowell says that Edward wanted 'that the girl should go five thousand miles away and love him steadfastly as people do in sentimental novels'.[521] The specificity of genre matters because sentimental novels were associated with the kind of emotional profligacy that characterises Edward's affairs, and with a link between responsiveness to the problems of others and virtue, or a pure heart.[522] That Edward is the intended hero of such a story is signalled by his distress after the transfer of his feelings from Mrs Basil to Maisie leads him to 'suspect that he was

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[514] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 153.
[515] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 152.
[516] Ibid.
[517] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 153.
[518] Ibid.
[519] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 160.
[520] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 159.
[521] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 161.
[522] Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 306.

inconstant'.[523] Edward 'thought that Mrs. Basil had been his soul mate, separated from him by an unkind fate' or, as Dowell puts it, 'something sentimental of that sort'.[524] This begs the question, of what sort? Which sentimental hero does Edward want to resemble?

A clue lies in Dowell's insistence that he is telling the 'saddest story'. The description of passing 'from sorrow to excessive joy, from sweet melancholy to destructive passion' [525] and squandering a 'fortune to give … constant proof of … devotion' could as easily describe Edward as it does the hero of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.[526] Dowell's narrative about Edward and Nancy has clear parallels with Goethe's story of an apparently unrequited love, beyond both ending with the death of the disappointed lover. Werther and Lotte share an interest in novels, for example, and Nancy's piano playing has its parallel in Lotte playing 'a simple but moving air'.[527] Nancy's concern about Edward's drinking is mirrored in Lotte's reproach to Werther for his 'excesses!' in 'going on to empty the bottle'.[528] Just as Nancy recognises her repressed love for Edward so Lotte comes to 'a profound realisation, albeit one which she was not consciously aware of, that her secret heart's desire was to keep him for herself'.[529] Werther, for his part, accepts that he holds second place in Lotte's heart once she marries, but like Edward wanting Nancy to love him from afar, believes 'it would drive [him] insane if she could forget'.[530] Werther does not go insane but kills himself by suicide. He shoots himself but is found with a 'vein opened in his arm', suggesting that he had initially tried a knife, like Edward.[531] Edward oiling the gun can be seen as a reversal of this.

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[523] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 119.
[524] Ibid.
[525] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Introduction and Translation by Michael Hulse (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 28.
[526] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, p. 33
[527] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, p. 53
[528] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 99
[529] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 118
[530] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 80
[531] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 134

Of course, any parallels with Goethe are created by Ford, not Dowell and the implications of this are discussed later. However, it would be unhelpful to entirely detach the similarities from Ford's narrator, because Dowell's claim to be recounting what Edward and Leonora told him is only partially true. He fills in gaps, embroiders scenes, and ascribes motives to actions which he did not witness. His twenty-three uses of 'I daresay' and nineteen of 'I guess' are indicative of this. The first of these phrases denotes a probability rather than a certainty, and the second an approximation, even perhaps a hunch. They are not just markers of Dowell's communication style and the uncertainty which characterises his narration but are signals that he is using his imagination and, like the characters he describes, creating stories of his own. The type of stories he tells, how he tells them, and where he places himself, illustrate how Ford puts a broken mind on the page.

5.3.4 Dowell: From depression to despair

Dowell's ostensible story is the breakup of his coterie which he compares to the sack of a city. To sack a city is an act of aggression, plunder and taking away anything of value. This is perhaps a reasonable parallel for a story in which three characters lose their life [532] and one their sanity, but it raises questions about who did the sacking and took the things of value? Dowell holds other characters accountable for the damage they do but he is the person who ends up with the victor's spoils: Florence's fortune, Bramshaw, and the woman Edward loved. Yet, emotionally, he loses everything, his wife, his closest friends and any possibility of marrying Nancy. Most of all, Dowell loses his illusions, the things which made his life bearable. This is where the writing chronology matters, because if Dowell began writing within weeks of Edward's death and with knowledge of the full story, any protective illusions he held had already been shattered. His mind was disturbed before he began writing and remained so throughout. He had already suffered a breakdown and although he initially

[532] Including Maisie Maidan.

presents it as short lived, it was not insignificant. If *A Call* hinted that the effects of Leicester's breakdown did not simply evaporate, *The Good Soldier* makes this explicit by allowing it to bleed into Dowell's narrative, conveyed in the tone Conrad labelled 'fretful melancholy' and in the stories Dowell tells himself.

This is evident from the early stages when Dowell presents himself as a man of wealth with no occupation other than 'sedulous strained nurse' to Florence.[533] As meeting the Ashburnhams meant that he was 'never to do it again alone',[534] he signals the sheer loneliness of his pseudo-marriage. Apart from their company, he shares with Leonora the 'profession' of 'keeping heart patients alive'.[535] He describes this as having been a 'kind of frenzy' but retrospectively, when he can hardly remember how it felt, he observes that 'surely, surely, these delusions are necessary to keep us going'.[536] The comment captures the deceits practised upon him by Florence and Edward, neither of whom had heart disease, and the comfort he took in his own self-delusion. It signals that Dowell prefers to stay in safe illusions rather than confront reality.

5.3.4.1 Fractured Illusions

His breakdown happens when this is not possible, on the 'last day of [his] absolute ignorance … and of [his] perfect happiness',[537] the night of Florence's death. Dowell places himself in the lounge, conversing with Bagshawe, when he sees Florence 'running with a face whiter than paper', and her hand 'over her heart'.[538] She sees Bagshawe, covers her face with her hands, and then 'was not there anymore'.[539] Bagshawe, recognising 'Florry Hurlbird', relays an anecdote of her staying at his home

[533] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 12.
[534] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 23.
[535] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 40.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 73-74.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Ibid.

and seeing her leave the 'bedroom of a young man called Jimmy at five o'clock in the morning'.[540] Dowell's reactions are what matters here. On seeing Florence, his 'own heart stood still' and he was unable to move.[541] The reference to his 'own' heart is a reminder of his belief in Florence's heart condition which he later claims to have assumed was the source of her obvious distress. Yet he emphasises his own state. Whatever he 'looked like' alerted Bagshawe to the effect of his revelation so that he stutters 'Oh, I say…'.[542] These were the last words of his that Dowell 'ever heard'.[543] It is an odd perspective and slightly theatrical. It purports to signal Dowell's state of mute immobility especially as the following sentence says that only 'a long time afterwards' did he move.[544] How long Bagshawe stayed or what more he said is unstated as if to convey that Dowell would not have heard it. Yet the theatricality makes Bagshawe like a character in a play whose small part has ended. Even as he recounts such a distressing incident, Dowell is storying it. It reinforces the unreality he felt but also keeps the focus on him, not Florence. It is easy to miss that Dowell claims to have been rendered mute and immobile before Florence's death, not by it. When he finally 'pulled himself out of the lounge' to go to her bedroom, left unlocked for the first time in their marriage, he finds Florence 'respectably arranged' on the bed with a phial that 'rightly should have contained nitrate of amyl' in her hand.[545] The unlocked door and arrangement of the body imply that Florence's death was meant to be a gesture, not suicide. However, the description is immediately followed by the final sentence in the chapter: 'That was on the fourth of August, 1913'. It is a return from reimagining the scene to addressing the reader. The impression Dowell wants to convey is that he froze in the moment of crisis

[540] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 75.
[541] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 74.
[542] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 75.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid.
[545] Ibid.

and was unable to function, and his curiously dispassionate description of finding Florence dead is to reinforce the idea that he felt like a mere bystander.

That this is how he experienced the event is reiterated in the next chapter which opens Part 3. Dowell claims that 'what sticks out' in his memory from the rest of that evening is that Leonora had said that he could marry 'the girl'.[546] Apparently, within two hours of Florence's death, he had said 'Now, I can marry the girl'.[547] Dowell claims no memory of this:

> I had never had the slightest conscious idea of marrying the girl; I have never had the slightest idea of even caring for her. I must have talked in an odd way, as people do who are recovering from an anaesthetic. It is as if one had a dual personality, the one being entirely unconscious of the other. I had thought nothing; I had said such an extraordinary thing.[548]

The comparison to a patient recovering from anaesthetic recalls Sorrell moving between states of consciousness after surgery in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, a novel concerned with different ways of knowing and the precariousness of living in the imagination. What does it signify, then, in relation to Dowell? Most obviously it affirms that, on some level, he knew things he did not allow into his conscious mind, uncomfortable things with which he would have had to deal were they acknowledged. Just as he suppressed what he understood by the incident at Marburg, so here he denies any sense of having coveted Nancy whilst married to Florence. Of course, to admit it would weaken his case against Florence. It can also be read as defensive, because writing it down would challenge his sense of identity, his story of himself as 'A Dowell of Philadelphia', with all the gentlemanly status that conferred.[549] When he says that Florence was a 'New Englander' without the

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[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 10.

'hot passions of these Europeans' and so 'need not have done what she did', he speaks for himself too.[550]

This does not account though for Dowell's claim to have no memory of even saying the words. Explaining this requires rejecting his proposition that 'analysis of [his] own psychology' does not 'matter at all to this story'.[551] On the contrary, his psychology creates the story and in doing so reveals the disturbances in his mind. He already knows the truth of Florence's death but writes as things allegedly appeared to him at the time. Specifically, he claims that he assumed Florence 'felt an attack coming on whilst she was in the gardens' and rushed back to take amyl nitrate.[552] It was 'inevitable' that his mind 'should frame the thought that her heart, unable to stand the strain of running, should have broken'.[553] The inevitability arises from Florence's absolute deception. However, his apparently instant acceptance of Florence's infidelity, without any challenge to Bagshawe, suggests at least something suspected but suppressed. Allowing it to surface would challenge the story he had woven for himself: that they were all 'good people' who would behave accordingly, and Florence was the invalid wife to whom he was martyred. These were the 'delusions' necessary to him but notice that he is still creating stories for himself as he writes. It is betrayed, for instance, in the phrase 'I fancy' to qualify his claim that only 'Leonora, the grand duke, the head of the police and the hotel keeper' knew that Florence had committed suicide.[554] This is his invention not fact, necessary because he remembers the evening as 'only a sort of pinkish effulgence' from the lights and the faces of these people bobbing 'like floating globes' into his consciousness.[555] In any real sense, Dowell was not there. His dissociated state is laid bare in the following passage:

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[550] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 55.
[551] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 75.
[552] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 77.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Ibid.
[555] Ibid.

> Then they all went away and I was left alone for a long time.
>
> And I thought nothing; absolutely nothing. I had no ideas; I had no strength. I felt no sorrow, no desire for action, no inclination to go upstairs, and fall upon the body of my wife. I just saw the pink effulgence, the cane tables, the palms, the globular march-holders, the indented ash-trays. And then Leonora came to me and it appears that I addressed to her that singular remark:
>
> "Now I can marry the girl."
>
> But I have given you absolutely the whole of my recollection of the evening, as it is the whole of my recollection of the succeeding three or four days. I was in a state just simply cataleptic. They put me to bed and I stayed there; they brought me my clothes and I dressed; they led me to an open grave and I stood beside it. If they had taken me to the edge of a river, or if they had flung me beneath a railway train, I should have been drowned or mangled in the same spirit. I was the walking dead.[556]

The force of this description comes from the repeated negatives evoking a state in which Dowell is devoid of thought or emotion, his only awareness that of inconsequential details of his surroundings. The fragmentation, disorganisation and vividness of detail are features often associated with traumatic memories of the kind highlighted by Brasme. Dowell's apparently traumatised state is reinforced by his statement that he was 'cataleptic' for three to four days afterwards, especially given the word's literary antecedents. For instance, Juliet's trance state in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet led Romeo to believe that she was dead, and Edgar Allan Poe and Émile Zola wrote short stories involving premature burial of catalepsy sufferers.[557] Dowell's description of himself as the 'walking dead' is not one to take lightly. That his symptoms accord with the desensitization and loss of mobility noted in medical definitions of catalepsy strengthens the argument that this was not a minor incident. Yet Dowell minimizes it, following it with a one sentence paragraph: 'Well, those are my

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[556] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 78-79.
[557] *The Premature Burial* (1844) and *La Mort D'Oliver Becaille* (1884) respectively. Ford discusses both Poe and Zola in *The March of Literature* in ways suggesting familiarity with their work. For instance, Poe is said to have been enabled by Baudelaire (p. 42) and Zola is described amongst writers engaged with Naturalism 'nearly all the time' (p. 789).

impressions…'.[558] His immediate switch to the events leading up to his collapse, of Florence overhearing Edward's declaration of love to Nancy, moves the focus off him and onto the story he can tell more comfortably. Despite his attempt to underplay the damage done, however, there are indications of a lasting impact. Whereas by the end of Part 2 Dowell was presenting himself as a dupe, in Part 3 he has 'come to be very much of a cynic' who finds it 'impossible to believe in the permanence of a man's or woman's love', or at least in the continuation of 'early passion'.[559] Both iterations position him as the idealist whose trust in people, and in love, has been destroyed by the duplicity surrounding him, but the impact deepens over time. In a characteristic shift of stance, a later description makes clear that the impact was not negligible and subtly changes its nature:

> I was so deadly tired. And I dare say that my week or ten days of affaisement – of what was practically catalepsy – was just the repose that my exhausted nature claimed after twelve years of the repression of my instincts, after twelve years of playing the trained poodle. For that was all that I had been. I suppose that it was the shock that did it – the several shocks. But I am unwilling to attribute my feelings at that time to anything so concrete as a shock. It was a feeling so tranquil. It was as if an immensely heavy – an unbearably heavy knapsack, supported upon my shoulders by straps, had fallen off and had left my shoulders themselves that the straps had cut into numb and without sensation of life.[560]

An 'affaisement' translates literally from the French as a sagging or collapse. It is gentler on the ear, and perhaps on the mind, than 'practically catalepsy', but Stannard identifies it as depression or a mental breakdown.[561] It was certainly a serious episode, denoted by the timeframe Dowell attaches to his incapacity and the language he uses. For tiredness to be 'deadly' it is either lethal or death-like, recalling his earlier claim to have been like the 'walking dead', a simile conveying an overwhelming sensation of numbness, a state Dowell found 'tranquil'. It is the description which Leicester in *A Call*

[558] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 79.
[559] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 82.
[560] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 86.
[561] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 86, footnote 8.

could not give of how it felt to have a breakdown. Dowell presents it as a limbo state, in which he is alive and aware but not living or engaging. Only four days later he returns to America to sort out Florence's estate and, through 'fighting with real life, some wrestling with men of business, some travelling amongst larger cities, something harsh, something masculine', endeavours to offset the 'twelve years in a rarefied atmosphere' which had characterised his life as a 'trained poodle'.[562] He determines to reclaim his masculinity so as not to present himself 'to Nancy Rufford as a sort of an old maid'.[563] It constitutes his one attempt at self-rescue but is firmly anchored in his expectations of marrying Nancy.

5.3.4.2 Facing facts

Whilst Dowell felt reinvigorated by his time in America, this dissipates on returning to Bramshaw at the request of Edward and Leonora. Only once Nancy has left for India and Edward is dead does Dowell learn the facts of the life he has been leading. Leonora had taken his comment that he was free to 'marry the girl' to mean that he understood and had suffered through Edward and Florence's affair just as she had. Therefore, a week after Edward's funeral, when Dowell is discussing the 'duration of his stay' and she encourages him to 'stay for ever and ever' because he is her support and consolation, she casually observes that had Florence not been Edward's mistress, Dowell would not have been at Bramshaw 'at all'.[564] Dowell's description of his response to getting this 'full in the face' [565] is worth attention:

> I didn't say anything and I don't suppose I felt anything, unless maybe it was with that mysterious and unconscious self that underlies most people. Perhaps one day when I am unconscious or

[562] Ibid.
[563] Ibid.
[564] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 76.
[565] Ibid.

> walking in my sleep I may go and spit upon poor Edward's grave. It seems about the most unlikely thing I could do; but there it is.
>
> No, I remember no emotion of any sort, but just the clear feeling that one has from time to time when one hears that some Mrs. So-and-So is au mieux with a certain gentleman. It made things plainer, suddenly, to my curiosity. It was as if I thought, at that moment of a windy November evening, that, when I came to think it over afterwards, a dozen unexplained things would fit themselves into place. But I wasn't thinking things over then. I remember that distinctly. I was just sitting back, rather stiffly, in a deep armchair. That is what I remember. It was twilight.[566]

Although similar to previous accounts of how Dowell responded to unwelcome news, this conveys a deeper sense of dissociation in the suggestion that it was as if he was hearing about someone else entirely. Dowell makes no response when Leonora shifts from discussing the damage rabbits on the lawn might do, to saying 'without any adornment at all' that she thought it 'stupid of Florence to commit suicide'.[567] 'I remember her exact words',[568] Dowell claims, and the effect was to create 'an extraordinary sense of leisure' between them.[569] It wasn't 'as if we were waiting for a train … [or] a meal – it was just that there was nothing to wait for. Nothing'.[570] In this passage Sara Haslam observes the slow pace, balance and apparent sanity of a narrative accompanying what had been a set of astonishing revelations.[571] The balance is a form of suspense, between Dowell's mind and the environment around him. In the next paragraph he minimises that environment to an 'extreme stillness' juxtaposed with the 'intermittent sound of wind' and the 'grey light in that small brown room',[572] creating the sense that his world has stopped, frozen for a moment. Why might Dowell want to create this effect? In part it is for dramatic purposes because the stillness marks Leonora's

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[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.
[568] Ibid.
[569] Ibid.
[570] Ibid.
[571] Sara Haslam, 'Dowell and Dopamine: Information, Pleasure and Plot', in Saunders and Haslam, *The Good Soldier Centenary Essays,* p. 129.
[572] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 77.

intention to take him into her 'full confidence'. To signal how much she might need to disclose he says 'Did Florence commit suicide? I didn't know'.[573] These too are words he recalls 'with exactitude'.[574]

It is a highly crafted scene which depicts Leonora brutally ripping away Dowell's remaining illusions. Although it occurs much earlier than Dowell's claim to have been writing for six months, it carries the same sense of a rationalisation after the fact.[575] The implied disassociation sits uncomfortably with Dowell's reasoned reply to Leonora. It is as if Leonora took away his option to avoid facts but in writing Dowell attempts to reassert control. The page break which follows his statement to Leonora and his offered rationale creates a pause for the reader, and perhaps Dowell too, to absorb the magnitude of the revelation. After all, in creating these scenes Dowell is reliving painful experiences. After the pause he reverts to a brisker tone with 'So that was the first knowledge I had that Florence had committed suicide' and goes on to defend the ignorance that might seem questionable.[576] This account immediately precedes the description of his cataleptic state on the night of Florence's death, creating the sense that it is a preparation for writing more deeply about the initial shock and the dissociative state it evoked.

Whilst in these scenes Dowell confronts Florence's infidelity with Jimmy, her death, her affair with Edward and her suicide, he devotes the final chapters to the woman who replaced Florence, and whom he has determined to marry, Nancy. So convinced is he that he will marry Nancy that he interprets the cable from Leonora summoning him to Bramshaw as a sign that Nancy has met an 'undesirable fellow' and he is to 'marry her out of harm's way'.[577] There is no evidence to support this assumption, making it another story of his own creation, one so internalised that when neither

[573] Ibid.
[574] Ibid.
[575] This scene is on p. 77 and the claim on p. 127.
[576] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 77.
[577] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 135.

Edward nor Leonora mentions a potential suitor to Nancy, Dowell 'imagined' that the man has been banned from Bramshaw.[578] He persists in this belief for 'nearly ten days', until Leonora announces that Nancy is leaving for India the following day.[579] Even then, despite finding it odd that they had given no warning, he 'imagined' that he was meant to propose that evening.[580] He interprets their actions as a 'delicacy' of 'English manners' he had not grasped for, he asserts, 'You must remember that at that moment I trusted in Edward and Leonora and in Nancy Rufford and in the tranquillity of ancient haunts of peace, as I had trusted in my mother's love'.[581] It is hard to believe that, after Florence's betrayal, Dowell would retain such wholehearted trust, so it invites consideration of his purpose. Narratively, it gives dramatic force to the next set of revelations, but also reiterates his tendency to delude himself by clinging to comfortable narratives, despite contradictory evidence.

He is not allowed the shelter of these illusions, however, because 'that evening Edward spoke' to him.[582] This statement is followed by a textual break after which Dowell diverts the story away from himself to give an account of what had happened between Leonora, Edward and Nancy before his arrival at Bramshaw. It is another turning away from a painful recollection. Only later does he reveal that what Edward 'spoke' of was his love for Nancy. This was the moment when Dowell realises that he is there not as Nancy's suitor but to 'make things easier' until she left.[583] Not only do Edward's revelations shatter his illusion of remarriage, but he learns that Nancy had offered to sacrifice 'her virtue' to Edward.[584] His story of her purity and innocence is also fractured. The cumulative effect of

[578] Ibid.
[579] Ibid.
[580] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 136.
[581] Ibid.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 154.
[584] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 138.

him learning, repeatedly, that the life he thought he had was a mirage is revealed in the final two chapters.

5.3.4.3 Fiction and Finality

As discussed, different arguments can be advanced on whether the text supports Dowell's claim to have paused his writing for eighteen months. Whichever view is taken, the difference in style and tone of the final two chapters is noticeable. As Dennis Donoghue observes, Dowell abandons any pretence of 'telling the story to a silent listener' in favour of the 'severity of the written word'.[585] The tone changes from 'fretful melancholy' to bitter resignation. The reasons for the shifts lie in an amalgam of Dowell's psychological experiences and more literary concerns. As these are interconnected any discussion becomes potentially as tortuous as Dowell's own narrative. The simplest approach is to consider each chapter sequentially.

The penultimate chapter opens with the sentence 'It is this part of the story that makes me saddest of all'.[586] The sadness appears to lie in the inevitability of the outcomes, for despite his mind 'unceasingly … going round and round in a weary, baffled space of pain', Dowell is unable say what else the people involved could have done. He asserts that the 'end was perfectly plain to each of them': if Nancy did not belong to Edward, he must die, Nancy must lose her reason because he died, and Leonora 'the coldest and strongest of the three would console herself by marrying Rodney Bayham'.[587] Narratively this makes no sense because Edward, Nancy and Leonora could not have known their fates at the time Nancy left for India. As a character, neither could Dowell. At a literary level, however, they can know, precisely because Dowell has cast them as characters playing out a

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[585] Dennis Donoghue, 'Listening to the Saddest Story', in Sondra J. Stang (Ed.), *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 46-47.
[586] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 155.
[587] Ibid.

known genre, a sentimental novel like *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. As narrator Dowell can observe that 'The girl, plainly, was half-mad' and 'Edward was half-dead' because he knows the conventions for the kind of story he is telling.[588]

Accordingly, he begins with the ending and adopts suitably melodramatic language: 'Edward is dead; the girl is gone – oh utterly gone; Leonora is having her good time with Rodney Bayham, and I sit alone in Bramshaw Teleragh'.[589] He had 'rushed through all Provence', the sacrifice of this clear in his comment that he had longed to revisit it, to reach Nancy in Ceylon.[590] On arrival he found her 'in a darkened room … motionless' looking at him with 'eyes that did not see' and able to say only that she believed in an omnipotent god.[591] He dismisses any notion of his rescue mission as 'romantic'.[592] It was 'tiring, tiring, tiring', just 'a record of fatigue', and he is now 'very tired of it all'.[593] Given that he described himself as 'deadly tired' before his breakdown these refrains are ominous. His mental state is also signalled by the tone of weary resignation in which he reflects on his role:

> I don't know why I should always be selected to be serviceable. I don't resent it – but I have never been the least good. Florence selected me for her own purposes, and I was no good to her; Edward called me to come and have a chat with him and I couldn't stop him cutting his throat.[594]

It is there too in his comment that he has 'lost all sense of the pathetic' when describing Colonel Rufford's appeal to Leonora to go to Ceylon.[595] The brevity in 'Leonora wouldn't. Leonora didn't ever

[588] Ibid.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 156.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Ibid.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 156.

want to see Nancy again' has the flatness of someone with no fight left.[596] It is unsurprising, therefore, that he claims to have been 'sent' to Nancy and to do not 'the least good'.[597]

Dowell's illusions have all disappeared and, with no wish to be 'in the least romantic' about his situation, he states it baldly.[598] Nancy will not recover her reason sufficiently to marry him, he is 'estranged from Leonora' and so is 'very much where (he) started thirteen years ago' as 'the attendant, not the husband, of a beautiful girl who pays no attention to me'.[599] He has moved beyond denying uncomfortable emotions. He can admit to disapproving of Leonora's marriage and to being 'no doubt jealous' of Rodney Baynham.[600] He, after all, in a 'fainter way' sees himself like Edward, wanting to be a 'polygamist: with Nancy, and with Leonora and with Maisie Maidan and possibly even with Florence'.[601] Dowell's comparison of himself with Edward has deeper significance, discussed shortly, but here it highlights the pathos of his position. Florence preferred two other men to him and there is scant evidence, beyond his own imaginings, that Maisie, Leonora or Nancy reciprocated his feelings. In a novel centrally concerned with love, Dowell finds none. Somewhat bitterly he observes that no-one got what they wanted. Even Leonora, who had wanted Edward, ended up with Baynham. Dowell questions whether people can possibly 'be with whom they like and have what they like', or whether all lives, like theirs, are 'broken, tumultuous, agonised, and unromantic lives, punctuated by imbecilities, by deaths, by agonies?' [602] It is a bleak picture which suggests the depth of his depression and continues to imply a certain inevitability.

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[596] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 157.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.
[600] Ibid.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that towards the end of the chapter Dowell refers to the 'closing scenes of the Ashburnham tragedy',[603] as if it were a stage play. These are the scenes, discussed earlier, in which Dowell charges Leonora and Nancy with tormenting Edward by their talking until 'his mind bled almost visibly'.[604] Dowell did not witness these scenes but imagines them vividly: 'I seem to see him stand, naked to the waist, his forearms shielding his eyes, and flesh hanging from him in rags'.[605] It was 'as if' Leonora and Nancy had banded together to execute him 'like a couple of Sioux who had got hold of an Apache'.[606] The allusion to indigenous American Indian tribes here is clearly Dowell's own, yet he maintains that the scenes had been relayed by Edward. He says that the picture which never left Edward's imagination was of 'the girl, in the dim light, rising up at the foot of his bed', looking directly at him with 'eyes of an unflinching cruelty' and saying that she was ready to 'belong' to him.[607] It is an image which has clearly never left Dowell either and the way it disturbs him is suggested by his conflicting claims that Nancy 'didn't in the least know what it meant – to belong to a man' and that she was being deliberately cruel.[608] He can empathise with Edward's torment because it torments him to visualise the woman whom he had hoped to marry offering herself to Edward. The anguish is increased when, in the final chapter, Dowell muses on whether Nancy's love had withstood Leonora's attempts to destroy it but is forced to conclude that she 'had loved Edward Ashburnham very deeply and tenderly'.[609] It makes even more poignant his revelation that he had suggested to Leonora that the necessity of sending Nancy to India could have been avoided by her marrying him. Leonora claimed to favour his suit but thought that Nancy should see more of life before 'such an important step'.[610] Dowell, despite appearing to agree with Leonora that Nancy should go away 'on

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[603] Ibid.
[604] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 159.
[605] Ibid.
[606] Ibid.
[607] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 160-61.
[608] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 161.
[609] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 162.
[610] Ibid.

probation',[611] had gone looking for Nancy with 'the vague idea of proposing to her'.[612] Instead, he found Edward and had to listen to him talk 'all night' of his love for Nancy.[613] The vivid imagery he attaches to Edward's torture by talk applies as much to his own experience. Pressured to accompany Edward and Nancy to the station, Dowell says of their parting that the only passionate element he can 'get into that scene' is the 'very bright red' of the signal.[614] When he refers to it as 'the most horrible performance' he highlights both the inauthenticity but also the sense of a play being enacted and, saying that Edward 'carried out the programme to the last breath', he implies a script in which all the characters know their role.[615] Thus Nancy is banished, Leonora is 'triumphant', and Edward gives up drinking, assuring Dowell that he 'hasn't any feelings about the girl now it's all over'.[616] Life resumes 'as if the girl had never existed'.[617]

The artificiality is underscored by a text break followed by 'Well, that is the end of the story'.[618] Dowell's ironic description of it as a story with 'villains', a 'heroine' and a 'happy ending with wedding bells and all' conveys both his own bitterness and a desire for closure.[619] Edward and Nancy had to become 'for [him], at least, no more than tragic shades' so that Leonora could have her new life.[620] Society, after all, can continue only if 'normal' people like Leonora 'flourish' and the 'passionate … headstrong' and truthful people are 'condemned to suicide and madness'.[621] As for him, Dowell is 'that absurd figure, an American millionaire who has bought one of the ancient haunts of English peace' and sits 'all day in a house that is absolutely quiet'.[622] He has no visitors and no one to visit, no

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[611] Ibid.
[612] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 165.
[613] Ibid.
[614] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 166.
[615] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 166 and 165 respectively.
[616] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 166.
[617] Ibid.
[618] Ibid.
[619] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 166-67.
[620] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 167.
[621] Ibid.
[622] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 168.

one who is interested in him, and no interests. His only social contact is with Nancy's nurse, tenants who 'touch their hats' when he passes, and the 'enigmatic, silent' Nancy who is nothing more than 'a picture without a meaning'.[623]

The chapter conveys Dowell's surrender to his fate and his abject depression. Yet it conveys something more. The style imitates an inexperienced author bringing a story to an awkward, perhaps premature close, an idea strengthened by the text break and line beneath it, only for the story to be re-opened to recount Edward's death. Or, at least, to claim to do so because, as Andrew Bennett points out, Edward's suicide is foreshadowed and alluded to throughout the novel, 'but not directly narrated'.[624] One reason for this lies in Dowell's own role within the script of the sentimental novel into which he has placed his fellow characters. The final section, therefore, turns from his psychological mind to the literary mind earlier claimed as important to understanding the story he offers.

5.3.4.4 Literary Endings

The clue to Dowell's own role lies in his claim to be a fainter version of Edward, whom he compares to an older brother whose daring exploits he watches from a distance, as if living vicariously through him. Dowell is, he declares, 'just as much of a sentimentalist', and loves Edward because he was 'just myself'.[625] This sense of identification is significant not only for its psychological implications and Dowell's feelings of envy and sexual inadequacy, but also for its literary connection. As argued earlier, Dowell narrates events in a way that casts Edward as the hero of a sentimental novel which carries

[623] Ibid.
[624] Andrew Bennett, *Suicide Century - Literature and Suicide from James Joyce to David Foster Wallace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 62.
[625] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 168.

echoes of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. His claims of parity with Edward's sentimentality, therefore, raise the question of where he fits into such a story.

Examining parallels and inversions between Goethe's novel and Ford's is illuminating. Dowell can be read as a version of Lotte's husband, Albert. When Albert observes that 'a man wholly under the influence of his passions has lost his ability to think rationally', Dowell's commentary on Edward can be heard.[626] Goethe's Albert is 'so scrupulous' that 'if he thinks that he has made an over-hasty or generalized or half-true statement he will not stop offering you qualifications and amendments and rider, till in the end the substance of what he has said has disappeared'.[627] Much the same could be said of Dowell's narrative. There are striking stylistic similarities between the two novels. Goethe's novel begins with a preface in which his narrator claims to have collected everything he could discover of Werther's story, much as Dowell claims his account is based on what others have told him. Just as Dowell laments his writing ability, Werther claims of an anecdote that 'as usual' he will 'tell it poorly' and 'you, as usual, will consider I exaggerate'.[628] Where Dowell imagines himself talking to a sympathetic listener, Werther's account is a direct address to Lotte, whom if he 'had' there he 'would talk to, instead of writing'.[629]

Dowell also owes something to Werther. His claim to be like Edward chimes with Werther's observation that 'We often feel that we lack something, and seem to see that very quality in someone else, promptly attributing all our qualities to him too'.[630] In this light, Dowell's description of Edward as 'just myself' is an acknowledgement that he has ascribed to him motives, behaviours and feelings which are his own. Dowell is, after all, Ford's Impressionist writer whose job is to make a

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[626] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 56.
[627] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* pp. 59 and 60 respectively.
[628] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, p. 35.
[629] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 45.
[630] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 73.

reader see, feel and identify with the plight of characters. He can't do that without inhabiting someone else's mind. Even with Nancy, who might not 'be said to have a mind' he claims to know 'what was passing' in it when she repeated the word 'shuttlecock'.[631] This is why it matters that Dowell wrote Edward as an aspiring sentimental hero, a Werther-like figure. In claiming parity with Edward, he also claims it with Werther. Dowell constantly points to his own virtue and the purity of his intentions: he is claiming to be the true sentimental hero in the narrative, so the saddest story is his own. It ends with him alone at Bramshaw, having given up on romantic storylines and the hope of a better future. Of course, his allegiance to the passionate and sentimental people raises the question of what is left for Dowell?

It is a question answered by the final section, added because Dowell had 'forgotten to say how Edward met his death'.[632] In fact he has already twice mentioned that Edward cut his throat, but the final paragraphs deliver the last shocking twist.[633] Dowell relays the arrival of Nancy's telegram which Edward opens 'negligently', reads 'without emotion' and silently hands to Dowell. 'Well,' Dowell observes, 'Edward was the English gentleman' and 'to the last, a sentimentalist, whose mind was compounded of indifferent poems and novels'.[634] Dowell had watched Edward take out a 'little neat pen-knife', understood his intention, and did nothing to 'hinder' him.[635] He had not been unable to prevent Edward's suicide, as he previously suggested, but had not tried. Again, there are parallels with *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Goethe's 'Editor' recounts Werther's 'last remarkable days', filling in the gaps in Werther's 'own testimony'.[636] This includes a letter from Werther to Lotte in which he claims to be writing 'without any romantic hysteria' on the day he shall last see her for he is

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[631] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 167.
[632] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 168.
[633] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, pp. 132 and 156.
[634] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 169.
[635] Ibid.
[636] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 106

'resolved to die'.[637] In the editor's account, Werther's servant brings a note to Albert to ask for the loan of his pistols. Lotte's sense of foreboding goes unexpressed, and the guns are handed over without question. Werther is later found, as described earlier, with a vein slashed and a shot, which had blown 'out his brains', but still alive.[638] In fact he lives for several hours before being buried at night, after which there were 'fears for Lotte's life'.[639] There are obvious similarities in the use of a knife, the fact that key characters suspect but do not intervene in the suicide attempt, and the fear for Lotte's life translates into Nancy's 'worse than death'.

In addition to plot similarities, Dowell's final chapters, appearing to pull together loose ends to make 'his … story plain' mirror how Goethe's editor fills in gaps.[640] The notable difference is the explicit depiction of Werther's death and the lacuna in Dowell's final scene. The reason for this is suggested by the way Dowell implicates himself in the scene, declaring himself 'also … a sentimentalist'.[641] Dowell's justification for not intervening in Edward's suicide was that he 'didn't think [Edward] was wanted in the world' and 'his confounded tenants, his rifle-associations, his drunkards, reclaimed and unclaimed' did not justify his ongoing 'suffering'.[642] Given that Dowell is literally now the landlord Edward once was, claims to be 'not the least use' and has no hope of a happy outcome, what are his options? Does his despair lead him into madness, like Nancy? Or, like Edward, does his exhaustion drive him to 'have a bit of a rest'?[643] Bennett reads Dowell as having made a 'declaration of suicidality' in his claim to be like Edward.[644] One small detail which suggests that Dowell may, like Edward, consider killing himself is intimated by the novel's intertextuality with *The Sorrows of Young*

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[637] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 116
[638] Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* p. 134
[639] Ibid.
[640] Ford, *A Call,* p. 304.
[641] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 169.
[642] Ibid.
[643] Ibid.
[644] Bennett, *Suicide Century*, p. 67.

Werther. Dowell is not just sitting 'in a house that is absolutely quiet' with no-one to disturb him, but specifically 'in Edward's gun room', where Leonora thought Edward might commit suicide.[645] The parallel is suggestive and gives Dowell's re-opening of his narrative to deal with Edward's suicide a different significance. It is like other painful subjects that Dowell avoids. He can't write directly about Edward's suicide, in part because it confronts the possibility of his own. If he intends death, it makes sense of his claim to be writing for unknown generations, because he will no longer be there to tell the story. Far from taking the sights out of his mind, writing them down confirmed them to him. Though Dowell says 'I don't want to sadden you', he does.[646] The novel that Ford wanted to call The Saddest Story could as easily have been The Sorrows of Poor Dowell.

This reading does not rely wholly on the parallels with *The Sorrows of Young Werther* because, as shown, there are internal textual reasons supporting the idea of Dowell's suicidality. However, the similarities invite the question of why Ford might have alluded to Goethe's novel. One answer is that it was at the forefront of his mind: he devoted a chapter to Goethe in *When Blood is Their Argument*, written in close proximity to *The Good Soldier*.[647] He had clearly researched Goethe in depth to explain how he had become Germany's equivalent of Shakespeare, a 'great figure' who stood for his country.[648] He had visited Goethe's home, read a 'colossal' biography published in 1903, and cites Lotte Buff as 'the original of the "Sorrows of Werther" lady'.[649] Yet to suggest that the connections were accidental would do Ford an injustice. In a 1924 essay Ford cited Goethe as an author of whom one could not afford to be ignorant, arguing for understanding of his methods.[650] This implies more

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[645] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, p. 168.
[646] Ibid.
[647] Saunders cites December 1913 as the point at which Ford began *The Good Soldier* and September 1914 for *When Blood is their Argument* (*A Dual Life Volume I*, pp. 400 and 471 respectively).
[648] Ford Madox Hueffer, *When Blood Is Their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture* (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 271.
[649] Ford, *When Blood Is Their Argument*, pp. 285, 277 and 288 respectively.
[650] Ford Madox Ford, 'Stocktaking: Towards a Revaluation of English Literature', in Saunders and Stang, *Critical Essays*, p. 242.

than a cursory understanding of how Goethe's novels worked and there are two levels to this: as texts and as cultural artefacts. It is the second of these that may have been more influential, because 'the Goethe legend' covered 'the entire world',[651] and included the association of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* with copycat suicides. The 'suicidal craze' which afflicts Ashburnham's fellow soldiers may owe something to this. Whilst Hulse points out that there is little evidence that the novel prompted a 'suicide epidemic' it was certainly a contemporary perception.[652] *The Good Soldier,* more than any of Ford's earlier novels, represents madness and its consequences as something almost contagious and sanctioned by an unfeeling society. It is in this sense, perhaps, that steeping himself in Goethe's world had its impact.

5.3.5 Conclusions

The Good Soldier is the pinnacle of Ford's enquiry into madness before the war, bringing together the ideas of the novels which precede it. As Saunders observes, it is a novel 'about writing' and the dangers of 'living by selling untrue statements'.[653] Dowell personifies this danger and his narrative style allows readers to experience vicariously being inside the mind of a man desperately trying to regain equilibrium, but instead writing himself into despair. As narrator, he is the madness maker in the novel, the person who labels and explains the madness he perceives around him. In doing so, he layers up the different causes of madness found in Ford's earlier novels. Some people are predisposed. Some relationships are toxic and damaging. Passion and its repression can destabilise people. The line between reality and illusion is subjective, and people are labelled problematic because they do not think or behave as others do. Finally, Dowell highlights societal attitudes and conventions as at least contributory, if not causal. Ford's pre-war novels follow a trajectory from

[651] Ford, *When Blood Is Their Argument*, p. 279.
[652] Michael Hulse, 'Introduction' to *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (London: Penguin,1989), p. 12.
[653] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 455.

personal to interpersonal to more systemic explanations for madness, woven through with a peculiarly literary sensibility. *Parade's End*, discussed in the next chapter, shows how the war sharpened Ford's sense of the interplay between these types of explanation.

6 *PARADE'S END*

6.1 Introduction

Where *The Good Soldier* is viewed as Ford's pre-war masterpiece, *Parade's End* (1924-28) holds the same status in his war writing. It marks a shift in his writing about madness in that it transparently references Freud and deals with war-related trauma. If *The Good Soldier* began the shift from explanations of madness privileging personal and interpersonal factors towards a recognition of societal norms, *Parade's End* moves definitively into a more systemic depiction in which explanations co-exist and compete. Ford's acknowledgement of emerging medical theories ensures that the tetralogy is contemporary. The idea that people are made mad through the power of language, through words spoken or withheld, through the words of other people and one's own, is a connecting thread to the pre-war novels. The essence of this proposition does not change in *Parade's End*, almost becoming more insistent as Ford covers a period in which new terminology, such as 'shell shock' emerged and psychoanalytic theory gained more influence.

Ford wrote *Parade's End* 'in favour of pacifism', making war his ostensible subject, but it was definitively not to be about 'shells, mud, dust and sending the bayonet home with a grunt' but about how little the 'actual' fighting occupied the thoughts of those involved in 'those hostilities'.[1] *Parade's End* has been considered to be primarily about the 'traumatic effects of the war on the mind'.[2] Chantler and Hawkes argue that 'it is only after the "shattering experience" of the war that the mind moves to centre stage in Ford's fiction, both in terms of content (with characters whose minds have

[1] Ford Madox Ford, 'Great Trade Route', in Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford War Prose,* p. 259.
[2] Meghan Marie Hammond, 'Fellow Feeling in Ford's Last Post: Modernist Empathy and the Eighteenth-Century Man', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind*, p. 63.

been shaken, scarred, or damaged irrevocably by the war) and of style (with abrupt time-shifts which frequently enact mental as well as structural fragmentation, and extensive use of free indirect discourse.)' [3] However, as already discussed, disturbed minds feature repeatedly in Ford's pre-war novels. It is not the preoccupation with shattered minds which is new but the specific context of war and the extensive use of techniques which minimise the distance between reader and character. If *The Good Soldier* allowed vicarious experience of Dowell's mind, the pervasive use of free indirect discourse in *Parade's End* allows access to the minds of multiple characters. This raises the question of whose perspectives are privileged. Saunders identifies Christopher Tietjens as the 'central consciousness',[4] and Barbara Farnworth observes that the first three books 'place the reader in Tietjens' mind'.[5] The extent to which this privileges Tietjens' perspective is emphasised by Hammond's observation that *Last Post* 'cuts off our access' to Tietjens, in favour of his brother Mark's 'conspicuous presence'.[6] Even then, Tietjens remains, if 'only as a preoccupation of others'.[7] *Parade's End* is essentially Tietjens' story.

At its simplest, that story is of a stoic, repressed English gentleman caught in a combative marriage who serves in the Great War and leaves his wife to live with another woman. The war is both a context and a catalyst. *Parade's End* encapsulates another of Ford's small circles with the romantic complications and intense emotionality of *A Call* and *The Good Soldier*. Core to the circle are Tietjens; his wife Sylvia; his mistress, Valentine Wannop; his friend Macmaster and the mistress he marries, Edith Ethel Duchemin; Tietjens' brother Mark and Marie Léonie, the long-term mistress he marries on his death bed; Valentine's mother, Mrs Wannop, suspected of a prior relationship with Tietjens'

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[3] Chantler and Hawkes, 'Introduction' to *War and the Mind*, p. 6.
[4] Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life, Volume II: The After-War World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2012), p. 204.
[5] Farnworth, 'The Self-Analysis of Christopher Tietjens', p. 77.
[6] Hammond, *Fellow Feeling in Ford's Last Post*, p. 63.
[7] Hammond, *Fellow Feeling in Ford's Last Post*, p. 69.

father; and General Campion, Tietjens' godfather and commander, and admirer of Sylvia. It is this set of irregular relationships which create most of Tietjens' problems.

It is not incidental that Tietjens' war service costs him his memory and almost his sanity, although, like Dowell, he exists within a matrix of other characters whose mental stability is called into question. Tietjens is not the only character to suffer shell shock, and parallels with Captain McKechnie raise questions about why the latter ends up in an asylum and Tietjens does not. Few characters in Ford's novels are consigned to asylums, so the fact that there is a second, the Reverend Mr. Duchemin, is notable. Duchemin's committal frees Edith Ethel, herself deemed hysterical, to begin a relationship with Macmaster, casting doubt on whose interest Duchemin's incarceration serves. The issue of whether Tietjens' unfaithful wife, Sylvia, is simply bad or, as he comes to wonder, mad, hovers over the text. Valentine, a militant suffragette at the start of the tetralogy, by *Last Post* is hiding in her bedroom, filled with anxieties. Do the circumstances of her relationship with Tietjens fully account for this, or are her own war experiences a factor, involving a brother who was a conscientious objector? That Mark Tietjens is mute and immobile for most of *Last Post* raises questions about whether it results from physical or mental illness, and about the significance of speech. Just as words and language remain important to Ford's representations of madness, so do stories, told by or about people. Examining the stories adjacent to Tietjens' own illuminates how madness is shown to be endemic rather than pandemic and, at least in Ford's version of it, deeply connected to language.

The least ambiguous instances of madness are those resulting in a character being admitted to an asylum. This is the fate of Duchemin, a civilian whose madness is unrelated to the war, and McKechnie, a combatant who ends up in 'an asylum for shell-shock cases'.[8] Despite these

[8] Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End*: *Last Post*, (Manchester: Carcanet Press Limited, 2011), p. 132.

dissimilarities, talk is a key part of the reason each is labelled, in Duchemin's case a 'scatological – afterwards a homicidal - lunatic',[9] and in McKechnie's as 'temporarily going off his nut',[10] 'always going mad',[11] and a 'troublesome lunatic'.[12] The descriptions of McKechnie imply that his madness is intermittent, inconvenient, and infuriating. It might be that 'obscenities dropped from the lips of McKechnie' under shelling, but this was 'unusual' [13] for this 'best orfcer in His Majesty's army', someone 'brave as a 'ero'.[14] Duchemin's problems are also intermittent, related to his ascetic fasting and drinking, but his profane outbursts are taken as proof of madness. There is obvious irony in the juxtaposition of a clergyman as murderous and a professional soldier as a mere nuisance. Why is Mr. Duchemin and his madness in a novel about war at all?

6.2 Duchemin – the 'standard' madman

Duchemin first appears indirectly, early in *Some Do Not…*, when Macmaster visits his wife to arrange a meeting with him. The fact that 'few women had ever made so much impression' on Macmaster as Mrs. Duchemin creates added frisson. She proposes a breakfast meeting, 'quite a party', something 'noisy and gay' because her husband is 'apt to brood'.[15] Intertextually, a brooding cleric evokes Brede from *The Benefactor* so does not augur well. Nor does Mrs Duchemin moving their conversation to the garden because of a 'considerable volume of noise', the 'hurried removal of pieces of furniture' and 'guttural ejaculations'.[16] It hints at concealment, so even before Duchemin's issues are made transparent, readers are primed to consider him problematic, and his wife's comment that it is

[9] Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End: Some Do Not…* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2010), p. 235.
[10] Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End: No More Parades* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2011), p. 11.
[11] Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End: A Man Could Stand Up-* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2011), p. 111.
[12] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 91.
[13] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 113.
[14] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 12.
[15] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 70.
[16] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 69.

'perhaps too lonely here … after all' suggests that she pays a price for this.[17] The addition of 'after all' can only be 'rather astonishing' to Macmaster if he interprets it as an admission of her own loneliness. This is why he is 'not a little excited' at the prospect of the breakfast.[18] His thoughts are no longer on the man he had wanted to meet, but with the woman 'you couldn't call … ordinary' who left him feeling that he was entering 'a room [he] had long left and never ceased to love'.[19] Whilst their shared 'Scotch' nationality undoubtedly supports this sense of familiarity, her 'Edinburghness' represents to him a privileged society which he had been unable to access.[20] When Macmaster envisages her as a 'mate for Tietjens', someone to be made an 'influence', to whom he would one day bring his own partner to learn from her 'assuredness of manner' and the 'gift of dressing', he expresses a sense of not being her equal.[21] He is in thrall to the woman whose very 'first words' left him with 'eyes for no one else'.[22] The first introduction of Duchemin thus primes two expectations: that he is problematic and that his unhappy wife will turn to Macmaster.

However, Duchemin is not foregrounded so early simply as a device to bring Macmaster into an illicit relationship with his future wife. Duchemin's significance is exposed in the only scene to involve him directly, the breakfast meeting, which from the start holds a barely constrained hysteria. Valentine, there to help Edith Ethel through the 'ordeal hanging over' her, 'screamed' when the 'immense voice' of Mr. Horsley, one of Duchemin's curates, 'had shouted, "This way! This way!"' [23] It is uncertain whether Valentine's reaction is to the shock of a loud noise, nervous anticipation of the breakfast or fear of her arrest as a suffragette. However, Horsley, one of three curates with the 'physiques of prize-

[17] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 70.
[18] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 71.
[19] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 70.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 71.
[22] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 67.
[23] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 108.

fighters', whose voice 'drowned every possible form of interruption', hints at an underlying violence.[24] He signals the physical and linguistic violence on which the scene rests.

Duchemin's own violence is spoken. It is in the 'dreaded, high, rasping tones' of his *'Post coitum tristia!'* which creates 'great … disturbance' in his wife.[25] It is in the 'hot licentiousness' of Latin texts he snuffles 'into Macmaster's ear'.[26] Intimations of his potential for physical violence lie in Edith Ethel's recall of him 'holding her wrist with the painful force of the maniac' as he had translated such texts 'over and over again' to her.[27] Violence suggests itself to Tietjens when he recognises Parry as a 'Bermondsey light middle-weight' there 'to carry Duchemin off if he becomes violent',[28] and Macmaster, faced with Duchemin's 'sudden, distorted rage' when he suspects that they are 'medical men' brought to certify him, quickly recognises that huge curates are 'enough to suppress' his host.[29] Macmaster extrapolates from experiences of a friend at Cambridge, 'subject to such temporary lapses as Mr. Duchemin', who would 'stand up and shout … the most unthinkable indecencies'.[30] He anticipates that Duchemin is about to 'shout obscenities wildly to the other guests', so converses with him until he 'considered that the fit was over'.[31] However, once Macmaster ceases to exercise the 'powerful will' that had outweighed Duchemin's own and turns his attention to Edith Ethel, her husband gets to his feet 'panting and delighted', shouting 'Chaste!' and 'three obscene words'.[32] The panting and delight suggest sexual excitement, as if the words arouse Duchemin. It is significant, therefore, that the incident happens shortly after Edith Ethel expressed her gratitude for Macmaster's intervention in 'profound tones' and the two are 'gazing at each other'.[33] Saunders

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 117.
[26] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 118.
[27] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 119.
[28] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 118.
[29] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 120-21.
[30] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 121.
[31] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 123-24.
[32] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 124.
[33] Ibid.

observes that Duchemin's 'sexual taunts' seem to articulate the 'undercurrent of the scene', including their flirtation 'under the guise of a Pre-Raphaelite literary sensibility'.[34] However, Duchemin's words go beyond surfacing the unspoken. His first statement is 'I say he made a settlement on her, *dum casta et sola*, of course. Whilst she remained chaste and alone!' [35] The phrase refers to a divorced man ceasing maintenance payments to an ex-wife on her remarriage, and can be construed as a warning, especially if taken together with the fact that Duchemin's will left his 'property to Magdalen College and merely the income to his widow'.[36] He provides for his wife but did not leave 'practically the whole' of his money as she expected.[37] Duchemin might intermittently have what McMaster thinks of as a 'fit', but he is sane enough to understand that his wife might have him committed and that her flirtation is not innocent.[38]

However, Duchemin's words damage him more than they do others. Ford highlights the force of words with the very linguistic responses of those present. Mrs Wannop responds to his obscene words by 'suddenly' saying 'Oh!' and immediately engaging Horsley in a conversation about writing.[39] Others, alerted by Edith Ethel's 'screamed: "Oh…*no*!"' as Duchemin begins talking about their wedding night, continue 'talking with polite animation and listening with minute attention'.[40] Tietjens normalises the reaction when he reflects that it constitutes 'the highest achievement and justification of English manners!' [41] Parry's offer to 'get Mr. Duchemin away', though it would create a 'hell of a fight', reinforces the idea that social decorum matters more than Duchemin's mental state.[42] Macmaster, concerned only with Edith Ethel's distress, proposes a way to stop Duchemin, to which

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[34] Saunders, "Sex Ferocity", in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind,* p. 19.
[35] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 124.
[36] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 295.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 124.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 125.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

she acquiesces. Because the scene is focused on their exchanges, the physical violence of what follows seems relegated to something unimportant. 'Punch him in the kidney' Macmaster advises Parry, 'as hard as you can without breaking your thumb'.[43] This inflicts 'such pain as [Mr Duchemin] had never conceived' and leaves him 'huddled up, a darkness covering his eyes'.[44] 'He won't get up again,' Macmaster assures Parry.[45] No-one remonstrates. Macmaster justifies it to Edith Ethel as a 'scientific nerve counter-irritant' used to combat, perhaps even cure, 'certain excesses' which are 'merely nervous cravings' through fear of incurring such physical pain.[46] At Parry's suggestion that he prepare for his sermon, Duchemin 'had gone as quietly as he had arrived', leaving Macmaster reminiscing with Edith Ethel about their Scottish upbringing and holding her hand under the table.[47] By the end of the chapter both are envisaging how their affair will progress, and Macmaster walks 'with the hard tread of the conqueror'.[48] At a narrative level, this complex scene is there to create the emotional bond between a grateful Edith Ethel and an infatuated Macmaster. It also establishes the tension between Edith Ethel and Tietjens who comes across them just as they have kissed and are still holding hands. Whilst both dynamics support Duchemin's necessity to the plot, Ford would hardly have expected readers to sweep past the appalling violence which sees Duchemin silenced, physically disabled and removed without remark from other characters. Duchemin is not just removed from the room, but never appears directly in *Parade's End* again. Only indirectly, via Tietjens, do readers learn that 'after a dreadful scene in the rectory, Duchemin having mauled his wife like a savage dog, and Macmaster in the house', he is 'in an asylum…'.[49] At this point Duchemin has become the standard madman of fiction, the Bertha figure of *Jane Eyre* confined for the

[43] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 126.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 130.
[49] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 232.

protection of others. The ellipsis following 'asylum' leaves readers to conjure up whatever images this might evoke. It carries the same sense of finality as when Moffat delivers Brede to an asylum in *The Benefactor,* but none of the sadness. Duchemin's fate is revealed only as part of an account of his wife becoming Macmaster's mistress. Just as he was removed from the breakfast room, he is effectively removed from the narrative. His voice is ignored, then suppressed, and disappears from the page.

This is central to Duchemin's significance in the story. His interjections at the breakfast, foreshadowing the relationship between his wife and Macmaster, embarrassed his guests and suggested an uncomfortable truth which they preferred not to know. He spoiled the 'parade' of good behaviour. Also at issue is the lack of self-control which his intermittent fits induced. Presumably it was in such a fit that he lost control sufficiently to attack his wife. This lack of personal control, and resultant unpredictability, leads to him being put under the control of others. This is the point of his inclusion in the novel: to illustrate what happens to people who break social codes, who are considered out of control and deemed mad. He becomes a problem to be managed, with all sympathy reserved for his wife whose 'sheer self-sacrifice' is commended.[50] He is there to explain why other characters, under stress, fear for their sanity. In the context of war, this fear is real, as McKechnie illustrates.

6.3 Mad eyed McKechnie

McKechnie first appears in *No More Parades,* misnamed as Captain Mackenzie, experiencing 'one of his mad fits' whilst sheltering from shelling in a dugout.[51] There is a noticeable focus on his speech. He 'spoke sharp, injurious, inaudible words' to the sergeant major, 'began a long argument' as to

[50] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 141.
[51] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 12.

'relative seniority' between himself and Tietjens, arguing 'with himself' and 'taking both sides in an extraordinarily rapid gabble'.[52] When he begins to 'talk, faster than ever, about a circle' and the end of the world, Tietjens worries that it 'may prove the beginnings of a definite, dangerous lunacy'.[53] Tietjens knows little about McKechnie except that he has been decorated for his war service and was a 'Vice-Chancellor's Latin Prize man'.[54] He infers from McKechnie being 'too dark and good-looking, too passionate' that his madness derives from having been 'absolutely repressed ever since 1914', for the 'repression of the passionate' has this effect.[55] He reinforces the connection between physical characteristics and a passionate nature by repeated references to McKechnie's eyes. They are 'dark, revengeful eyes',[56] 'dark eyes as mad as a cat's',[57] blazing 'maniacally in his head',[58] eyes like 'Hot prunes!' which are 'certainly mad'.[59] Tietjens' assessments appear to rest on an underlying theory, with scant evidence, but create the impression that McKechnie is inherently vulnerable. Just as with Florence in *The Good Soldier*, McKechnie's talk signals instability. Talk is a constant in how he is portrayed. Tietjens describes McKechnie as conducting 'a long – an interminable – conversation with the doctor's batman' when he was unable to sleep.[60] He 'talked like a drunkard, but he was not drunk',[61] and eases his mind 'by having got off his chest a confounded lot of semi-nonsensical ravings'.[62] He shouts during shelling because he cannot stand 'the bloody noise',[63] viewing it as protective because if 'you could out-shout the row you were safe',[64] but also acknowledging it as 'not

[52] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 13.
[53] Ford, *No More Parades,* pp. 14-15.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 24.
[57] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 92.
[58] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 98.
[59] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 120.
[60] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 70.
[61] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 17.
[62] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 25.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 26.

sensible'.[65] It is close to the kind of comforting superstition Ford defended,[66] but McKechnie's shouting is seen by others as evidence of his madness.

At times, however, he seems saner than those around him. His attempts to dissuade Tietjens from 'going out in nothing but … pyjamas' appear more rational than Tietjens' insistence that the men cannot be kept waiting whilst he dresses.[67] When their Colonel is 'too exalted' to enact orders to evacuate, when within ten minutes the 'Huns would have been in the trenches', it is McKechnie who has 'to beg Tietjens' to give it instead.[68] As the account is focalised through Tietjens, who is reflecting on how the incident was later portrayed as 'an officially strategic retreat', it is easy to miss that McKechnie was the most decisive and rational of the three men.[69] Though Tietjens judged him too handsome and passionate 'to be a good regular officer on the face of him', his actions justify his military reputation.[70] Tietjens' perspective is not infallible, nor necessarily informed, as McKechnie points out when Tietjens asks him directly if he is 'mad? Stark, staring … Or only just play-acting?' [71] 'You are not a mad doctor,' McKechnie says in response to Tietjens' advice to 'pull [himself] together' because if he lets himself go, he may 'go a tidy sight farther than [he] wants to'.[72]

As with Duchemin, lack of control matters, especially over what is said and how. Tietjens refers to the 'male fury' with which McKechnie recounts his 'really very painful story' to him 'till past half past four' in the morning.[73] Notice that Tietjens describes it as a story. Indeed, he recounts it as such:

> It appeared that he had obtained leave to go home and divorce his wife, who, during his absence in France, had been living with an Egyptologist in Government service. Then, acting under

[65] Ibid.
[66] Discussed in Chapter 4.
[67] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 90.
[68] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 70.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 15.
[71] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 23.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 95.

> conscientious scruples of the younger school of the day, he had refrained from divorcing her. Campion had in consequence threatened to deprive him of his commission …. The poor devil – who had actually consented to contribute to the costs of the household of his wife and the Egyptologist – had gone raving mad and showered an extraordinary torrent of abuse at the decent old fellow that Campion was…. A decent old fellow, really. For the interview, being delicate, had taken place in the general's bedroom and the general had not felt it necessary, there being no orderlies or junior officers present, to take any official notice of McKechnie's outburst.[74]

Campion chose to frame it as a 'temporary brainstorm' and assigned McKechnie to Tietjens' unit.[75] It is a passage which rewards close attention. McKechnie had clearly given a long and emotional account because it was the early hours of the morning before he 'had calmed himself down'.[76] The neat précis and matter-of-fact tone, therefore, show it to be Tietjens' perspective. McKechnie would hardly have described himself as 'raving mad' or the General as a 'decent old fellow'. The value judgement which finds McKechnie's loss of emotional control problematic and likely to have had more serious consequences had his 'torrent of abuse' been witnessed, is Tietjens' own. McKechnie's fury makes it unlikely that he would have ascribed compassionate motives to Campion. This matters because, without these value judgements, McKechnie's responses seem reasonable. What has he done that is so terrible? His original leave request might be deemed fraudulent, but McKechnie did not disguise his actions. Indeed, towards his wife and her lover they appear generous. More pertinently, they echo Tietjens' own principled decision not to divorce an unfaithful wife: a parallel that McKechnie subsequently draws. Yet Tietjens presents McKechnie's outburst to Campion as inappropriate and his venting to himself as inconvenient. To Tietjens, whose 'emotional existence was a complete taciturnity', either is sufficient to make McKechnie unsound.[77] This difference between them shapes a debate in the novel about the value and risk of talk.

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[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 8.

McKechnie is generally represented as unable to manage his talk and it brings him into conflict. His repeated complaints about seniority provoke Colonel Levin into saying that, had he not been the nephew of some protegee of Tietjens,[78] he would 'be in a lunatic asylum'.[79] 'McKechnie's face worked convulsively' before he 'lifted his fist and cried out; "My un …"', only to be interrupted by Levin saying 'if you say another word you'll go under medical care the moment it's said. I've the order in my pocket. Now fall out.' [80] When McKechnie hesitates Levin suppresses any dissent by giving him three choices: go up the line that night, go to a court of inquiry for not obtaining a divorce, 'or the other thing'.[81] Being put under medical care, therefore, is a threat. Soldiers returning to the front after breakdowns often recounted their treatments including a 'disciplinary approach' to the use of electric shock therapy in both England and France, so it is easy to see why Levin's threat constitutes an effective deterrent.[82] Equally, the notion freely circulated amongst soldiers that shell shock was imaginary.[83] Colin Walsh's compilation of contemporary material includes an ironic list of *Commandments Revised for Cadets* which includes 'Thou shalt not parade thine imaginary ailments before the M.O.' [84] Contemporary songs speak to the power of those in authority to label someone mad, with one advising that if the Sergeant says you're mad, 'Well – you are', so 'don't answer back'.[85] McKechnie doesn't answer back and is silenced, temporarily, by Levin's threats. Tietjens' suspicion that McKechnie is faking madness fades over time, but he remains ambivalent. McKechnie 'was mad' to engage in a sonnet writing competition with him, but also 'not quite mad' in that he appears to be

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[78] McKechnie is the nephew of Macmaster.
[79] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 191.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Peter Leese, '"Why Are They Not Cured?" British Shellshock Treatment During the Great War', in Mark Micale and Paul Lerner (Eds.), *Traumatic Pasts History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age 1870-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 218.
[83] Leese, *Why Are They Not Cured?,* p. 209.
[84] Colin Walsh, *Mud, Songs and Blighty - A Scrapbook of the First World War* (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1975), p. 51. The items in this compilation are a combination of contemporary retyped texts and reproductions of original articles, poems, songs sheets, postcards, advertisements and photographs.
[85] Walsh, *Mud, Songs and Blighty*, p. 88.

staying 'sane in order to be fit for' it.[86] Above all, Tietjens finds him 'tiring' because he 'never brought his mad fits to a crisis'.[87] He switched from behaving like a 'wild cat' protecting kittens to a 'submissive subordinate' without apparent 'rhyme or reason'.[88] McKechnie shares with Duchemin the ability to disrupt unexpectedly. He may not have obscene outbursts, but he repeatedly returns to his grievances, particularly about Tietjens.

His grievances, volubly expressed to Valentine on Armistice Night, lead her to tell the 'brute beast' that he does not need to shout.[89] He is a 'hateful man … grumbling' about Tietjens, complaining 'agonisedly' about his 'filthy, bloody, swinish uncle Vincent Macmaster' and claiming that they and Campion are 'in a league against [him]'.[90] Struggling to make sense of his account, Valentine suggests that he has 'shell-shock' but McKechnie refutes it, saying that he has 'a bad wife. Like Tietjens'.[91] He talks 'inexhaustibly and fast', changing topics 'so quickly' that Valentine cannot process his words.[92] By the time others arrive, McKechnie has 'talked himself hoarse' [93] but has managed to convey to Valentine that Campion had 'wanted Sylvia' and, though Tietjens had 'saved two lives under fire', the general had had him sent to the front to be killed.[94] When that failed to happen, Campion tried to have Tietjens 'cashiered',[95] but his plan that this would make him 'less disgustingly disgraced for taking up with the wife', was undermined because he 'overreached' and 'had to withdraw his words'.[96] Despite being refracted through McKechnie's grudges, this account is not untrue. Like Duchemin, McKechnie vocalises things which might otherwise go unsaid. Once they are voiced,

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[86] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 121.
[87] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 119.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 202-03.
[91] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 204.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 205.
[94] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 204.
[95] Dismissed in disgrace.
[96] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 204.

McKechnie disappears from the page, his fate revealed indirectly, in *Last Post*, through Marie Léonie. At the Armistice celebration dinner an officer 'had gone raving mad'.[97] Tietjens and Valentine were 'left … with the madman' whom they had 'got rid of … somewhere in Chelsea at an asylum for shell-shock cases'.[98] Even allowing for Marie Léonie's characteristically unsentimental perspective, this is a brutal dismissal in which McKechnie is not even named. A man of distinguished war service is 'got rid of' as if of no value. McKechnie stands for all the soldiers whose mental health gave way under the pressures of war. His claim to share Tietjens' relational difficulties is there to illustrate that those pressures were not confined to combat.

McKechnie also signals the dangers of talk, which is what first leads him to being labelled mad and later shell-shocked.[99] His rapid-fire revelations on Armistice Day seal his fate. Like a soldier recklessly throwing grenades, he adds accusation upon accusation, only some of which are true. He claims that Tietjens was 'selling his wife to Generals', describes him as a 'cully who comforted his wife's lover', and labels Sylvia a 'bad' woman with 'appetites'.[100] It is a scattergun attack from which no-one is safe and marks the point when McKechnie is, like Duchemin, deemed to be out of control and removed from society. McKechnie shares his willingness to fight in words with the woman he labels 'bad': Sylvia. Indeed, she initiated the damaging rumours he repeats. Why she does so is central to addressing the question of whether she is simply bad or, as other characters suggest, mad.

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[97] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 132.
[98] Ibid.
[99] The value and risks of talking about personal or war trauma is also a theme in *The Marsden Case*. See Gillian Gustar, 'The First World War, Madness, and Reading between the lines of The Marsden Case', *Humanities* 13, 123 (2024), for fuller discussion.
[100] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 202-04.

6.4 Sylvia – War in Words

Although some of McKechnie's claims are inaccurate he is not alone in labelling Sylvia bad. Macmaster describes her as the 'cruellest beast',[101] Mark Tietjens as 'that bitch Sylvia',[102] and her own son as 'beautiful' but 'Cruel!' [103] Sylvia is cast as the villain of the story from the opening scenes when she is presented as the 'woman of means',[104] who had married Tietjens, left him four months earlier 'to go abroad with another man',[105] and has now written 'without any contrition at all' asking him to take her back.[106] She had lured Tietjens into marriage whilst pregnant 'probably' [107] with Drake's child, leaves Perowne heartbroken when she returns to her marriage, only to then persecute Tietjens. On the night McKechnie labels her a 'bad wife',[108] Sylvia lies to Tietjens about having cancer and feigns a 'creditable faint from the top of the stairs' which, despite 'practice' put her 'ankle out of joint'.[109] Both acts intend emotional harm and are deeply irrational. The lie will inevitably be exposed, and if falling downstairs is hardly rational, practising it suggests an unbalanced mind. There is certainly a case for finding both Sylvia bad and mad, but the important question is what this signifies in the novel.

Sylvia is made bad in the way that characters in Ford's pre-war novels are made mad, linguistically, in descriptions by other characters. Her position as villain appears reinforced by the conversation between her mother and Father Consett as they await her arrival at Lobscheid after leaving Perowne.

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[101] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 59.
[102] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 21.
[103] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 57.
[104] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 6.
[105] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 8.
[106] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 10.
[107] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 37.
[108] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-*, p. 204.
[109] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 153.

They describe her as 'wicked'[110] in a tone only part playful, and twice refer to her 'evil' thoughts.[111] These are people who love her and want her reconciled with Tietjens. Consett advises that she should live decently and have children with Tietjens because it is 'unnatural living and unnatural practices that cause these complexes'.[112] His claim not to be an 'ignoramus',[113] and reference to 'complexes', shown in *The Marsden Case* to be attached in Ford's mind to Freudian theory,[114] hint at underlying psychological drivers for Sylvia's 'unnatural' behaviour. The repetition of 'unnatural' creates emphasis and raises the question of what, beyond her infidelity, this denotes. One clue lies in Sylvia's admission of 'dealings with Mrs Profumo' and 'that loathsome fellow', thought to be Aleister Crowley.[115] 'Does it shock you?' she asks, clearly intending that it should.[116] If the reference is to Crowley,[117] the admission associates Sylvia with an occult spirituality involving 'sex magic' and sexual initiation rites.[118] Sylvia's provocation here is characteristic of her verbal sparring with Consett, a game they both understand and play well. Sylvia engages by goading and insinuating. Her claim to be 'done with' it in favour of 'Mrs. Vanderdecken' and 'of course, Freud' implies some level of engagement.[119] She is adept at unsettling people by seeding ideas in their mind. After her occult allusions, therefore, Consett and Mrs Satterthwaite instantly become attuned to and unnerved by inexplicable scratching noises at the window. 'I don't say it's devils trying to get in,' Consett says, but

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[110] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 39.
[111] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 35.
[112] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 37.
[113] Ibid.
[114] See Ford Madox Ford, *The Marsden Case – A Romance* (London: Duckworth and Co., 1923), in which Miss Jeaffreson, a young woman intellectually attached to the ideas of 'a professor called Freud', seeks to make the narrator 'a distinguished convert … of the complex' (pp. 31 and 40).
[115] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 49. Footnote identifies Crowley as probable reference.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Highly likely as Ford was acquainted with the writer Mary Butts, a student of and co-author with Crowley. In 1921 Butts spent time at his order in Sicily and left disillusioned, and with a drug habit. See Martin Booth, *A Magick Life: A Biography of Aleister Crowley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000), pp. 375–76. Cited at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Butts#cite_note-9> [accessed 13 February 2023].
[118] Liz Williams, *Miracles of Our Own Making – A History of Paganism* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), p. 222.
[119] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 49.

it's useful to remember that they 'are always trying' and these 'deep forests' are noted for it.[120] His own combination of denial and seeding doubt leaves Mrs Satterthwaite 'crossing herself with great rapidity' but Sylvia declaring it 'superstition'.[121] As shown in Chapter 4, one person's superstition is another's reality. Despite this apparent continuity with Ford's pre-war concerns, *Parade's End* inverts the juxtaposition of the occult and Christianity found, for instance, in *The 'Half Moon'*. Where Anne Jeal's witchcraft was dismissed by Edward Colman as archaic and viewed as evidence of her madness by Magdalena Koop, Consett effectively validates Crowley when he declares Sylvia's choice to engage in 'black' prayer a 'sin' for which she is accountable.[122] If she is accountable for her decisions, then Consett believes her neither irrational nor vulnerable. He does, however, consider her immoral, and Tietjens 'perfectly sound'.[123]

However, Consett's judgements are perspectival, based on belief in the existence of evil, devils and occult sacrifices. Sylvia does not believe in these and so appeals to the rational, for them to 'be just', and to see things from her perspective.[124] She does not defend her actions but explains them. She claims to 'hate' Tietjens, not for 'his actions' but for the immorality of 'Every speech he utters'.[125] Whatever topic she raises, Tietjens 'knows *every*thing' and will 'prove' his point by argument until she is almost 'hypnotised' and unable to think.[126] He can reduce her to 'speechless rage' with his arguments.[127] In frustration at being unable to prove him wrong 'not ever, about the simplest thing', Sylvia retaliates by being able to 'pain him' with insinuations about close friends or family.[128] Tietjens suffering these insinuations in 'mute anguish' only heightens her resentment.[129] The essence of her

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[120] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 50.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 54.
[123] Ford, *Some Do Not…*, p. 52.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 52.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 51.
[129] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 52.

complaint is that she is effectively silenced by Tietjens' cold logic. It is notable, therefore, that Consett silences her too. Sylvia says she is resigned to resuming her marriage and being 'bored stiff for the rest of [her] life' but reserves the right to 'torment' Tietjens.[130] Her over-insistence that she 'can' and will 'get even' sounds overwrought, and perhaps reflects her exhaustion after travelling nonstop from Brittany.[131] However, when she claims that, in extremis, she would 'drive him silly … by corrupting the child', it is a provocation too far for Consett.[132] He counter-threatens with ritual exorcism and Sylvia's initial 'outrage' gives way to admissions that she 'shouldn't have' and 'won't'.[133] Mrs Satterthwaite deems the threat 'rather strong', but Consett defends himself on the grounds that it was designed to hit her 'so hard' that she 'won't forget' it.[134] As shown later, she never does. Consett's exchange with Sylvia presents her as bad rather than mad, but her intention to torment the husband who has taken her back after an affair seems less than rational. It raises the question of whether there is, as Consett hinted, an underlying psychological problem. Connecting Sylvia first to Crowley and then Freud intimates that any problems are rooted in her sexuality. Consett is hardly neutral, but when the narrative is focalised through Sylvia, it reveals that his view may not be entirely misjudged.

Two related instances illustrate this. The first occurs in *Last Post* when Sylvia recalls an incident from her teenage years. She had 'proposed' to the family gardener 'to do something to the kitten' of which he was very fond, 'force its paws into walnut shells perhaps'.[135] Though an odd and disturbing suggestion, Sylvia's target was not the kitten but Carter himself, whom she had 'merely' wanted to 'torment'.[136] This prompted the response that he would 'thrash her' like a public schoolboy so that

[130] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 54.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ford, *Some Do Not…*, p. 55.
[135] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 164.
[136] Ibid.

'she would not be able to sit down for a week'.[137] Whilst it is an astonishing threat from a family servant, what Sylvia most recalls is the 'queer pleasure' it gave her.[138] With adult hindsight she links it to her sexual experiences, specifically those with Drake. The pleasure, therefore, implicitly lies in the pain inflicted on her, or at least the anticipation of it, not the kitten. The incident appears to be an account of Sylvia's sexual awakening. The 'recollection' of it 'always' returns that 'queer pleasure' to her and she revisits the memory for that reason.[139] Significantly, it predates her encounters with Drake, by whom she was 'taken advantage of, after champagne'.[140] After her seduction, 'passion had developed: intense on her side and quite intense enough on his', certainly intense enough for him to be 'mad with grief and jealousy' when she agreed to marry Tietjens.[141] In 'dreadful scenes' the night before her wedding, Drake had 'mangled her' to the extent that she had 'been very near death'.[142] The memory of it leaves her 'longing', not for Drake but for 'that dreadful feeling'.[143] How Sylvia was 'mangled' is not made explicit, but Janet Soskice notes that Sylvia's subsequent behaviour mirrors 'that of many rape victims'.[144] Whatever 'mangled' represents, the association between sexual pleasure and physical violence initiated by Carter's threat is cemented by Drake. Ford's treatment is not simply a suggestion that violence is arousing for Sylvia, especially as intense passion seems equally important to her, but the Drake incident bears witness to 'the fact of male brutality and its psychological aftermath'.[145] It is a brutality often directed at Sylvia: Carter threatens thrashing, Drake mangles her, and Perowne threatens to 'incontinently kill her' rather than let her leave.[146]

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[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 185
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 185-86
[143] Ibid.
[144] Saunders, "Sex Ferocity", p. 29.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 126

Sylvia is not alone in experiencing male violence. Edith Ethel, another unfaithful woman, shares the experience. Why then is Edith Ethel generally regarded as a 'poor woman', but Sylvia accorded little sympathy?[147] In part it is because Edith Ethel's agonies are vocalised and witnessed but Sylvia's experiences are not. More pertinently, Sylvia does not consider male threats necessarily problematic. If she learned from Drake how far a man who desired her might go, she also learned that her sexual allure gave her a perverse kind of power. The 'psychological aftermath' to Sylvia's experience of male brutality lies in how she frames relationships with men as a game of combat, a tussle for power. Any game relies on both parties observing the rules and Sylvia believes that Tietjens does not. Since being tricked into marriage, Tietjens has 'never said a bitter thing' [148] to her and the telegram confirming that he will accept her back 'on rigid conditions' signals, as Mrs Satterthwaite observes, that 'he doesn't mean to reproach'.[149] Sylvia views Tietjens' refusal to condemn her or defend himself as not playing the game fairly. She vows to 'get even' with the man who reduces her to speechlessness and is considered blameless.[150] Sylvia sees it as 'sport' to wield the power of her desirability to lure then reject men.[151] Thus, an inebriated young man who mistook her smile for an invitation was sent away with 'a gift of words that scorched his backbone'.[152] This is Sylvia's other power, an ability to weaponize language. It is not simply her adept verbal sparring, or willingness to address men in a 'tone of very deep contempt',[153] but her knowledge that men 'choose to believe her because she [is] a beautiful woman with a thrilling voice'.[154] When Sylvia decides to 'get even' with Tietjens it is this combination that she deploys.

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[147] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 141
[148] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 41
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 54
[151] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 186
[152] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 182
[153] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 112.
[154] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 145.

She considers less the consequences of her retaliation. Consett conjectures that whilst she might make 'an occupation of torturing' Tietjens, her own 'hell on earth' would come when he went 'running, blind, head down, mad after another woman'.[155] Then, he predicts, 'she'll tear the house down'.[156] This language summons images of men running blindly in trenches, of destroyed buildings, of attack. Sylvia, it implies, will wage war. Yet the comment that the more a woman is accustomed to torturing a man, the 'less right she thinks she has to lose him', introduces the notion of obligations and rights, of rules and fair play.[157] Fussell's observation that the Great War was initially approached as an 'armed version of the Olympic Games', with an innocent 'commitment to the sporting spirit' is pertinent.[158] As someone attached to fair play and who might believe in the 'right' not to lose in her personal war, Sylvia stands for this ideal. Mark Tietjens later attributes her failure to it.

Sylvia's early attacks on Tietjens are propagandistic and designed to destroy his reputation. She promulgates, but cannot control, rumours. Like dropped bombs they 'smash' not only Tietjens but his father, who commits suicide.[159] Sylvia is not immune to such collateral damage. The rumours about Tietjens and Valentine are not without foundation, and, as Consett predicted, Sylvia reacts, escalating her attacks from second hand insinuation to direct verbal assault. The best example occurs the day before Tietjens is due to return to the front. He and Sylvia are obliged to have a difficult conversation about practical and personal matters. Tietjens' recollection is that

> The whole morning; at intervals, like a person directing the whip lash to a cruel spot of pain, reiteratedly, she had gone on and on. She had accused him of having Valentine Wannop for his mistress. She had accused him of having Valentine Wannop for his mistress. She had accused him of having Valentine Wannop for his mistress…With maddening reiteration, like that.[160]

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[155] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 55.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 25.
[159] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 161.
[160] Ford, *No More Parades,* pp. 77-78.

Notice how the repetition here mimics the lash of the whip. The effect was to '[force] him to the pitch of sexual excitement' which led him to proposition 'a young lady to whom he had hitherto spoken not even one word of affection'.[161] Sylvia 'without doubt, had known what she was doing',[162] and had admitted after the event that she wanted him to have sex with Valentine in the hope that it would exhaust the attraction and return him to 'physical desire for her'.[163] However, just as she could not control rumours, Sylvia could arouse but not direct desire and Tietjens does not seduce Valentine. The fury this unleashes in Sylvia leads Tietjens to fear that she has gone 'perhaps, mad'.[164] As with McKechnie, he presents Sylvia as unstable because she gives vent to her emotion. Moreover, unlike McKechnie's private outburst, Sylvia's involved 'scenes before the servants!' [165] In contrast to her tirade of threats to 'ruin [him] in the Army', Tietjens 'never spoke'.[166] His assertion that he is 'damn good at not speaking' carries a note of pride and implies that it is a deliberate choice, not an effect of shock.[167] Both are fighting here, but differently: Sylvia attacks in words, Tietjens parries with silences. He knows how to frustrate and silence Sylvia and so he does. She resorts to striking him and, in a clearly symbolic gesture, throws down a gold medallion of the 'patron of soldiers in action that she had worn between her breasts'.[168] She leaves at dawn with no further communication between them. Both withdraw, one verbally and the other physically. Whilst they both imagine it as the end of hostilities, it is not.

It is unnecessary to reprise all Sylvia's manoeuvres and escalations to make the point that, eventually, words prove insufficient. Tietjens is out of reach at the front, and her deluge of letters to Campion,

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[161] Ibid.
[162] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 77.
[163] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 76.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 79.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 76.

first enquiring about Tietjens' safety and then making 'worse and worse' claims about him, do not address the fundamental problem.[169] Sylvia wants their marriage back but will not give Tietjens the power of refusal by writing to say so, so pursues him to France. Like an enemy crossing a boundary to trigger a reaction, Sylvia draws all but one shilling from Tietjens' bank account to force him 'into remonstrating'.[170] It is a sign that she is losing perspective because she soon realises that this first attempt at 'inconveniencing' rather than defaming him was 'rather stupid', because Tietjens would see through her attempts to force a reaction.[171] This has become their pattern: she attacks, he stands stoic. Its resonance with trench warfare makes it inevitable that Sylvia will escalate the conflict. She determines to adopt more 'formidable methods' so that 'He shall…he shall… he *shall* come to heel'.[172]

Her language betrays an inability to approach their relationship as anything but a power struggle. As words have failed, Sylvia falls back on the power of which she is most confident, her sexual attraction. She needs to be there, to 'torment … and to allure' him.[173] However, she is not in control of her 'pure sexual passion' for him.[174] She 'can't *help* it', she can't 'get over it'.[175] In her desperation to succeed she turns to portents. The woman who had denounced superstition now worries that a powder box Drake gave her, which she used as a 'defiance' because Tietjens 'disliked it', is an 'ill-omen'.[176] She makes mental bargains with a now dead Consett, fears that she is 'going mad',[177] then reassures herself that her visions are an 'effect of fatigue on the optic nerves', something Tietjens had once 'explained'.[178] These vacillations depict someone on the edge of rationality, moving in and out of it. In

[169] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 80.
[170] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 116.
[171] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 117.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 169.
[174] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 135.
[175] Ford, *No More Parades,* pp. 135-36.
[176] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 138.
[177] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 140.
[178] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 155.

this precarious state, she undermines what Mark later refers to as her 'campaign'.[179] She confides in Perowne that she wants to be reconciled with Tietjens, but doesn't actively forbid him to come to her bedroom, so he does, along with General O'Hara, who claimed Sylvia had 'made eyes at himself in the lounge'.[180] Tietjens is forced to protect the honour of his wife, who was 'in a state … bordering on nudity', by ejecting them.[181] Whether Sylvia's state of undress, and that in their earlier dance 'she had almost kissed him on the lips' and 'his lips had almost responded', imply that she might otherwise have succeeded in seducing Tietjens is unclear, but it constitutes another failed assault.[182] Undeterred, Sylvia becomes more resolute to reclaim him, to 'Never, never, let him go…'.[183]

Her single-mindedness has become like the unreasoning mania which unhinged Kasker Ryves in *The Shifting of the Fire.* It drives her extreme actions on Armistice Night and her continued attacks on Tietjens' reputation. So convinced is she of her mission that his choice of Valentine over her is not a valid 'turning down', because there had been 'no chance of comparison'.[184] Alongside portraying herself as 'treated … barbarously' by Tietjens, Sylvia makes a pretence at suing for divorce by petitioning 'for the restitution of conjugal rights'.[185] It was a 'fiasco',[186] which undermined her credibility and resulted in her personal circumstances being 'broadcasted all over England'.[187] It is also when Sylvia begins to question her behaviour, recognising that it constituted one of the 'acts of vulgarity' Consett had forecast.[188]

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[179] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 79.
[180] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 206.
[181] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 202.
[182] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 184.
[183] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 155.
[184] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 153.
[185] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 165.
[186] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 167.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

Gunning's reminder of the court case becomes a pivotal moment. If the case had left her feeling that God might change sides, in this moment she 'suddenly' knows that 'He' had done so, 'at the cutting down of the Great Groby Tree'.[189] It is a recognition that, as with Consett, she had attempted a provocation too far. When Gunning suggests that she might cause Valentine to 'have a miscarriage or an idiot child',[190] it is 'as if within her a shelf dropped away' much as it might from beneath the 'feet of a convict they are hanging'.[191] The fear that she might be instrumental in hurting Valentine's child, and the sense that God, or perhaps Consett, 'desired' that she apply to Rome for the dissolution of her marriage, is decisive.[192] She goes to the cottage to confront Valentine. The encounter is short, but Sylvia's final comments are significant. She assures Valentine that she 'never thought to harm [her] child' or 'any woman's', and that 'Father Consett in heaven … has done this' with his 'desiring soft things!' [193] 'You hung him,' she says, 'though I *say* you shot him to spare my feelings…', as if Valentine and Tietjens stand for those who killed him.[194] When she ends with the comment 'I'm playing pimp to Tietjens of Groby – leaving my husband to you!...' [195] it is as if she is a general handing over territory, something rightfully hers that she is choosing to relinquish. It is not for them, but to fulfil her promise to Consett, and because she feels herself 'degraded' by her actions.[196]

It is a sentiment Mark Tietjens echoes in observing that Sylvia left 'no stone unturned' in trying to keep herself in 'her man's mind',[197] but that it had 'taxed her mind to invent what she had invented', and she could not be unaffected.[198] Indeed, those who 'gossip frequently … go a little dotty'.[199] This

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[189] Ibid.
[190] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 168.
[191] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 169.
[192] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 168.
[193] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 193.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 194.
[196] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 167.
[197] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 79.
[198] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 74.
[199] Ibid.

assessment finds Sylvia culpable and diminished. She became unhinged by her single-minded pursuit, not of love, but of power and possession. In this sense she stands for the madness of war. As Isabelle Brasme highlights, the relationship between Sylvia and Valentine centres on a 'complex opposition'.[200] Part of this opposition lies in Valentine's declared pacificism which is why, ultimately, Sylvia concedes to her. Sylvia's withdrawal preserves both herself and new life, so represents a reassertion of reason over the temporary madness of war. However, in waging her war Sylvia had implicated both Edith Ethel and Valentine, who also have bouts of madness.

6.5 The 'Other Women'

As his reputed and actual 'other women', both Edith Ethel and Valentine are casualties of Sylvia's rumours about Tietjens, and their once close friendship fractures. Edith Ethel chooses to believe the 'seven people in the last five weeks' who told her that Valentine had had a child with Tietjens,[201] and Valentine later suspects that her 'once idolised' friend had been his mistress.[202] Indeed it is to Edith Ethel not Sylvia that Valentine attributes most damage. This makes the parallels between Sylvia and Edith Ethel important, particularly the fact that both women believed themselves pregnant to their lover. Sylvia duping Tietjens into marrying her is considered socially acceptable. Even Mark Tietjens finds 'nothing to be said against' it had she remained loyal.[203] In fact, Tietjens subsequently establishes that the child was not Drake's but his own.[204] Edith Ethel, in contrast, delivers the 'great shock, the turning' of Valentine's life when she calls her to the rectory, late at night, and demands that she tell her how to 'get rid of a baby'.[205]

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[200] Isabelle Brasme, 'Parade's End', in Chantler and Hawkes, *An Introduction to Ford Madox Ford,* p. 139.
[201] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 315.
[202] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 280.
[203] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 77.
[204] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 217.
[205] Ibid.

Edith Ethel is depicted in this encounter as hysterical. Valentine finds her 'like a mad block of marble, with staring, dark eyes and mad hair'.[206] Later, she is 'screaming coarse phrases of hatred for her lover' and 'rushing backwards and forwards … her hair flying'.[207] It is not the first presentation of Edith Ethel as out of control. Tietjens alluded to her in his comparison of Valentine to women 'attending on lewd husbands year in year out till [they're] as hysterical as a cat on heat'.[208] That no baby ever appears reinforces the idea that her behaviour is an overreaction. Still, Edith Ethel lashes out as if it is real, with little regard to the impact on others. Valentine later reflects that Edith Ethel is capable of a 'recklessness of evil-speaking that almost outpassed sanity….'.[209] The scene suggests Edith Ethel as unstable and with a potentially slender grasp of facts and reality.

Other characters reinforce it. Sylvia describes her as 'a little cracky' about Macmaster's debt to Tietjens, something she knew to have been 'advanced as a gift'.[210] Sylvia's account, after Macmaster's death, is illuminating. Edith Ethel had 'actually visited Sylvia' to petition for her influence with Tietjens, wearing 'widow's weeds of the most portentous crape, that gave her at once the elegance and the direness of a funeral horse', and had 'really seemed more than a little out of her mind'.[211] Sylvia's description undercuts any notion that Edith Ethel is destabilised by grief in its insinuation that her dress is performative, designed to claim significance and to impress. Her focus is on the debt, and her 'supplications' continued 'even in correspondence'.[212] Even as *Last Post* closes, Edith Ethel is trying to sell Tietjens her letters from a prominent Scottish Littérateur who had admired her 'eyes, arms, shoulders, feminine aura' for him to sell to collectors in lieu of the debt.[213] She is prepared to

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[206] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 279.
[207] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 280 and 81 respectively.
[208] Ford, *Some Do Not…*, pp. 134-35.
[209] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 54.
[210] Ford, *Last Post,* pp. 145 and 146 respectively.
[211] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 146.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 147.

sacrifice the reputation of a man she had cultivated to further her own interests. That she was on her way to make the case to a heavily pregnant Valentine, when Sylvia intervenes,[214] illustrates Edith Ethel's single mindedness, so similar to that of Sylvia. Unlike Sylvia, however, she does not know when to withdraw, as shown by her then attempting to interest Mrs de Bray Pape in the letters. There is no postwar return to reason for Edith Ethel.

In some ways, Edith Ethel fits the label 'bad' better than Sylvia, for there is little evidence, beyond her initial 'marital martyrdoms', of her acting in anyone's interests but her own.[215] Where Valentine credits Sylvia's genuine kindness to her mother,[216] she finds that Edith Ethel can only 'so absolutely impersonate kindness'.[217] Edith Ethel's significance in the novel is not just as a foil to Sylvia. As with Duchemin's insanity, her hysteria and obsessiveness predate and are largely unconnected to the war. She is there to demonstrate that previous conceptions of madness did not suddenly disappear in 1914. These past explanations co-exist with new rationales for madness, such as Sylvia's Freudian complexes, and those, like shell shock, brought to prominence by combat. Valentine's sense of being damaged by exposure to Edith Ethel's hysteria echoes *The Good Soldier's* depiction of madness as interpersonally experienced, almost contagious.

Valentine also shares with Dowell the experience of having her illusions torn away. She symbolises the purity of the world before the war and must lose her innocence in the discovery of the shadow side of the woman she had revered for heroism in the face of Duchemin's madness. Edith Ethel's attempt to involve Valentine in her wish to 'get rid of' a child is Valentine's equivalent of Dowell's discovery of Florence's infidelity.[218] Until then, Valentine's life had been tranquil, if 'tinged of course

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[214] Ibid.
[215] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 14.
[216] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 191.
[217] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 312.
[218] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 279

with melancholy because she loved Christopher Tietjens'.[219] Life was about 'renunciations … high endeavour and sacrifice',[220] and the passion between Edith Ethel and Macmaster was 'one of the beautiful things in life' characterised by 'beautiful quotations and … steadfast waiting'.[221] Valentine had assumed a chaste 'romantic passion', but discovers that the woman in whom she unquestioningly believed had been Macmaster's mistress 'almost since the first day she had seen him…'.[222] Equally shocking is how Edith Ethel had 'stored somewhere' a character with 'great vulgarity of language'.[223] Her civilised persona is exposed as a masquerade, but Valentine's idolatry implicates her in the fantasy. By her own account Valentine is not innocent, her time in service having left her with 'considerable knowledge of the sexual necessities and excesses of humanity',[224] but that had been in 'Ealing', and in her own world people are 'chaste, beautiful in thought, altruistic and circumspect'.[225] The 'irreparable wrong' Edith Ethel has done her, the 'sexual shock' which means she 'cannot … ever be the same', is that she destroyed the fantasy that a man and woman can 'leave it at the beautiful inclination'.[226] Despite claiming to share with Tietjens 'good, bread and butter brains, without much of the romantic…',[227] Valentine has imaginatively constructed a picture of the world in which she lives. Like Clara in *The Benefactor,* she wants to see those she loves as elevated beings. Edith Ethel 'had appeared a bright being', not the 'mere stuff to fill graveyards whose actions … couldn't matter'.[228] Ford's distinction between artists and the majority of humanity underlines that Edith Ethel had stood for something special to Valentine. When she is revealed as a 'foul whore',[229] not only is she tarnished but so is the story in which Valentine had participated. The incident forces Valentine to question

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[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 280.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 281.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 282 and 281 respectively.
[227] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 38.
[228] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 321 and 320 respectively.
[229] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 321.

whether the 'beautiful inclination' between herself and Tietjens could sustain, and to conclude not. 'On the next day came the war'.[230] The shattering of Valentine's personal world anticipates the destruction of the known, prewar world.

In that prewar world Valentine's loyalty kept her there 'into the small hours' when her friend 'fell … into a deep chair and refused to move or speak'.[231] Indeed, she continues her faithful waiting for some time. Only later, when Edith Ethel makes it clear that Valentine is no longer welcome at her Friday evening events, does she fully realise that their friendship had been illusory and the woman she thought she knew a *trompe l'oeil*. This is made explicit when she recalls observing Edith Ethel bend over a rose bowl, as she 'was accustomed to do for many minutes on end' because she thought it made her 'resemble a picture by' Rossetti, and 'she did'.[232] The artifice is clear but Valentine's 'throat ached' because she 'knew' it would be her 'last sight' of the woman 'she had loved very much'.[233] The separation is 'as if a novel had been snatched out of her hand so that she would never know the end'.[234] Of course, she knows the ending of the 'fairy tale' in which the 'fortunate and adventurous tailor had married his beautiful and be-princessed goose girl and was well on the way to burial at Westminster Abbey',[235] but would never know if, in the end, they would get 'the blue Dutch tiles' for their bathroom.[236] Valentine's framing of their story as a fairy tale reflects her new understanding that what she perceives is sometimes illusory, and reveals her tendency to think in stories. As previously discussed, living in the imagination risks losing touch with reality and possible madness. Valentine's position is already precarious without this risk. She is the love interest of the man Sylvia wants. She is socially damaged by the rumours about her and Tietjens. She and her

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[230] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 281-82.
[231] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 282.
[232] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 316, Footnote identifies it as a Rossetti painting.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 318.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 318-19.

mother are impoverished, and her brother Edward, whilst 'not mad', is 'a little unbalanced' and 'over-violent in any views' he holds.[237] His experience as a conscientious objector is not incidental to Valentine's experience of the war as a 'nightmare of pure suffering'.[238] When the war ends, Edith Ethel reinserts herself into Valentine's life, reconnecting her to the man whose name 'she could not afford … could not bear' to recall, and to 'the suffocating web of his imbroglios'.[239] If even a name recalled is unbearable, the implication is that some things are better left unsaid.

This is reinforced by Valentine's account of Edith Ethel's Armistice Day phone call in which she makes her 'unthinkable' proposition.[240] This proposition is one of her numerous attempts to have someone persuade Tietjens 'not to enforce the pecuniary claim' he has on Macmaster.[241] Something 'unthinkable' is beyond the reach of language, signalled by Valentine's reliance on metaphor. The impact was 'as if she had been lifted off her feet and deposited on that bench against the wall'.[242] It leaves her 'breathless', too weak even to replace the receiver as the telephone 'continued to quack'.[243] The word quack conveys the characteristic harsh call of a duck but also has connotations of fakery. One word, 'quack', can convey how Valentine feels about the voice of the caller, just as Sylvia could take off a man's hide with 'a word', and Tietjens claimed not to have spoken 'one word' of affection to Valentine before Sylvia's provocations. This recurring motif of the importance of a single word focuses attention on what is spoken and how. It highlights when literal words are supplanted with figurative ones, and where language is used to suggest rather than state. Valentine's description of the voice on the telephone is a good illustration. Initially, it is a voice she cannot place, one

[237] Ibid.
[238] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 282.
[239] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 28.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.

'tantalisingly half-remembered' with exaggerated s's creating 'an effect of spitting vehemence'.[244] The alliteration builds to a crescendo. It is a 'sibilating voice', 'spitting out spitefully' pieces of information only half heard because of the Armistice celebrations outside.[245] The reverberation of s's evokes the rapid fire of a gun. The voice is a weapon, hence it 'seemed to mean to give pain by what it said'.[246] It is first a 'Lady someone or other' whose voice is 'hissing, bitter' and 'cruel' before Valentine recognises it as Edith Ethel.[247] Repeated references to a voice dehumanise the speaker, who becomes just a noise that Valentine wants to stop. The parallel with McKechnie's desire to escape the noise of shelling equates Edith Ethel with an enemy, but also hints at Valentine's state of mind. Reducing Edith Ethel to a voice is the ultimate negation of the woman at whose feet Valentine had 'once … sat'.[248] It is a brutal denunciation, a way of othering her enemy and an attempt to put words to the experience, a narrative to her impressions, so as to make it real.

Valentine's attentiveness to language and her ability to weave a story from her impressions is a double-edged sword, which can both protect and damage her. For instance, during the war, when Edith Ethel uses the words 'oaf' and 'beast' about Tietjens, the 'very ones' she had used about the 'father of her putative child', Valentine makes an imaginative connection and decides that Tietjens 'must have abandoned Mrs. Duchemin' and so was 'available for her'.[249] She had felt 'ignoble' but the idea 'soothed her', because it is what she wants to believe.[250] With the outbreak of war and Tietjens' 'inevitable departure' she had waited for him to 'speak the word, or look the look that should unite them'.[251] Yet, though in their final conversation 'every word they said to each other … confessed their

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[244] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 8.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 8 and 10.
[248] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 14.
[249] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 320
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 322.

love', and 'every word he uttered … had sung of passion', he neither held out or crushed hope.[252] In the lacunae between his words she 'knew' that he was saying that they must stay in limbo, and this restored her image of the 'world as a place of virtues' and 'her image of her lover as a beautiful spirit'.[253] It repairs the 'deterioration' Edith Ethel had 'worked in her mind' [254] and she feels returned to her 'confident self in a world of … straight problems'.[255] In this instance, words unspoken, and others imagined into the vacuum, are consolatory.

Yet the same process during the war is damaging. In a mirror situation, Tietjens is about to return to the war front again and Edith Ethel's 'fantastic denunciations' of Tietjens and the 'sexually lunatic charge' levelled at Valentine, has 'driven the old phantoms across' her mind.[256] She receives a phone call in which Sylvia warns her to 'keep off the grass' for 'Mrs Duchemin is already my husband's mistress'.[257] Valentine focuses on the present tense of '*Is!*' [258] and is overcome by 'Blind passion … at the thought of Edith Ethel in Tietjens' arms'.[259] From 'that image' she constructs a narrative in which Edith Ethel becomes one of those women who 'abuse their lovers after sleeping with them',[260] and Tietjens becomes a 'a town bull' [261] who might 'want her … on his last night' because 'Everybody was coarsened then'.[262] Even Tietjens' suggestion, that Mrs Wannop write an article on war babies to argue that a decent man abstains for fear of leaving 'his girl in trouble' whilst others do not because it might be their 'last chance….', becomes a 'message' to Valentine.[263] Fired by nights when her longing for him 'could convulse her with joy' or 'cut through her breast like a knife', she decides to confront

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[252] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 322-23.
[253] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 323.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 323-24
[257] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 327-28.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 327.
[260] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 328.
[261] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 330.
[262] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 328.
[263] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 329.

him with his reputation for debauchery.[264] If he acknowledges its truth, she will demand that he 'take her' too, for though it would make her 'one with all the stuff to fill graveyards',[265] she was 'Just a little nobody!' [266] Awaiting his arrival, her mind veers between thoughts of having subconsciously 'arranged the cushions' for a seduction, her intoxicated brother 'talking treason', and the way that a bus had 'touched her skirt as she ran' across the road.[267] The unfinished thought that it 'might have been better…' but she 'hadn't the courage' is left hanging. The 'patterned deaths', presumably lists of the war dead, at which she is looking so disturb her that she is 'going mad'.[268] Her mind is occupied not only with 'all these deaths' but with 'contemplating parting from life'.[269] When Tietjens appears, 'framed by … sordid stones',[270] Valentine rushes at him and 'said something; with a mad hatred' about 'he and his like' being responsible for all the deaths.[271] Valentine is clearly unbalanced at this point.

Yet once Tietjens is physically there and 'completely calm', her agitation subsides.[272] His 'eyes, his unconcerned face, his tranquil shoulders' acquit him before she asks her question and 'Immediately' she is 'Valentine Wannop again'.[273] It is an odd comment unless taken to mean that she had lost a sense of herself amongst the 'phantoms' occupying her mind, where the word stands both for the dead and for figments of her imagination. If Tietjens were to acknowledge that he was the man of his reputation, then Valentine's love story collapses and becomes just 'An affair of Ealing…'.[274] When he responds 'angrily' with the words 'Certainly not. I imagined you knew me better',[275] it is 'the greatest

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[264] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* pp. 330-32.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 331.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 332.
[275] Ibid.

love speech' he could 'ever make her'.[276] Her mind clears 'like water that goes off the boil' and she is 'Valentine Wannop again' in 'sunlight' with chaffinches and 'tall grasses brushing against her skirt'.[277] This seemingly simple statement is multi-layered. It evokes the setting of their early meetings, the prewar peace and the summer night in which her petticoat had been torn to make a bandage for an injured horse. Her skirt is brushed not by a bus, a machine which could injure or kill, but by nature's grasses. It conjures up the pastoral and restores Valentine's romantic tale to her. Having been destabilised by her imagination, she is rebalanced by a return to the concrete world, 'sordid stones' and the physicality of Tietjens, with hope intact.

Though Valentine lives in words and the imagination, she does not, like Dowell, delude herself to avoid reality. As her name suggests, she is the 'sweetheart' of the story, the character who wants to believe the best of people. The discovery that she is loved by a man of 'crystal purity' wipes from her mind thoughts that ten minutes earlier 'shouldn't have' been there.[278] She could not even 'think the words' she had used about him or remember 'what she had been!' [279] It is a recognition that she, like Edith Ethel, had another character hidden within her which operated with a different vocabulary. This hint of duality evokes Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*,[280] yet where Dr Jekyll took a serum to become someone else, Ford's characters access a pre-existing part of their own personality. There is some continuity from Ford's pre-war depictions of unconscious duality in, for instance, *The Good Soldier* and *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes.* What is new in *Parade's End* is that Ford uses the concept to show how people encounter the unacceptable parts of themselves under duress. Of course, the war perhaps brought out the worst in people, but Ford resists this simplification. By making Valentine

[276] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 334.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 334.
[280] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1886). Ford certainly knew his work because he discusses it in *The March of Literature*, p. 843.

as vulnerable as anyone else he conveys that good and bad co-exist within one person. It connects with her role in rebalancing polarities in how people are perceived. She sees both the cruelty and the kindness in Sylvia and finds Edith Ethel false but not 'merely a hypocrite'.[281] Their worst sides provoke Valentine, who is as fearful as Sylvia is fearless and who '*hate[s]* rows', to stand her ground.[282] Notably, she resists Sylvia's attempt to re-appropriate her husband on Armistice Night. Sylvia recalls Valentine as 'vigorous, determined on her man, even vituperative'.[283] The pacifist, in her own words, had 'fought for her man' and is ready to do so again when Sylvia appears at the cottage at the end of *Last Post*.[284] As discussed, the fight was already over, Sylvia has capitulated. Valentine could not bring herself to say to Sylvia that her 'loathsomeness is … infectious', it was 'not done!' [285] To be loathsome is to inspire hatred, and infectiousness would cause that to spread. What is 'not done' is to allow hatred to be contagious, so Valentine says nothing. Her only verbal contribution in their final encounter is an apology that Ruggles had called her Mrs Tietjens 'under Sylvia Tietjens' nose'.[286] Where others deployed silence and words as weapons, Valentine uses them, if not to make peace with Sylvia, at least not to inflict further injury. Sylvia's response, designed to let Valentine know that 'she had previously enjoyed Tietjens' intimacies – before her',[287] is less a taunt than an acceptance of loss and so an equivalent cessation of hostilities.

As this discussion illustrates, Tietjens is not simply caught between two women but is at the centre of a web of people entangled in his affairs, whether they choose to be or not. Each character considered

[281] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 323.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 153.
[284] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 186.
[285] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 190.
[286] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 192.
[287] Ibid.

so far illuminates different aspects of Ford's treatment of madness in *Parade's End*. It remains only to interrogate what Tietjens himself is there to expose.

6.6 War Torn Tietjens

Ford chose a central character with a specific type of consciousness to show the effects of war, so it is important to understand how Christopher Tietjens functions. Core to this is his 'complete taciturnity' about his emotions.[288] As he sees it, 'you didn't "talk." Perhaps you didn't even think about how you felt'.[289] Thinking and feeling are here divided, something integral to Tietjens' psyche. When Sylvia left him, he hadn't talked much about it and was 'almost completely without emotions that he could realise'.[290] The implication is that it is the act of putting feelings into words which makes them recognisable to him. Other characters can only infer his emotions from what they see. Macmaster deduces from his friend's greyness of complexion that 'terrible things must be going on within him'.[291] Yet Macmaster knows him well. When Mark is reunited with Tietjens he finds not only that he 'wasn't talkative', but also 'completely expressionless'.[292]

It is this combination which frustrates and is exploited by Sylvia. The frustration is reciprocal and symmetrical. For Tietjens, 'Hell' is Sylvia

> "talking! For ever talking; cruelly, and cleverly, with imbecility; with maddening inaccuracy; with wicked penetration, and clamouring to be contradicted: a gentleman has to answer his wife's questions….".[293]

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[288] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 8
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 21.
[292] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 247.
[293] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 152.

Although this captures the combative nature of Sylvia's conversational style it also reveals Tietjens himself. Inaccuracy is 'maddening' because he prizes, and prides himself on, precision in thinking. He stipulates that he can provide Masterman with statistical information in exactly an hour and twelve minutes.[294] Against his ability to tabulate 'from memory the errors in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*', he positions some of what Sylvia says as foolish.[295] His comments betray the assurance in his own views which led Sylvia to complain that he knows 'everything' and has to 'prove' it.[296] There is little doubt that Tietjens is knowledgeable. Sergeant Major Cowley redundantly assures Sylvia that there isn't 'a question under the sun you could ask him that he couldn't answer'.[297] The critical question, however, is what Tietjens does with his knowledge. In part it is a defence against Sylvia's 'wicked penetration'. That he dates his encyclopaedia tabulations from Sylvia leaving him suggests that it is a diversionary tactic.

This is the significance of the line he draws between thought and feeling. It is not simply that Tietjens values factual correctness, that he loves 'a clear mind' and admires French 'logic',[298] but that he uses such capabilities to shield himself. To manage his 'real agitation' about how he and Sylvia will live together on her return, he plays patience whilst thinking through these 'difficult things'.[299] So well does his strategy work that when Macmaster suddenly appears it gives him 'a really terrible physical shock'.[300] Even then, 'he couldn't talk' so instead drinks so much whisky that he is barely aware of being helped into bed.[301] The incident illustrates his strong capacity for compartmentalising thought. Tietjens often talks about his mind as divided, or with different parts. In this scene, he reflects that he

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[294] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 13.

[296] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 52.
[297] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 135.
[298] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 230.
[299] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 99.
[300] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 101.
[301] Ibid.

had 'carried the suppression of thought in his conscious mind so far that his unconscious self had taken command'.[302] For a time this had 'paralysed both his body and mind'.[303]

There are obvious inflections of Freudian theory here, especially in the parallel with shell-shocked soldiers whose mental disturbance might manifest in an incapacity to speak. More interesting, however, is Ford's creation of a character who constantly monitors and analyses his own mind. Whereas in *The Good Soldier* Dowell seems unaware of what his mind was doing, and in *The Marsden Case* the pressure to which Heimann's 'poor brain was subjected' [304] becomes a 'case' relayed by Jessop, in *Parade's End* Ford has Tietjens not only offer up his mind as a case study but also has him analyse it in real time. Readers see how his singular mind reacts under sustained personal pressure and direct experience of war. A central question is whether his ability to 'pigeon-hole and padlock his disagreeable reflections' helps or hinders Tietjens.[305]

He is not always successful as illustrated by his attempt to conduct a discussion with Campion whilst privately ruminating on Sandbach's role in spreading rumours about him. When he groans out loud, he has to prove 'his reputation for sanity' by explaining it in terms of the topic at hand.[306] It gives him a 'nasty turn' to realise that he had been 'as good as talking to himself'.[307] The groan is caused not by Sandbach directly but the string of associations which led him to 'Suddenly' think that 'he didn't know for certain that he was the father of his child'.[308] This dual processing is also evident when 'Mrs. Wannop was talking to him' but he 'did not know what she said' because his mind is occupied with Sylvia.[309] This instance demonstrates his remarkable ability to insulate his mind against stress. He

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[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ford, *The Marsden Case*, p. 18.
[305] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 99.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 152.

privately acknowledges that he had 'been fighting down' for months the knowledge that Sylvia had probably been pregnant when they first 'had physical contact', by bathing himself 'in figures and wave theories' so that he was 'anaesthetised'.[310] Suddenly unanaesthetised, he is so pained that he fears he has 'had a stroke' and gets out of a chair to 'test his legs'.[311] When he finds he can stand he turns to psychological explanations:

> It must then, he thought, be that the pain of his last consideration must be too great for his mind to register, as certain physical pains go unperceived. Nerves, like weighing machines, can't register more than a certain amount, then they go out of action.[312]

This is essentially Tietjens' core hypothesis, and that of the novel itself. The equation of mental with physical pain matters in the context of the war because, as Valentine observes, the 'dreadful thing' had been that 'the suffering had been – mental rather than physical. And they had not thought of it…'.[313] Just as significant is the suggestion that some things are too painful for the mind to allow in, so they go 'unperceived'. This implies that the avoidance of painful subjects is protective, not problematic. The simile is also noteworthy because in resorting to figurative language, Tietjens tacitly accepts that some things cannot be adequately explained in literal language. Tietjens is the case study for his own theory though more generally it raises the question of how much mental strain someone can take before nerves break down completely.

McKechnie faces the same combination of personal and combat pressures as Tietjens. Tietjens returns from the war, 'Weakish' after pneumonia and a hospital stay for 'mental rather than physical' problems,[314] but able to assure Mrs Wannop that he is 'quite capable of taking a practical hold of

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[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 153.
[313] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 200.
[314] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 193.

life',[315] and Valentine that he is 'not mad'.[316] Although put under pressure in *Last Post*, these assertions invite consideration of why Tietjens escaped complete breakdown and McKechnie did not. It is partly explained by the gulf between McKechnie's volubility and Tietjens taciturnity.[317] What was in McKechnie's mind was on his lips, and this was interpreted as him being out of control. In contrast, Tietjens constantly manages his mind. Moments when he feels he has failed to control his thoughts are often ascribed to a mysterious consciousness for which he adopts a range of words. When 'Mark had said that Sylvia was in love with him',[318] it 'had been underneath his thoughts all the while' and so 'struck him … like a kick from the hind leg of a mule in his subliminal consciousness'.[319] Until Mark voices it, and Tietjens puts his own thoughts into words, Sylvia being in love with him is 'unperceived'. Words bring things into the open and make them unavoidable. Once Tietjens acknowledges the reality of his situation, he sees no option but to return to the front and 'get wiped out'.[320] In other circumstances, when an 'appalling shadow of a thought went through Tietjens' mind: he would not let it come into words'.[321]

Tietjens' ability to compartmentalise, to put things 'out of his mind', to be able to distract his mind with other activities, and to avoid putting disturbing thoughts into words, are formidable defences.[322] Yet, as his own theory suggests, they prove unequal to the deluge of painful experiences which afflict him across the course of the tetralogy. Many domestic and personal examples have been examined in

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[315] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 211.
[316] Ibid.
[317] The issue of talk is also significant in *The Marsden Case.* See Gillian Gustar, 'The First World War, Madness, and Reading between the lines of The Marsden Case' in *Humanities* 13(5), 123 (2024) for discussion of its role in creating or curing nervous breakdowns.
[318] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 273.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ford, *Some Do Not…,* p. 242.
[322] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 20.

discussions of other characters. What remains is the one area that Tietjens can best illuminate: the effect on the mind of front-line war experience.

6.6.1 O Nine Morgan

A significant example concerns O Nine Morgan, whose death scene critics note as significant to representations of Tietjens' mind. Charlotte Jones uses it to argue that Tietjens actively avoids trauma by not putting things into words,[323] and Sara Haslam highlights his capacity to think simultaneously on different conceptual levels and to transpose 'a very different reality' on events.[324] Viewed through Tietjens' mind, the scene relies heavily on metaphor to pace himself, and readers, through the horror. For instance, it is 'as if a whole pail of scarlet paint had been dashed across the man's face on the left and his chest'.[325] Only subsequently is the body described as 'lavish of blood'.[326] The word lavish is striking because of its connotations of opulence, implying a status in death which Morgan did not have in life but also conveying excess, the sense of it being too much. This is why Tietjens' mind switches from the scene in front of him to the horse hurt in the carriage accident when 'a girl had lent him her petticoat to bandage it'.[327] The inadequacy of a bandage for Morgan's wounds suggests this as displacement activity. This is reinforced by how Tietjens' thinking swings between Valentine, who moves from being 'a girl' to 'his girl…a pacifist' who might feel 'disgust' if she could see him now; the impossibility of thinking 'in this row'; and the 'half face' below him which 'grinned at the roof'.[328] He recognises his 'strong feelings' for Valentine and attempts to think 'Hard' about her, but 'Nothing happened'.[329] His mind wanders to reflecting that he has not had a 'single letter' whilst at the front,

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[323] Jones, 'Representing Shell Shock', p. 132.
[324] Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism*, p. 91.
[325] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 28.
[326] Ford, *No More Parades,* p. 29.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 30.
[329] Ibid.

and to how, had he allowed Morgan to take the leave he had requested, he would have been 'smashed to bits' by the prizefighter who had taken his wife.[330] It is a good illustration of a mind shielding itself by adopting Tietjens' own 'rule' never to 'think on the subject of shock at the moment of shock', when the mind is 'too sensitized' and its 'conclusions will be too strong'.[331] His failure to displace the shock with thoughts of Valentine foreshadows how his strategies for suppressing war trauma become inadequate.

Visions of Morgan recur. As Tietjens tries to lose himself in the 'quiet and engrossment' [332] of administrative work, the Batman's reminiscences about 'Poor bloody O Nine Morgan' send 'thin films of reddish purple' across the documents.[333] His framing of it as an 'effect of fatigue on the retina' is an attempt at displacing emotional disturbance.[334] Knowing something intellectually, however, proves irrelevant. He knows his sense of responsibility for Morgan's death is 'absurd' but cannot remove from his mind the image of Morgan's 'incredulity' when he had denied his leave request.[335] Later he acknowledges that Morgan's death has become an 'accursed obsession' which 'intermittently jumped on him'.[336] He sees him 'alive, not with half his head cut away' just in front of the 'coffin-headed' horse he is riding. He constantly feels 'a dreadful depression! A weight!' and nearly faints at the thought that Morgan 'might have been the man whose life he had spared at Noircourt'.[337] This forces him to recognise it as 'a serious matter!' and to worry that it might be 'a crack in his … brain. A lesion!' [338] This occurs in Sylvia's presence whilst she is in France, and she is shocked to observe that

[330] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 31.
[331] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 38.
[332] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 55.
[333] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 85.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 86.
[336] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 228.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.

the man she feared for his 'terrifying expressionlessness' and for being so 'appallingly competent' [339] appears to be 'in the middle of a full nervous breakdown. Over one man's death!' [340]

Of course, Sylvia is an additional pressure and Tietjens also labels as an 'obsession' his unreasonable sense of obligation to 'shield that whore'.[341] Obsession is a word Tietjens uses frequently. The thoughts of Valentine which come 'wriggling in … At all hours of the day and night' are 'an obsession. A madness'.[342] He experiences the fracturing of his ability to compartmentalise as a form of madness, in part perhaps because he equates obsessions with 'What those fools called "a complex"!' [343] Therefore, when he tells Campion that Morgan had been 'killed on [him] last night' he also describes himself as having 'a sort of…. Complex they call it now'.[344] There are Freudian overtones in his observation that his complex about Valentine was 'Due, no doubt, to something your nurse had done, or your parents said to you. At birth'.[345] Though this indicates that Ford 'knew of Freud' it is not, as Osbert Sitwell's 'Cynical moniker "Freud Madox Fraud"' might imply, a claim to expertise.[346] Trotter's analysis, discussed previously, makes it unlikely that Ford had deep knowledge of psychoanalytic theory. Like many of his references, the ideas here would be commonly understood by contemporary readers, and the significance of their mention lies in how those who talk about complexes are 'fools' to Tietjens. It is consistent with Ford's depiction of a man who stands for not talking that he would resist a theory which depended on doing just that. This is partly the point of Tietjens' taciturnity and reluctance to put some thoughts into words. His attempt to 'coolly' recap on all aspects of the separation from Sylvia, to do the 'calm analysis' which is 'better put into writing', into 'exact language'

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[339] Ford, *No More Parades*, pp. 141-42.
[340] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 178.
[341] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 65.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 212.
[345] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 65.
[346] Steffens, 'Freud Madox Ford: Impressionism, Psychoanalytic Trauma Theory, and Ford's Wartime Writing', in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind,* p. 38.

like a garrison report, forced him to confront his assumptions and revise his view.[347] As Dowell discovered in *The Good Soldier*, putting things into words can disturb as much as it soothes, obscure as much as it illuminates. This is best demonstrated in *Parade's End* in those chapters dealing with Tietjens' close encounters with his own death.

6.6.2 Waiting for the Strafe

Tietjens views 'being sent up the line' by Campion as a ticket to 'certain death'.[348] His 'one dread' throughout the war has been that 'a wound, the physical shock of a wound, would cause his mind to fail'.[349] Now, 'He was finished. There was nothing left but to find out how his mind would take it.' [350] He believes it to be a distinct possibility that he will 'lose his reason' during 'BATTLE FEAR, experienced in *strafes*'.[351] Seventy pages are devoted to the 'forty-five minutes' before the regular twice-daily German barrage is expected, with Tietjens periodically counting them down.[352] At forty five minutes out he is musing that 'something behind his mind' had created a 'conviction' that if he were suspended above the trench duckboard, level with 'a splash of purposeless whitewash', he would be in an 'inviolable sphere'.[353] He understands it to be 'irrational' but, much as having 'only a paper bag in front of your head' when lying under fire leaves you feeling 'safer', so this conviction puts your 'mind at rest'.[354] It is a kind of magical thinking. Though the term is now often associated with mental illness, here it is closer to superstition and reflects Fussell's point that talismans were

[347] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 73.
[348] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 221.
[349] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 73.
[350] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 231.
[351] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 100.
[352] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 60.
[353] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 59.
[354] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 60.

widely used by soldiers.[355] It is an early sign that this most rational of men is clinging to irrational hopes, but knowingly. He is not delusional but actively protecting his mind.

He constantly distracts it. When he recognises that a 'sulky cannon' is not the signal that the barrage will begin, a 'good thing' for 'the later they began the less long it lasted', he focuses on the 'ugly alliteration' in his own phrase.[356] It is a sidestep from the source of his anxiety. Notice, however, the personification of the cannon. Tietjens' internal narrative in these pages is suffused with metaphor, such as grenades which are 'miniature pineapples' from the 'bothering place'.[357] Presumably objects not given their literal word are less real. Alongside this, the limitations of fact and figures become evident. Figures are 'clean and comforting', but his mind making 'abstruse calculations' of his chances of 'direct hits, by shells, by rifle bullets, by grenades, by fragments of shells' is a 'bad sign'.[358] It is more problematic because these calculations are something his mind has 'taken to doing' rather than it being deliberate.[359] Notice that all the things which might hit him 'in that soft-spot behind the collar bone' are given their literal names, made real and concrete.

These anxieties are an overspill from what Tietjens believes was a near miss by a sniper. He had 'elevated his head cautiously' above the trench only to hear 'F.R.R.R.r.r.r.! A gentle purring sound!' and had 'automatically' ducked back down.[360] His casual 'By Jove! I got the fright of my life!' and recognition that a 'laugh was called for' [361] reflects the expectation that officers should appear 'nonchalant' [362] to ordinary soldiers. It is unclear whether his reassurance to an elderly sergeant worried about 'beastly snipers' that it was 'a beastly skylark that almost walked into his mouth' is

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[355] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 124.
[356] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 61.
[357] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 60.
[358] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 65.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 62.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 47.

true, or feigned bravado.[363] Haslam notes that skylarks take off vertically 'hence the fright they cause Tietjens and his sergeant'.[364] Since the sergeant corroborates Tietjens' experience with his own anecdote, and Tietjens himself refers to 'that bird' as causing his 'agitation', it is the most obvious conclusion. Yet, neither man mentions the bird in flight. Tietjens says it almost walked into his mouth, and the sergeant that he came upon it in its nest. This hints that their exchange is the co-construction of a comforting fiction. When an 'appropriate skylark from above and before the parapet' makes its 'shrill and heartless call', the sergeant suggests that it was 'No doubt' the one Tietjens had 'frightened – that had frightened him'.[365] The words 'appropriate' and 'no doubt' hint at the kind of face-saving story an experienced subordinate might offer to protect an officer's dignity. The incident leaves Tietjens with 'knees still weak' and his 'stomach turning round', signs that his nerves, 'unknown to himself', had got into a 'filthy state'.[366]

This 'state' reveals itself in how Tietjens increasingly blurs the lines between the real and the illusory. Even concrete things become less substantial. For instance, the 'picks going on in the dark under the H.Q. dugout' are 'familiar' to a 'North Country man' but 'appear[s] supernatural'.[367] The very familiarity makes it 'rather dreadful. Haunting'.[368] Whilst he is on watch, a 'disordered pile of wet sacks' makes his stomach turn over, because the 'resemblance to prostrate men', the 'enemy creeping up', is 'appalling'.[369] Four times he has the same experience 'in spite of' knowing differently.[370] He observes the ground ahead, gentle until it reaches 'the untidiness', where 'They appeared to mostly lie on their faces'.[371] Inanimate sacks mistaken for men are suddenly replaced by a real 'they' who are

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[363] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 62.
[364] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 63 editor's footnote.
[365] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 63.
[366] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 63 and 64 respectively.
[367] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 75.
[368] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 76.
[369] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 67.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.

first a mere 'untidiness' and then 'mostly Germans', casualties of a counterattack. Juxtaposed with the fact that mostly he sees 'the seats of their trousers' is the jarring 'how profound is their repose'.[372] It has to be 'phrased like that - rhetorically' he says, to achieve an 'effect' of the 'profoundness'.[373] It was 'different from sleep. Flatter. No doubt when the appalled soul left the weary body, the panting lungs…. Well you can't go on with a sentence like that…. But you collapsed inwards.' [374] The sentence cannot be taken to its conclusion because that would involve the literal word death, a reality Tietjens' mind avoids confronting directly. Whilst highlighting how the line between reality and illusion has become permeable, the scene also illustrates Tietjens' departure from his preferred factual and logical thinking to a more imaginative mode. He becomes like Ford's other impressionist author characters, determined to make readers see what he perceives. This is an idea reinforced, but also complicated, by his subsequent claim that 'Painter fellows doing battlefields' could never quite achieve the right effect because they drew from ideas of the human form, but what he sees are just 'tubular shapes' looking as if they had been dropped by God from a great height to flatten the earth.[375] There is a tension, throughout the war scenes, between language and vision. Language, as in this scene, can be stopped. Thoughts can be managed by not putting them into words, but 'you cannot control your imagination's pictures'.[376] This is a double-edged problem. On the one hand, Tietjens cannot prevent 'ghostly visit[s] from O9 Morgan',[377] but nor can he summon up an image of 'exactly what Valentine Wannop looked like. Not vividly'.[378] His is 'not that sort of mind':[379] it depended on 'words … to let him know', words which served as a mental checklist which he 'referred

[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 68.
[376] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 125.
[377] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 82.
[378] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 135.
[379] Ibid.

to when he wanted to think about her'.[380] Words, then, can be an invocation, an idea given resonance when Tietjens receives a fourteen-minute warning of the barrage. 'The name Bemerton suddenly came onto his tongue. Yes, Bemerton, Bemerton, Bemerton was George Herbert's parsonage.' [381] The repetition of Bemerton sounds like a mantra, almost meditative, a way for Tietjens to take his mind to a safer place where he imagines himself 'standing up on a little hill, a lean contemplative parson', something 'unthinkable' in the war zone.[382] The reference to Herbert is significant: Ford calls him 'one of the most English of all writers',[383] amongst those 'sheltered in their lives and materially saved from anxieties'.[384] It can also, therefore, be viewed as a call for protection, for a future.

Words can be called up, or find their way in. Just as Tietjens compares his mind calculating that his chances of being hit 'by a rifle-bullet' were 'say, 140,000 … to one against' to a 'well-trained dog' which will not stay 'in one part of the room' when it 'prefers another', so the words and images which his mind allows in are equally beyond his control and can disturb not protect.[385] A good example lies in the way that the notion of 'haunting' miners' picks is expressed. With his nerves 'in a bad way' after knifing a 'Hun' in the strafe, Tietjens believes he hears a German voice asking for a candle 'just under his camp bed' as he is 'dozing off'.[386] It would be 'just like German spooks to go mining by candle-light'.[387] It is a thought which takes hold of his mind until the picks become personified. They exchange 'sinister confidences in each other's ears',[388] and the voice becomes that of a 'myopic' Captain whose 'face or … spectacles' he cannot see.[389] The Captain's men become 'whiteish-grey,

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[380] Ibid.
[381] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 90.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ford, *The March of Literature,* p. 477.
[384] Ford, *The March of Literature*, p. 489.
[385] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 73.
[386] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 82-83.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 84.
[389] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 85.

tubular agglomerations…. Large! Like the maggots that are eaten by Australian natives'.[390] Just as the dead bodies were not human, neither are these imagined miners. Tietjens is 'possessed' by fear, in an 'icy sweat' and convinced that 'his brain was going'.[391] His fear is not the disturbing image but the sense that 'He was mad and seeing himself go mad', so he casts about for 'some subject to think about so that he could prove to himself that he had not gone mad'.[392]

Tietjens shares some ground with Sorrell in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, whose head injury transports him, whether figuratively or literally, to a different kind of reality requiring a different kind of thinking.[393] For Tietjens war is another place, distinct from 'the outside world' which is 'said to be' ravaged by influenza.[394] It is a world that cannot be explained, or even thought about in the way he had engaged with the world before the war. His mind depends on words, so his language must change to accommodate it. Compare for example two descriptions of noise. In the first it is 'terrific', made up of countless different noises 'rushing up' as if determined 'not to be late', and preventing coherent thought.[395] A page later, noise is 'like black angels gone mad' which swept not only 'your brain off its feet' but made you 'second-in-command of your own soul'.[396] Similarly, the repetition of certain imagery gives it force. Prisoners allocated to him, like the miners, become 'maggots', something 'unclean' which would cause 'nausea' if he were to touch them, even though he knows this is 'irrational'.[397] This need to accommodate the irrational demands new language and that in turn structures different ways of thinking. It allows imaginative space alongside the literal. Tietjens can imagine, therefore, 'whole afternoons' talking to Valentine, which would necessitate 'living with her'

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[390] Ibid.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Ibid.
[393] See discussion in Chapter 4.
[394] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 163.
[395] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* pp. 76-77.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 154.

because ‘you can’t otherwise talk’.[398] At least you can’t have the ‘intimate conversation’ which would create the ‘final communion of your souls’.[399] This, for him, becomes ‘love’, a word previously ‘so little in his vocabulary’.[400]

Letting the imagination loose means relinquishing control of the mind. The consequence, as Tietjens highlights, is that imaginative language creates images which are not easily dislodged. On Armistice Day he tells Mrs Wannop that it was being a ‘gaoler’ to German prisoners which had almost ‘driven him mad’.[401] They live in his mind as ‘grey spectral shapes that had surrounded and interpenetrated’ his final days at the front.[402] At ‘odd moments’ there ‘floated before his eyes’ a ‘landscape of greyish forms [in] thousands, seated on upturned buckets’ eating from ‘tins of fat’ and ‘holding up newspapers’.[403] Such images, as Sir Geoffrey Keynes explained, are highly individual, and seen ‘as clearly … as if they had just happened’.[404] They are the kind of vivid snapshot memory now associated with Post Traumatic Stress, characterised by the ‘small ironic detail’.[405] Thus Tietjens, though grateful at the time for the ‘great physical strength’ [406] which allowed him to pull Aranjuez out of the mud, carry him to safety and save his life, after the war can focus only on being ‘responsible for the loss of his eye’.[407] In the moment of crisis he had first noticed those ‘immense black eyes in bluish whites’ which ‘looked at him’ from the ‘viscous mud’.[408] It is the kind of detail which makes the memory

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[398] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 165.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Ibid.
[401] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 198.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 31.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 176.
[407] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 199.
[408] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 175.

'[recur] Continuously'.[409] It is 'a sort of monomania', signalled by his constant need to talk about it, after not having 'really spoken to a soul for two years'.[410]

This shift from the taciturnity for which he was renowned needs comment. It is not just any talk, but talk about his private thoughts, about the experiences which have left him with a 'desperate need. Of talk.' [411] Where McKechnie had talked endlessly about his obsessions and been judged mad, Tietjens not talking, other than to himself, helped him through the war but took its toll. In *Last Post* Valentine reveals that 'for years' he had 'talked dreadfully, about the war' in his sleep.[412] He had, during the war, talked about Valentine in his sleep, leading Cowley to suggest that it might mean he was 'a bit dotty?' [413] Tietjens' reply is central to the novel. 'Not necessarily' he says, 'It means that one has been under mental pressure, but all mental pressure does not drive you over the edge. Not by any means…'.[414] This qualifies his hypothesis that it is cumulative pressure which makes nerves break down. He is the case study which both proves and undermines this point. No-one had been under a greater range of pressures, and by his own hypothesis, his nerves could have reached their limit, and broken down. Several times he seems to be at that point. For example, when he recognises that Cowley's reputation means that his battalion is put into all the toughest spots, he 'felt it all over his body, nearly more than flesh and blood could stand'.[415] At other times he thinks he's 'stood too much',[416] or prays 'just not to lose his reason'.[417] He can perhaps fairly claim, as he does to Valentine on Armistice Day, that he is not 'mad'. This does not mean, however, that he is undamaged, as Valentine's testimony about the aftermath highlights.

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[409] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 199.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 177.
[413] Ford, *No More Parades*, p. 195.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 111.
[416] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 150.
[417] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 100.

What does Tietjens add to the mosaic of madness in *Parade's End*? Most obviously he is part of Ford's representation of how, as Cowley puts it, 'the worst thing about the war' was that men were not 'let … alone' to fight but were plagued with issues from home.[418] War, for Tietjens, was as much a battle with Sylvia and with himself as with the official enemy. Beyond this it is how, as Saunders argues, Ford was 'able to show' [419] the effects of sustained conflict, and the direct experience of war, on a mind. It is why, as Hammond suggests, readers given access to his interiority develop an empathic link which eludes most of his fellow characters.[420] Readers vicariously experience the disintegration of his very precise rationality, the points at which he is clearly on the line between reality and delusion. He avoids falling over the edge into madness when he stops resisting the irrational and absorbs it. Yet even a mind like his is shown to become destabilised. If this could happen to a man so skilled at protecting his mind, then it could happen to anyone. This is why his central hypothesis is qualified. Not all mental pressures have the same effect. Not all individuals react to such pressures in the same way. What destabilises Edith Ethel is not what unhinges Sylvia. Anyone, in any circumstance, can succumb.

Whilst this demonstrates how profiling individual characters shows what Ford was doing with his theme of madness, there is one question remaining. Why, as Hammond and Farnworth highlight, is Tietjens effectively absent in *Last Post*, and seen mainly through the thoughts of his mute brother?

6.6.3 Mute Men

Moore makes an interesting observation on Mark Tietjens' 'immobility and silence' when he likens it to 'the paralysis and mutism characteristic of shell-shock'.[421] He argues that Mark's 'withdrawal from

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[418] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 144.
[419] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 199.
[420] Hammond, *Fellow Feeling in Ford's Last Post,* p. 67.
[421] Gene Moore, *'*Peace of Mind in Parades End'*,* in Chantler and Hawkes, *War and the Mind,* p. 168.

the world' is for 'similar reasons' and constitutes an 'act of renunciation'.[422] This positions it as an active choice, and parts of Mark's narrative certainly support this contention. He claims to have taken 'Iago's resolution' that he would no more 'speak word',[423] and believes that, despite his seizure, 'if he would, he could talk, walk, and perform the feats of strength of a Hercules'.[424] It is a view shared by Marie Léonie, who 'through … reason' accepts medical opinion, but whose 'subconscious intuition' tells her otherwise.[425] These different ways of knowing, redolent of Ford's 'Just Possible' novels, underscore the uncertainty about whether Mark's mutism is a choice or a physical incapability. In that, it mirrors contemporary debate about shell shock victims. Why would Ford create a character who, as Moore points out, 'had never been in combat' but represents shell-shock? [426] A straightforward answer, as this chapter has shown, is that the madness of war did not affect only those in active service. Nor did its psychological damage suddenly cease on Armistice Day.

However, to focus on the dynamic which sees Mark's consciousness replace that of his brother obscures something striking. By *Last Post* the voices of most male characters have been lost. Duchemin died without ever really being heard. Macmaster lost his voice to that of Edith Ethel and his death is barely acknowledged. McKechnie disappeared not only from the page but from anyone's thoughts on Armistice Night. O Nine Morgan's distinctive voice died with him, and Duckworth, who reminded Tietjens of Valentine, was silenced by a 'bullet clean thru the ed!' [427] Perowne's entreaties to Sylvia died with him in the war. Cowley survived the war but not his hidden cancer. Mark and Christopher's father 'probably committed suicide'.[428] It is a sobering inventory of silenced men. Tietjens, when he appears, speaks only three sentences: 'Half Groby wall is down. Your bedroom's

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[422] Ibid.
[423] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 12.
[424] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 25.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Moore, *Peace of Mind in Parades End,* p. 168.
[427] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-,* p. 179.
[428] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 69.

wrecked. I found your case of sea-birds thrown on a rubble heap.' [429] It is full of the destructive echoes of war. He makes no response to Valentine's remonstrations about his loss of a saleable item or to the accusation in her question, 'How are we going to feed and clothe a child if you do such things?' [430] Although the 'age of fairy-tales was not … past … [and] they had had windfalls',[431] her fundamental question is 'How are we to live?' [432]

It is this question which forces one last piece of speech from Mark. He wants to say, 'Let him off: the poor devil's worn out'.[433] Instead he manages a fragment of song identified in a footnote as 'The Ghaistly Warning' and a whispered reminder that 'Groby Great Tree is down'.[434] Then he too dies. The last words of the novel are given to Valentine and spoken to the doctor: 'Perhaps it would be best not to tell Lady Tietjens that he spoke…. She would like to have had his last words…. But she did not need them as much as I.' [435] Some things are best not said, for the hurt they might cause. Some words, like these, are needed. They are understood by Valentine as a caution, not to attack in words his 'poor devil' of a brother.[436]

This is the point of the last novel in the series, not originally planned by Ford. It is a remembrance of those lost but also an acknowledgement that those who remain, as Valentine highlights, must work out how to live in a damaged world. If Sylvia's cessation of hostilities is a reassertion of reason, then the implication is that waging war is itself a form of madness. No one wins. It simply leaves damaged survivors on both sides. People might avoid falling over the edge into madness, but they still have to learn to live with the damage to their minds. Across the tetralogy, however, Ford depicts madness as

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[429] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 203.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 180.
[432] Ford, *Last Post*, p. 203.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 204.
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ford, *Last Post,* p. 203.

woven through society, visible in individuals, relationships, and institutions. He makes it endemic not pandemic, a societal phenomenon unlikely to disappear as the memories of war fade.

7 THE LATE NOVELS

7.1 Introduction

Parade's End offered Ford's most rounded portrait of madness in English society, with the Great War as a context, illustrating the various ways in which different minds experience and respond to psychological pressure. With *The Good Soldier*, it is recognised as one of Ford's masterpieces. Implicit in this claim is that they were the pinnacle of his achievement, and that what followed was less accomplished. Saunders observes that Ford's later novels have often been 'written off' as, at best, 'pallid doubles' of his masterpieces.[1] Even if this were so, and it is debateable,[2] they remain important to examining what Ford is doing with his theme of madness. Saunders argues that the 'best of his novels' in this period, *When the Wicked Man*, *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh*, are more subtle and coherent than often appreciated, and interesting for how they make sense of the whole oeuvre.[3] They are the contemporary novels of Ford's late period and fit the selection criteria for this thesis. This chapter treats *When the Wicked Man* as its exemplar, with *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* discussed briefly to expand the argument. It illustrates how these novels extend and consolidate Ford's treatment of madness. They make sense of its place in the oeuvre through the continuity they offer, and their reflections on a trajectory of madness from the personal to the systemic.

[1] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II,* p. 386.
[2] Ibid. Saunders challenges this, arguing for the merits of *When the Wicked Man*, *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* as worth attention in their own right.
[3] Ibid.

Striking parallels inevitably invite comparisons with previous novels. For instance, *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* substitute the Great Depression of the 1930s for the Great War as a vehicle for re-exploring the systemic forces holding people in positions inimical to their mental stability. The identity swap central to the plot can be considered a more explicit exploration of the idea of parallel lives suggested in *Parade's End*. The attempted and achieved suicides of Henry and Hugh echo the tone of despair in *The Good Soldier,* described by Andrew Bennett as Ford's most decisive and troubling exploration of suicidality.[4] By implication, later suicides in the oeuvre are perhaps less disturbing, but this proves questionable. The suicide in *When the Wicked Man* carries reverberations from earlier novels. Much as Dowell was arguably culpable in Ashburnham's suicide in *The Good Soldier*, and Moffat feels accountable for Mr. Brede's committal to an asylum in *The Benefactor*, Notterdam is implicated in the suicide of an author. The equation of suicide with committal is deliberate, for throughout Ford's novels the few characters who end up in an asylum effectively become the living dead, never heard from again. It is surely not unintentional to make Notterdam a publisher and the suicide a writer, yet this is not a simplistic attack on the profession with whom Ford frequently wrangled. A deeper theme is at work.

As both Mizener [5] and Saunders [6] note, Notterdam's profession invites comparison with Sorrell in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*. This correspondence offers a clue to what Ford is doing with the parallels, especially as the doubling element of *When the Wicked Man* rests on the inclusion of the narrator's doppelgänger. This echo of the preternatural [7] elements that characterise *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* hints at an ongoing exploration of the line between illusion and reality. It flags a similar allusion in *The*

[4] Bennett, *Suicide Centur*y, p. 57.
[5] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 517.
[6] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 392.
[7] This word is chosen over the term supernatural because it better reflects the sense that what happens in those novels is beyond what is normal or explicable but is 'just possible'.

Rash Act, where Hugh Monckton is envisaged as a 'Godhead', specifically 'Apollo',[8] suggesting intertextuality with *Mr. Apollo,* a novel questioning the supremacy of material realities.[9] If in *Parade's End* Ford brought his sharpest focus to the question of permeability in the line between reality and illusion, and on how far a hold on reality is core to being sane, the late novels consolidate it and connect it clearly to the literary. The term doppelgänger was originally coined by the German author Jean Paul in *Siebenkäs* (1796,) giving it a long literary history.[10] Saunders allies Ford's use of the motif in *When the Wicked Man* to the work of Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde.[11] As Tom Little observes, the doppelgänger is 'perfectly suited' to personifying 'the darker traits of a character'.[12] It lends itself, therefore, to a portrayal of the 'wicked man'. Yet its significance in Ford's late novels goes beyond this, lying in the fact that the concept of the doppelgänger, an 'apparition of a living person',[13] exists in the uneasy land between the supernatural and the hallucinatory. As discussed previously,[14] mere acceptance of the existence of supernatural phenomena can be sufficient to raise questions about someone's mental stability, as can hallucinations, generally viewed as figments of the imagination. Anyone claiming to see a doppelgänger, therefore, is caught between these two polarities: either they have an irrational belief, or they are seeing things which do not materially exist. In either case, they might be considered mad. Ford's introduction of the motif in his late works, therefore, is related to his exploration of madness. The doppelgänger is attributed the status of an omen, portending bad luck. It has its own mythology, so bridges beautifully between madness and

[8] Ford Madox Ford, *Henry for Hugh* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1934), p. 21.
[9] See Chapter 4 for full discussion.
[10] Tom Little, 'Tracing the Development of the Doppelgänger', *Atlas Obscura* (6 June 2017) <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/history-doppelganger> [accessed 3 July 2023].
[11] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 396, citing *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and *The Picture of Dorian Grey* respectively.
[12] Tom Little, *Tracing the Development of the Doppelgänger.*
[13] Ibid.
[14] See Chapter 4.

literature. It is there to raise the stakes on the question of what is real or illusory, and whether something existing only in the mind is any less 'real'.

The following analysis illustrates how Ford uses the figure of the doppelgänger to raise such questions in *When the Wicked Man* before considering how *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* strengthen the sense of illusions as collective, not individual.

7.2 *When the Wicked Man*

On the surface the novel presents as familiar territory in Ford's depiction of madness. It contains multiple characters grappling with mental distress, is focalised through a character intimately concerned with his own psychological state, and centres on a small circle of participants. It is Notterdam's story, signalled by his name being the opening word of the novel. Notterdam constantly monitors his 'mental sensations' and their causes, but with the self-delusion of Dowell rather than the insight of Tietjens.[15] He is entangled with three women: his wife Elspeth who is in love with his business partner; Henrietta Faulkner Felise, a young colleague with whom he begins an affair; and Lola Porter, widow of the man who commits suicide. The novel opens, like *The Marsden Case*, with a near-violent conflict, in this case between Notterdam and his business partner Kratch, whom he views as 'a sort of visionary rather than a captain of industry', someone whose heart lies in buildings, not books.[16] Nevertheless, he owes his job to Kratch whose capital bought the publishing house over which Notterdam presides. Notterdam's professional conflicts include trade rivals from whom he poaches newly discovered authors, and whose 'nasty allegations' undermine his candidacy for the Presidency of the National Book Trades Association.[17] He presents as one of Ford's beleaguered

[15] Ford Madox Ford, *When the Wicked Man* (New York: Horace Liveright Inc., 1931), p. 3.
[16] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 9.
[17] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 135.

heroes, with personal, amatory, and financial pressures combining to leave him feeling psychologically destabilised. Yet this is a book which undercuts such parallels. Notterdam proves to be as wrong as Dowell about the factual circumstances of his life. The triangle of Elspeth, Henrietta and Lola is not that of Sylvia, Valentine and Edith Ethel from *Parade's End*. Where the women in Tietjens' life feel love, hate, fear and frustration, Notterdam's coterie feel occasional affection, sometimes pity, but often very little at all about him.

Equally, the parallel between Notterdam and Sorrell in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* is imperfect. Like Sorrell, Notterdam is committed to the view of himself as one of the solid, sound thinkers of the world. His 'unremitting toil' has made a failing business profitable, primarily through the sale of nonfiction books, specifically economic textbooks, allying him with Sorrell's publishing interests.[18] He dismisses as risky the 'visionary' [19] enthusiasms of his business partner and frames their conflict as security versus speculation. Kratch 'would make you see' [20] his dreams for the Manhattan skyline, and generally 'gets his own way' in business ventures, sometimes by 'sheer vitriolic storming'.[21] Notterdam's invocation of Ford and Conrad's code for the impressionist artist effectively accords Kratch this status, whilst intimating that it is irreconcilable with business. He observes how Kratch's 'fits of passion' have become more frequent and his appearance more 'singular'.[22] After Kratch's outburst in front of the staff, and his subsequent 'mysterious … departure' for 'Who knew where?', Notterdam labels him 'a sick man'.[23] When Henrietta says that a charlady getting stuck in an elevator shaft had been 'the finishing touch to [a] superstitious fit' that Kratch 'had on', he asks whether 'Mr. Kratch is ill…..Mentally? Seriously?' [24] The equation of superstition with irrationality and mental

[18] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 102.
[19] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 9.
[20] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 10.
[21] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 5.
[22] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, pp. 6-7.
[23] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 42.
[24] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 45.

disturbance is clear. Whilst Kratch may have been accorded the dubious honour of being the impressionist artist, it is Notterdam who is creating impressions, in this case of his partner's instability. This is how he justifies the conflict between them. He is reasonable. Kratch, driven by his passions, is not. It is one of Ford's tropes, recalling other passionate characters like Brede, Ashburnham, Nancy, and McKechnie, and establishing the link between uncontrolled emotion and madness which runs through the oeuvre. However, a subtext of *When the Wicked Man* shows Notterdam's perceptions to be, at best, partisan. Though he says that Kratch has 'perhaps never read a book',[25] he admits to not liking books himself, reading them only to make the professional assessments for which he has an 'unerring flair', an 'instinct' for judging which to commission.[26] He visualises them as a 'heap of cardboard cubes', like bricks.[27] Though intended to convey that he is not a man with his head in the clouds like Kratch, but one with a 'passion' for the material 'details of book-production – for paper, for type, for binding materials; even the smell of inks',[28] it does the opposite. It reveals that he too operates from hunches and visions. If Kratch is an impressionist artist, so is Notterdam, and what he considers to be his own 'deterioration' is intimately connected with this, with the literary.[29] Where Sorrell comes to appreciate literature, Notterdam is already steeped in it. The best way to illustrate this is to focus on three key aspects of the novel: the suicide, the recurring appearance of the Notterdam's doppelgänger, and the 'devil booze'.[30]

7.2.1 Suicide

Porter's suicide creates Notterdam's relationships with Henrietta and Lola. Henrietta assists Notterdam in repudiating his contract with Porter, and then in creating the impression that there had

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[25] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 8.
[26] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 47.
[27] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 12.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 42.
[30] Phillip Blom, *Fracture – Life and Culture in the West 1918-1938* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), p. 68.

merely been a delay, to make the suicide look like one committed 'on the verge of triumph' rather than because of failure, something 'romantic' rather than cowardly.[31] Notterdam conspires with Lola to fabricate an account of events designed to counter any imputation of intentional suicide. These decisions are about appearances, about how things can be made to seem to other people, not facts. In contrast, Notterdam's account of the suicide scene is starkly real, with none of the romantic staging of Florence's suicide or the 'foreshadowed but not directly narrated' suicide of Ashburnham in *The Good Soldier*.[32] Nor is Porter's death camouflaged in metaphor like O Nine Morgan's in *Parade's End.* Instead, Notterdam bluntly tells Henrietta that Porter 'turned on the gas in the geyser of that bath and sat down to play solitaire till it killed him…'.[33] The choice of card game underlines the pathos of the scene which follows. Notterdam recalls, 'as if in a vision', the 'sordid, nasty-smelling bedroom', Lola Porter 'pallid with drink and fear', and an 'evil-looking tough'.[34] Porter

> was dreadfully, in the bathroom, his head reclining on the patience-cards with which he had occupied himself whilst waiting for death. His hands were stretched out and ice-cold, his thin hair disordered on his white scalp. A deep hollow in the nape of the neck above the coat-collar denoted his extreme emaciation. The cards alone gave a startlingly bright touch of scarlet and black to the sordid brown room where even the geyser that had killed him was green with verdigris.[35]

The visual detail makes the reader 'see' the scene as Notterdam experienced it. It is an explicit depiction which owes more to the death scene of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, which undercuts any romantic notions of suicide, than to Ford's previous indirect obfuscations.[36] Why the change? As

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[31] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 160.
[32] Bennett, *Suicide Century*, p. 61.
[33] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 159.
[34] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 165.
[35] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 167.
[36] Emma Bovary's death is not the 'nothing much' she envisages but involves vomiting blood, screaming in agony, and begging the poison she has taken 'to hurry'. See Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners*, translated by Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 281-82.

Saunders observes, these late novels work subtly.[37] The reason for the uncompromising image is that it is the one in Notterdam's mind, one he experiences 'as if' it is a vision. If Notterdam had meant to convey that it was simply a clear mental image, then the 'as if' is superfluous. 'As if' signals the illusory, something which might appear real but is imagined. This is the point of the juxtaposition between the stark, raw death scene and its positioning as something dream like. It points to how the real can feel imaginary in the mind.

This is important to understanding Notterdam and Ford's use of the doppelgänger. Notterdam, like Dowell, operates from his impression of how things appear. His 'strongest and most shuddering impression' of the night of Porter's death was that Lola, with 'not a crumb of food in the house' was 'actually starving'.[38] Actually, literally, really. It is an impression given the status of fact. Of course, therefore, his recall of Porter includes him being emaciated. This belief, and Lola's clinging, begging and kissing his hand like a 'slave imploring a boon of a sultan',[39] lead him to corroborate her fictitious account of Porter's death. As if to emphasise the falsehood, he begins to talk of Porter, a man he barely knew but who came from the same village in Wessex, as his 'dead friend'.[40] Once these things become fact in his mind, they drive his actions, and generate the guilt he comes to feel, that 'Technically' he had 'murdered' Porter.[41] In fact, it was 'perfectly well known' in the publishing world that Porter was 'miserably in love' with his 'harlot' wife and had 'gone home and killed himself' when he failed to dissuade her from dancing 'half nude' with racketeers in a 'disreputable haunt in Harlem'.[42] The suicide, therefore, illustrates not only how the real can feel imaginary, but also how the imaginary can feel only too real. This connects directly to the doppelgänger motif and its status as

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[37] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 396.
[38] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 172.
[39] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 171.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 267.

either a supernatural phenomenon or an hallucination. Is it something Notterdam experiences or imagines?

7.2.2 The doppelgänger

The first question is why the doppelgänger appears at all. Notterdam's experiences of his doppelgänger are, as Saunders argues, confrontations with the self.[43] Specifically, they are encounters with his past self, at different ages. The first occurs immediately after his quarrel with Kratch at the staff conference. The doppelgänger is 'Himself at the age of eighteen', looking at him with 'completely unenquiring eyes',[44] and accompanied by 'the queerest of feelings' [45] and the physical sensation of being 'frigid and clammy', something he attributes to 'a fit of indigestion'.[46] However, as it prompts 'like an ache in his tired brain the muddle of the Porter agreement', it clearly has a psychological component.[47] Notterdam rationalises that his shared origins with Porter have 'no doubt' raked up the memories of his youth which do not 'let him alone…'.[48] He appears to dismiss the doppelgänger as a real presence. It is a disturbance of his equilibrium and an inability to suppress memories of a past he would rather not recall.

This past is gradually revealed to include seducing a young virgin, reporting information extracted from a 'trembling widow' which got 'her son hanged',[49] and marrying Elspeth knowing that she was more 'inclined to Kratch'.[50] Elspeth's parents had made it clear that their daughter would 'be given to the one who made good first', so Notterdam's refusal to support Kratch's business plans, which might

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[43] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, pp. 391-92.
[44] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 41.
[45] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 40.
[46] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, pp. 40 and 42.
[47] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 41.
[48] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 42.
[49] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 63.
[50] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 66.

otherwise 'have succeeded', was instrumental in the outcome.[51] The account carries the flavour of a contest won, framed by Notterdam as the 'only time' Kratch had 'failed' to 'get his own way', rather than of a love affair.[52] Learning that Notterdam has been repeatedly unfaithful to his wife therefore comes as little surprise. Nor does his 'dishonourable' withdrawal of Porter's contract having been preceded by 'several other business uncomfortablenesses' which had been 'buried'.[53] Notterdam is not what he appears and, whilst he bears some comparison with Ford's other flawed heroes who prefer an illusory version of themselves, such as George Moffat in *The Benefactor*, Robert Grimshaw in *A Call*, and Dowell in *The Good Soldier,* he is qualitatively different. Notterdam is the novel's 'wicked man', with a record of doing real harm to others. Yet *When the Wicked Man* is itself also not what it appears.

For instance, the fact that Notterdam's shameful past being revealed largely through his encounters with a doppelgänger evokes Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol.*[54] Like Scrooge, Notterdam realises that he 'had not had a shining and golden youth'.[55] Kratch's name recalls that of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's abused clerk, hinting at the exploitative relationship between Notterdam and his partner. Kratch, like Cratchit's son, proves to have a serious illness, dismissed by Notterdam as a 'powerful hypochondria'.[56] These resonances and title combine to suggest that the novel might be read like *A Christmas Carol,* as a Christian allegory of redemption. However, this would be a misdirection. Not only does Notterdam fail to transform himself, but a doppelgänger is tonally different from Scrooge's ghosts of a Christian festival celebrating the birth of a child sent to save man

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 10.
[53] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 118.
[54] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol In Prose being A Ghost Story of Christmas* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843).
[55] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 64.
[56] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 70.

from sin. A doppelgänger, as Notterdam knows, 'always presaged disaster'.[57] How he knows this is significant. When he feels 'haunted' by its repeated appearances, he recalls a story he read as a boy which fixed 'traces of the doppelgänger legend' in his memory.[58] It may have been called 'the Student of Prague – or … Vienna', by a 'German author with a name like Lippschuetz…'.[59] Despite Notterdam's apparent uncertainty, this is an explicit allusion by Ford to *The Student of Prague*, a German silent horror film originally released in 1913 and remade several times.[60] Notterdam's recall of a man so haunted by a 'double of himself' that he shot it, only to discover that he had 'fractured a mirror and fell dead',[61,] reflects the ending of the 1926 film version.[62] Ford's allusion is probably as much literary as cinematic, because the film was loosely based on *William Wilson* by Edgar Allen Poe,[63] an author whose work he knew.[64] In Poe's story the protagonist is haunted by a double he believes to be boy who grew up in the same village. He stabs the double only to find it is his own alter ego. Like Poe's protagonist, Notterdam is fixated on someone from his childhood village and tries to kill his doppelgänger but, in an inversion, he shoots not himself but the gangster, McKeown, and is charged with homicide.

The references hint at the literary nature of Notterdam's engagement with his doppelgänger and align him with other Ford characters whose thinking is shaped by the stories they have read. Unlike the romantic reference points of Florence, Nancy and Ashburnham, Notterdam's stories are darker, consisting of real-life poverty, swindles and deaths, and gothic horror fictions. They prove just as

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[57] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 179.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid. I have found no author with this name.
[60] In 1926, 1935 and 2004.
[61] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 179.
[62] A brief synopsis of the film is provided at <https://www.filmportal.de/en/movie/der-student-von-prag_ea43d4a711285006e03053d50b37753d> [accessed 20 July 2024].
[63] Edgar Allen Poe, 'William Wilson' in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgard Allen Poe* (New York: Random House Inc., 1938). An account of its adaptations is provided at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wilson_(short_story)> [accessed 20 July 2024].
[64] Ford, *The March of Literature,* p. 758.

slippery. In a sense, Ford's novel is as haunted by past stories, his own and those of other authors, as Notterdam is by his past selves. Its allusions seem like ghostly suggestions to read the story in a particular way, but the story itself thwarts that interpretation. Stories, Ford seems to suggest, do not always end predictably. They cannot be relied upon. What Notterdam thinks he knows about doppelgängers is, therefore, not secure. This uncertainty is emphasised when Notterdam's claim to be descended from Nostradamus is examined. He turns to researching encyclopaedic records of his ancestor when he feels caught in a 'nightmare of unreality' as his double stalks him.[65] He looks for the security of facts. He had 'always had the impression' that Nostradamus 'had been a magician', but finds him represented as 'nothing but a doctor', even perhaps 'a quack', a label he rejects.[66] His ancestor had, after all, cured several 'celebrated royalties' and his 'many prophecies' as a 'soothsayer' were proven by his 'extreme correctness concerning the French Revolution'.[67] As if aware that single instances do not prove his point, Notterdam concedes that the term quack might derive from his ancestor effecting cures 'by suggestion as is the case with ninety-nine percent of the cures of today'.[68] This dismissal of contemporary medical cures as based on something intangible, and so pervasive as to constitute a fad, is a claim to more grounded thinking. Yet, finding no comfort in the factual records, Notterdam 'continued' to think of his ancestor as 'a stage figure in a long furred cloak',[69] with 'one hand extended in a motion calling on spirits to appear'.[70] In effect, the stereotype of a magician or conjurer, someone who creates illusions, perhaps even a stage hypnotist working with suggestion. The image hints at the performative, at pretence, even at make-believe. If its intention is to dismiss the validity of such abilities, it fails because, in negating the ability of the mind to conjure up, as if by magic, things which appear real, Notterdam shows exactly how it is done. He creates in his own mind

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[65] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 178.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

a vivid image of an ancestor he never met, an illusion of reality based on culturally recognizable stock figures filtered through his own imagination. Notterdam does what Ford's impressionist writers do. They create images in their own minds and then put them into words and so into other people's minds.

Notterdam's identification with a magical, prophetic ancestor and his summoning up of supernatural legends, raises questions about his mental stability. In Ford's novels, people who believe in the supernatural or see things which are not there are likely to be considered irrational and, more likely, delusional. These questions preoccupy Notterdam himself, seen most easily in the defences he mounts to keep his rational persona intact. The image he creates of Nostradamus summoning up spirits is so persuasively real that he wonders if the doppelgänger is 'a sort of devil' which he 'called up involuntarily' in 'moments of extreme depression, fatigue or alcoholic indulgence'.[71] It is a double-edged suggestion. The phrase 'called up' implies that he might have inherited the ability to summon up the supernatural. If so, the doppelgänger exists as a phenomenon outside his mind. However, the qualification of it as something which happens outside of his control or will, when he is weakened in some way, undercuts this, creating ambiguity. The qualifications are worth attention in themselves. Notterdam explains his exhaustion and depression as the consequence of a life devoted to the patriotic toil needed to keep the 'immense machine' of business going which, 'from a hygienic point of view, was madness'.[72] The word patriotic, in a post war context, evokes the Great War and seems to equate Notterdam's efforts with those who served. His business work is a duty, its demands damage his health, and he is as trapped in commerce as soldiers were in the Army. To dismiss this as hyperbole or hubris would be to ignore the link to madness. Notterdam himself makes the connection, and more generally the parallel between the war and the business world hints at the kind

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 102.

of conflict which sends men over the edge of sanity. This is why the novel is punctuated with conflict, threats and violence. It hints at a battleground which people must psychologically navigate.

The undertone of violence is closely connected to the third of Notterdam's qualifications, that the 'sort of devil' might appear when he drinks too much. It is not simply that 'People who drank too much got delirium tremens… the horrors!', but that alcohol is part of the broader societal context.[73] Drink, and its effects, is a point of clear differentiation in Ford's late novels. In *The Good Soldier* or *Parade's End*, alcohol is positioned as a means of deadening or escaping mental distress, but in *When the Wicked Man* it is given the status of a necessary social lubricant. It becomes a way of connecting the personal to the societal.

7.2.3 Alcohol

Even on the novel's first page Notterdam is counting 'three – … four – possibly even … five nights' when he has refrained from attending gatherings where drinking was 'unavoidable'.[74] Intermittently, he is on the 'water-waggon', suggesting that he feels the need to control his drinking.[75] Even though 'alcoholic indulgence' could explain the doppelgänger's appearance, he tells himself 'fiercely' that he 'certainly did not drink enough to have delirium tremens'.[76] This is more than just a denial of what Mizener describes as his 'incipient alcoholism'.[77] If he were to accept that he had delirium tremens, then the doppelgänger is an hallucination, something which does not exist except in his mind. Of course, there is an irony in how much of Notterdam's life is an illusion constructed in his mind.

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[73] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 179.
[74] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 3.
[75] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 245.
[76] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 179.
[77] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 517.

An example of this is his reframing of the circumstances around Porter's death. Having abstained from drinking for a fortnight, he now has a 'clear head', can focus his 'mind tranquilly on his days' work', and 'above all' is 'without forebodings'.[78] He reviews the 'case of Porter' and finds 'little doubt' that Porter had 'deliberately' got him drunk to secure a contract that he would not otherwise have considered.[79] Notice that Porter has become a 'case', a word already shown to carry weight in Ford's oeuvre. Here it makes Porter a story to be told, and in this version the responsibility for what Notterdam had done was 'in effect, Porter's', not his own.[80] Lola is also implicated because it was 'likely' that she had put the 'nickel cup … against his teeth' and fed him the 'foul brew'.[81] Nor do Notterdam's peers escape culpability. It was necessary at such parties to be 'a little canned' and to do justice to 'Croesus' wines' but 'those fellows' had pressed the 'contents of flasks' on him before dinner, also in the hope of 'getting good contracts out of him'.[82] Though his intoxication would legally negate Porter's contract, Notterdam's 'code' means that he must respect his own signature 'however it was obtained'.[83] Sober and, as he sees it, rational, Notterdam is no longer Porter's *de facto* murderer but a victim of unscrupulous people, and of societal conventions around drinking. However, much of his account is based on supposition, not fact. His need to say that there is 'no doubt' about Porter's motives implies the opposite. The recollection of Lola, arm around his neck, literally pouring drink into his mouth, is only 'likely' or perhaps imagined. Even the recollection of the 'click on his teeth' of the metal cup is questionable, given that he was more than 'sufficiently jolly' at the time.[84] Notterdam may prefer this version of himself as a reasonably abstemious man of principle, but there

[78] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 202.
[79] Ford, *When the Wicked Man* p. 203.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 204.
[84] Ibid.

is little in his history to support it. It is no more real than the version of Porter's suicide which makes him a murderer, or the account which presents Lola's promiscuous behaviour as causal.

Notterdam's tendency to reframe and reshape narratives points to the precarious nature of truth and reality, fact and fiction. It makes him like other Ford characters who prefer to live in their own constructed worlds. Indeed, Notterdam's defences often sound like those of Dowell. People acted in their own interests at his expense. Interpersonal tensions and disappointments shaped the way things evolved. Society favours those who play by the rules of the game, even if those rules are corrupt. However, where Dowell's reflections on society were embittered final thoughts on how he had been cheated out of his dreams, Notterdam's are neither retrospective nor reflective. They are *in media res* and show society in process. His claims that he was socially expected to be drunk contrasts starkly with Dowell's account of Ashburnham's solitary drinking in despair. It shifts the focus from the individual to the collective, portraying a society in which the social is enmeshed with alcohol, where Henrietta feels going to nightclubs is a necessity for 'a girl alone', and the 'almost spinsterly' Miss Cresswell finds it socially 'impossible not to take a little' drink.[85] Its dangers are represented by Lola, a 'star journalist' who 'can't hold down jobs because of drink', and Notterdam himself.[86]

This is not incidental context. *When the Wicked Man* was written and published during the period of Prohibition in the United States,[87] and the many instances of drinking in the novel capture the period when Prohibition had become a 'farce', with courts overwhelmed by the number of prosecutions, and a thriving trade in illicit liquor.[88] It was an America of speakeasies selling bootlegged liquor supplied by gangsters like Al Capone, an underworld beneath the façade. Notterdam's 'foul brew' served covertly from flasks, the clubs he frequents, and Lola's reference to 'the worst racketeer that ever left

[85] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 205.
[86] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 182.
[87] Prohibition was introduced in January 1920 and repealed in 1933.
[88] Blom, *Fracture,* p. 63.

Chicago', place him with at least one foot in this world. His version of himself as the patriotic businessman leading a publishing House of 'ancient augustness' [89] and 'traditions' is as much a façade. Yet to call it a façade suggests deliberate deception rather than an illusion which Notterdam believes to be real. This goes to the heart of the issue, his mental state, but in Ford's late novels this is not a solely individual question. For instance, when Capone famously rejected the label of racketeer, saying that he considered himself a 'businessman', pointing out that when he sold illegal alcohol he was a 'bootlegger', but his patrons serving it 'on a silver tray' were offering 'hospitality',[90] he highlighted not only hypocrisy but the way in which a shared language framed the situation. Capone's claims illustrate how fine the line might be between an ostensibly legitimate but crooked businessman like Notterdam and the gangster he ultimately kills. Capone's challenge is an intimation of how illusory 'reality' can be if enough people share a certain perspective.

Alcohol serves a dual purpose in the novel. Apart from its status as a mind-altering drug, it places Notterdam in a broader debate. Though Mizener argues that *When the Wicked Man* fails because Ford 'did not understand the world he was describing' [91] and was inaccurate in the detail, Ford's impressionistic writing nevertheless captures the zeitgeist. Disregarding Prohibition measures was part of a post war disillusionment and a rejection of the moral values underpinning it, part of a 'culture war' [92] which was also 'fought in literature'.[93] Some authors, like Upton Sinclair and Jack London, took a 'dim view of the devil booze' but many others, including Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings and Dorothy Parker, all known to Ford, were for 'free drinking … free thinking, free love'.[94] On this level, drinking is associated with freedom, personal and creative. Yet, whilst it

[89] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 3.
[90] Blom, *Fracture,* p. 64.
[91] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 518.
[92] Blom, *Fracture*, pp. 66-67.
[93] Blom, *Fracture*, p. 68.
[94] Ibid.

seduces it also snares. At best, it encourages unwise decisions. Notterdam's account of how Porter secured a contract from him seems captured by Hemingway's maxim that one should 'Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut'.[95] At worst, as Notterdam fears, it can conjure up demons.

The final appearance of the doppelgänger occurs when Notterdam is 'heated with wine', 'raging with lust' and attempting sex with a 'completely limp' and 'unresponsive' Lola.[96] As she suggests that this would make him a 'rather a lousy villain', he hears a sound, leaps to his feet and finds he is 'looking at himself in the dim light'.[97] It is worth considering the doppelgänger's appearance as Notterdam experiences it:

> He was looking at himself in the dim light and grasped at his hip. He was enraged and determined….His other self was a detestable monster: flushed, red-eyed, lecherous, obese, his clothes disordered. You should put a monster like that out of the world he soils.
>
> His gun was out. He said:
>
> "By God, I'm going to kill you…." You can't of course kill a supernatural being – but he was going to.[98]

The active tense places both Notterdam and reader in the scene as it unfolds, with the figure being perceived as the doppelgänger which is haunting him. The description is a plausible depiction of how Notterdam might appear; drunk, dishevelled and debauched. Precisely because it arrives just as Lola calls him a villain, it is persuasive as a glimpse of himself as he might appear to her, another Scrooge-like revelation. Notterdam says that Lola could not see the 'monster' because she was lying on the

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[95] https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2019/05/12-best-ernest-hemingway-quotes [accessed 14th November, 2024). Although it has not proved possible to trace the original source of this frequently cited quotation, Penguin books affirm that it is attributable to Hemingway.
[96] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 341.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 342.

couch where 'he had thrown her',[99] but if it really was a supernatural vision appearing to him, would Lola have been able to see it even with an unimpeded view? When she runs screaming into the shadows, he interprets it as her thinking he meant to kill her. Her screaming 'disturbed him' and parallel screaming from the kitchen is simply 'a nuisance',[100] rather than a signal to pause for thought. Instead, Notterdam is conscious of feeling 'as if he were in a cathedral' with 'immense pillars' and is 'Nostradamus who had called up a devil'.[101] 'As if' again. The 'other' is a 'menace to the world' and should be put out of it.[102] So Notterdam, who had 'always been accustomed to fire from the hip', shoots and 'continue[s] firing when the other had stopped' despite being wounded in the thigh.[103] It makes no sense that a supernatural being would shoot back, let alone inflict a real-world injury. All the signs are that the figure is real and that Notterdam is drunkenly out of control. His perceptions and actions therefore invite scrutiny. Are his reason and judgement simply impaired by alcohol? Is this the real Notterdam beneath the civilised veneer, a man who rapes and kills? Does he sense, on some level, that this is McKeown? After all, he had been warned by Lola what would happen if McKeown found her with another man. Or is he, in fact, hallucinating, seeing something illusory? Can it even be said to be an hallucination if the figure did exist? It is a beautifully ambiguous presentation perhaps deliberately so to illustrate that it does not matter which interpretation applies. Notterdam acts on what is mentally available to him, what seems real to him, whether actual or imaginary. The question of how his reality stands in relation to that of other people is central to the issue. In *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, Sorrell's sense of reality was judged by others to be an illness. Were Notterdam to have claimed to be shooting at a doppelgänger would he have been believed? The answer is

[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* pp. 342 and 343 respectively.
[103] Ford, *When the Wicked Man,* p. 343.

suggested by the fact that his 'villainy' is judged by the 'train of actions' not by 'frame of mind', and he is formally charged with homicide.[104]

This seems like a reassertion of the supremacy of fact. After all, Notterdam does not deny that he has killed a man, he simply finds it less 'disagreeable' than having 'killed Porter'.[105] In gaol his 'head grew clearer' again and he 'seriously considered repentance and reform', yet dismissed it as 'impracticable'.[106] Though Mizener highlights Notterdam's claim that 'American commercial society – is simply too strong', this is only part of the reason that he cannot 'turn away from wickedness'.[107] More binding is the way his homicide comes to be viewed. Whilst shooting McKeown is 'unpopular' in England, it is accorded 'a certain amount of credit' in America.[108] His case is thrown out and he is heralded in the American press for 'ridding the earth of one of the worst felons' they had ever had and for saving 'the life of a beautiful woman, his protégée and the widow of a great American author'.[109] The story he had seeded about Porter has taken hold. On the boat back to Manhattan a boy asking for his autograph refers to him as a 'national hero'.[110] 'That had proved, as you might say, the end.' [111] The ending to the story is an illusion. He should 'deny the fact' but 'couldn't'.[112] 'You could not say that whilst in a state of alcoholism you had been trying to rape a young woman a phantasmagoric product of delirium tremens had appeared to you… So that you tried to shoot it and hit a racketeer.' [113] To say such a thing would risk being called mad. However, his reason being called into question is not the only obstacle. He had 'tried his hand at contradicting the report' to two men in the smoking room but couldn't 'even begin' because they had read of his suffering and were

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 345.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, p. 518.
[108] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, pp. 344 and 346.
[109] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 350.
[110] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 349.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 350.
[113] Ibid.

determined to respect his privacy.[114] Just as his belief in the doppelgänger coloured his actions, so their belief in his heroism shapes their response. Notterdam, trapped in the story, goes along with it and after that 'how could you reform?' [115]

This is the key point to Ford's depictions in *When the Wicked Man*, that illusions are not just something existing in an individual's mind. It questions whether there is a substantive difference between Notterdam's hallucinatory experience and the combined illusions held by a whole society. Both are perceived as equally real, and both exist in the mind. It is a point reiterated by *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* duology.

7.3 *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh*

The story across these two novels rests on a different kind of doubling. It avoids supernatural doppelgängers and suggests that one man, with physical similarities, can substitute for another. However, it relies on the same literary traditions. Poe's *William Wilson* is again apposite, with one character of noble birth, like Hugh Monckton, and another who speaks only just above 'a very low whisper' like Henry Martin.[116] It also carries echoes of E. T. A. Hoffman's *The Devil's Elixirs*, which depends on the resemblance of a monk to a Count, each 'unaware that they are the sons of the same father',[117] much as Henry learns that he and Hugh shared 'the same great grandfather'.[118] In Poe's story the noble's obsession with his double leads him to insanity,[119] and in Hoffman's the men share

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[114] Ford, *When the Wicked Man*, p. 351.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Poe, *William Wilson,* p. 631
[117] Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, Edited and translated by Harry Tucker Jnr. (New York, London and Ontario: Meridian New American Library, 1971), p. 12.
[118] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 279.
[119] Jeffrey Meyers, *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1992), p. 287. Meyers argues for the theme of the double as concerned with the protagonist being haunted by a second self to the point of insanity, or as an expression of insanity itself.

'a pathological inheritance from their father' and become 'mentally ill'.[120] Hoffman's Count becomes insane after a fall, thinks he is the monk, and 'goes so far … that he utters the latter's thoughts' [121] just as Henry comes to think that 'he really had become Hugh Monckton and seemed to feel his voice speaking through his own lips'.[122] The name Monckton may, of course, be entirely coincidental and it would be tenuous to argue that both men attempting suicide suggests a joint inherited pathology. However, Otto Rank cites Hoffman as the 'classical creator of the double projection', and the double as 'among the most popular motifs' in Romantic fiction, so the resonances again place Ford within this literary tradition.[123]

This also raises the question of the relationship of Ford's late novels to psychoanalysis, especially since Poe's story has long been associated with it and *The Student of Prague* inspired Rank's article *The Double,* published in Freud's journal *Imago*.[124] Whilst a case could be made for Ford engaging with psychoanalytic concepts in his late novels it is not straightforward, as they overlap with theories referenced in his prewar novels. It is not simply that Henry feels Hugh speak through him but that it is 'as if Hugh Monckton's soul, leaving his own warm body, had come upon his, insensible'.[125] This recalls the theories of Myers already elucidated in discussing *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*. Taken together with 'They say that happens … It is an old, old legend…', it is a reminder that Ford's project is literary, that in these late novels he is interrogating the relationship between story, illusion and states of mind.[126]

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[120] Rank, *The Double*, p. 12.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 154.
[123] Rank, *The Double*, pp. 12-13.
[124] <https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/don-juan-and-double> [accessed 17 July 2023].
[125] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 154.
[126] Ibid.

Although the familial connection between Henry and Hugh is an aspect of the novels which could be derided as implausible, it is better viewed as another of Ford's 'just possible' scenarios, not least because of the obvious intertextuality not only with *When the Wicked Man* but with the earlier *Mr. Apollo*. A fish dropped on Henry's shoulder by a bird is an omen of the type heeded by Notterdam, and Hugh after death becomes 'what they used to call a Solar Myth…' associated with the god Apollo.[127] This appears to be the territory of irrational beliefs used to depict the precarious state of an individual mind. However, Henry never really is out of touch with the truth of his situation, despite feeling that he is losing his identity in the sustained pretence of being Hugh. Instead, these references are a signal to pay attention to the way such beliefs create context. When Henry observes that Hugh resembled Apollo, had been 'god-like' to 'ordinary mortals' because of his 'largesse', a 'lunatic extravagance' unless one were a God with 'endless resources', he hints at the kind of relationship in which those who knew him were invested.[128]

It is also pertinent that whilst Hugh was English and Henry American, the story is set in the South of France, a place of 'stone pines and illusions' [129] where people 'existed amongst mirages' [130] and 'consider works of the imagination' more honourable than the achievements of economists or scientists.[131] The juxtaposition of the imagination and science recalls Ford's earlier explorations,[132] and positions the South of France as a place where story is as important as fact, and where people admire and so collude in fictions. The novel's predominant fiction, that Henry is Hugh, can continue only for as long as the people around him believe this to be the case. People's willingness to deny 'the evidence of their senses',[133] as Hugh's aunt appears to do, comes to feel like a 'crowd madness' to

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[127] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 21.
[128] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 22.
[129] Ford Madox Ford, *The Rash Act* (London and Toronto: Jonathan Cape, 1933), p. 262.
[130] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 21.
[131] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 190.
[132] In Chapter 4.
[133] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 51.

Henry.[134] Even the doctor, who knows Hugh to have been a wounded 'Mons hero',[135] does not recalibrate when he finds Henry to have 'the physique of an athlete'.[136] He simply diagnoses 'nervous disorders' and prescribes a life of ''Abstinence!'' [137] Henry is not at all sure that he is 'an invalid' [138] but, much as other Ford characters are made mad through the language used about them, the diagnosis and the ministrations of those around him make him into one.[139] Henry becomes confined in the story that he is Hugh. With echoes of Notterdam, he reflects that 'If he tried to prove to these people that he was Henry Martin and not Hugh Monckton they would certify him as a madman'.[140] The strain of playing make-believe for almost a year, 'all the pretences',[141] and the desire to avoid hurting people, leaves him feeling 'like Gulliver', 'tied hand and foot by endless invisible strings'.[142]

It is an interesting analogy, less for the allusion to Swift's novel than for its evocation of men in the trenches in the First World War and their felt helplessness, depicted in *Parade's End*. Though the family connection between Henry and Hugh is important to the plot, it matters more to the theme of the novel that they served in the same regiment. Hugh committed suicide because 'the after effects of the late war had become too intolerable to him'.[143] Henry, forced to live as Hugh, shows these effects by proxy. Henry realises that Hugh wanted him to live the life Hugh himself would have liked rather than that forced on him by his injuries. This is why, ultimately, Henry has to break free of the illusion that he is Hugh, to resume his identity as Henry and to live on for those who could not. As Saunders observes, Henry's commitment to write the book Hugh had intended is expressly said to be

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[134] Ford, *The Rash Act*, p. 249.
[135] Ford, *The Rash Act*, p. 268.
[136] Ford, *The Rash Act*, pp. 278-79
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ford, *The Rash Act*, p. 291.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ford, *The Rash Act*, p. 217.
[141] Ford, *Henry for Hugh*, p. 165.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ford, *The Rash Act*, p. 206.

a way to make him 'live again'.[144] There are resonances with how Dowell's reference to Florence as a personality of paper in *The Good Soldier* hinted that people remain alive in the minds of those who read about them. It is a testament to the power of story, to the things people create in their own minds, things sometimes called 'mad'.

The significance of this is illustrated by a contemporary writer renowned for her ability to write compelling fantasy. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series lured readers of all ages into seeing a world parallel to that of mere 'muggles', humans without magical powers. An iconic passage from the final novel is pertinent: -

> 'Tell me one last thing,' said Harry. 'Is this real?' Or has this been happening inside my head?
>
> Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, and obscuring his figure.
>
> 'Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean it is not real?' [145]

For contemporary readers used to postmodern self-referentiality, Rowling's commentary on the process of writing and reading is evident. It is a claim to the value and power of the imagination. As already shown, this undercurrent is at work throughout Ford's inquiry into madness. It is in the late novels, however, that he brings the exploration to its logical conclusion that if individuals who imagine things which are not real are mad, then so are groups and societies who believe the stories they tell themselves.

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[144] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 415.
[145] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 579.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined the theme of madness in Ford's novels, guided by the questions of how Ford represents madness and with what effect. Having argued in Chapter 1 that his depictions were most often read as a reflection of Ford's own life and discussed in relation to a narrow range of his novels, this thesis redresses the balance. It does so through close reading of exemplar novels across the oeuvre, to test the hypothesis that Ford's representations of madness have something to say about the subject matter, not just his life. This concluding chapter summarises what has been established and the significance of it.

A useful entry point is to establish what kinds of madness Ford's novels depict. It is worth returning to the definition of madness which guided the research. Scull argued that lasting disturbances of reason, intellect or emotion are central to the concept of madness, and outlined categories generally understood to denote those who might be termed mad. Comparing his categories, repeated below, with Ford's depictions is illuminating:

> Those who lose control of their emotions, whether melancholic or manic; those who do not share the common-sense reality most of us perceive and the mental universe we inhabit, who hallucinate or make claims about their existence that people around them conclude are delusions; those who act in ways that are profoundly at variance with the conventions of their culture, are heedless of the ordinary corrective measures their community mobilizes to induce them to desist; those who manifest extremes of extravagance and incoherence or who exhibit the grotesquely denuded mental life of the demented.[1]

[1] Scull, *Madness in Civilization,* p. 11.

Ford's novels feature characters depicting almost all of these types of madness. There are those who lose control of their emotions in ways considered problematic. Examples previously discussed include Kasker Ryves in *The Shifting of the Fire*, a man maddened by jealousy; McKechnie's outbursts in *Parade's End*; Mr. Brede who is both choleric and melancholic in *The Benefactor*; Ashburnham in *The Good Soldier* who loses reason in his passion for La Dolciquita, and his life to despair; the unnaturally calm Dowell flies into rage with a servant, and Leicester in *A Call* almost assaults a shopkeeper and both can be argued to turn their anger inwards, to depression. States of heightened emotion are generally regarded as unsound, if not dangerous. Some novels offer up characters who do not appear to share the same reality as other people. *Mr. Apollo* maps out the territory whilst Sorrell in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* and Notterdam in *When the Wicked Man* provide examples of worldly men who come to question their own realities, understanding that they risk being labelled delusional. Many of Ford's characters maintain only the appearance of living within conventional cultural standards. Some, such as the Simple Lifers, are dismissed as eccentrics inviting derision. Others are taken more seriously. For example, Anne Jeal's belief in witchcraft in *The 'Half Moon'* makes her frightening to some and delusional to others, whilst Sylvia in *Parade's End* is a woman whose sanity is questioned when she defies the cultural norms of her time and class. Whether any of the characters who are out of step with cultural expectations could be described as 'profoundly at variance' or 'heedless' of attempts to change their behaviour is questionable. Sylvia, for instance, epitomises the way in which characters know how to play the game expected of them. Similarly, whilst there are characters confined to asylums, notably Brede, McKechnie and Duchemin, they cannot easily be described as 'denuded' of all rationality in the way Scull's final category suggests. This leaves Nancy in *The Good Soldier* who might have gone irrevocably mad, as Dowell suggests, but without 'extravagance and incoherence'. Questions hang over even these most obvious of candidates for the legitimate use of the term 'mad'.

This is in part because they are characters from books living in an invented world, not real people. Any madness they exhibit lasts only for the duration of the novel, so is bound to be an incomplete representation. Scull's descriptions prove useful because they are not clinical diagnostic categories, with the precision that might imply, but broad types of behaviour generally understood to denote madness. They allow for the sheer range of depictions in Ford's novels. He presents a wide range of 'mad' characters who his contemporary readers would find unthreateningly familiar. These are not the mad men or women foaming at the mouth or hidden in attics of earlier fiction. For the most part they are recognisably ordinary people, many of whom could be considered only transiently mad. This sense of familiarity enables Ford's readers not only to 'see' but to relate to the madnesses he portrays, and so to join with him in his inquiry. The juxtapositions and ambivalences of the novels mean that readers are likely to develop as subjective and personal a response to madness in their 'own time' as Ford did. As a result, he shows his readers not where 'we stand' but how they stand in relation to madness.[2] Of course, this thesis carries that same subjectivity, an issue discussed towards the end of this chapter.

8.2 The territory mapped

It is useful to consolidate the arguments of previous chapters which provide a strong basis for the claim that Ford's representations of madness have something to offer beyond an insight into his psyche. A quantitative analysis of Ford's use of madness-related language primed a sensitivity to patterns, which suggested that his representations were evolving not static. A high occurrence of diagnostic terminology invited questions about how informed Ford was and where he acquired his knowledge. As discussed, his knowledge was gained eclectically rather than through study of the

[2] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, p. xv, discussed in Chapter 1.

psychiatric literature, and he was clearly not working from one underpinning theory about madness. The closest he came to a statement was through Tietjens in *Parade's End*, that nerves are like a weighing machine which can tip out of balance, but that too became modified. This lack of doctrine allowed him to focus on how ideas about madness circulated in society, reflected in and shaping the way people spoke, thought and acted.

The other way Ford became informed was through direct experience, his own and that of people close to him. Recontextualising his 1904 breakdown provided more finely grained information about the treatment of nervous conditions than secondary texts offered. However, the highest value lay in exploring the intersectionality of this experience with language, revealing two things of importance. Firstly, it illustrated the contested status of nervous illness and the effect of this on patients. Ford's autobiographies and contemporary letters convey the impression of doctors casting around for theories on which to base treatments, as if conducting live experiments on their clients. Partly in consequence of this, the relationship between self-selecting patients and ambitious doctors facilitated the production of new diagnoses, such as neurasthenia. Ford, acutely sensitive to language, instinctively understood how the words applied to people could shape their sense of self and problematize them in the eyes of others. It was this approach that he uses in his fiction, to make up 'mad' people for his readers.

Of course, the very nature of fiction is that it is 'made up', imagined. Specifically, it is made up of words on a page which are ascribed meaning between an author and reader. In that sense, there is a parallel with how doctors and patients might collaborate linguistically to shape, in symptoms and words, an illness. One of Ford's achievements in his depictions of madness is in the replication of that process between characters, showing how words exchanged or withheld position some people as mad and others as sane. This begs the question of whether, amid his cast of characters, anyone is sane. By implication, those doing the labelling, making the distinctions, are claiming to be sane. That

doesn't make it an objective fact, and, by the same logic, the mad are not definitively so. The issue is complicated by the fact that characters sometimes self-identify as mad, if only temporarily. As discussed in Chapter 2, Ian Hacking's analysis reinforced social constructionist arguments about the way in which language holds and creates identities. Ford's depictions of how language shapes the thinking and judgements of characters show madness to be less a stable, identifiable reality and more the outcome of a bounded process of construction between people. At its simplest level, characters' conceptions of madness are bounded by societal norms, as discussed in relation to *The Good Soldier*. As Hacking argued, there is a boundedness which derives from language itself. Until, for instance, the term neurasthenia came into circulation, it was a condition which socially did not exist, as Olive Garnett's testimony underlined. The symptoms might exist, but they go by another name. This is why Ford's diagnostic terminology and explanations for madness change over time. It is not simply to ensure that the novels remain contemporary, but to demonstrate how people are made mad in new ways. The discussion of *Parade's End* offers the most obvious examples of this. Ford uses shifts in terminology to undermine certainties about what is, or is not, mad. He does not replace past explanations for madness but keeps them in play alongside newer ideas, with the effect that none of the theories or therapies carry conviction.

This instability is found even in the early novels, where Ford explores the issues of whether madness can be said to be individually located, even heritable and inescapable. As shown in Chapter 3, people are presented as predisposed, but not deterministically. Characters hold a view of themselves which can colour the outcome, but they are not islands and their interactions with others cement or fracture their sense of vulnerability to madness. At the same time, characters who consider themselves stable and sane are shown to harbour illusions, raising the question of when these might be considered delusions, an aspect of madness. In these novels madness is constructed between characters in dialogues, in disputes, in outbursts and in silences. The question of who decides where the line lies between sanity and insanity is implicit, but visible.

The novels discussed in Chapter 4 make it more explicit. Instead of implausible plotlines they offer fantastical propositions: pagan gods floating down to a London square, a man living simultaneously in two centuries, a community of people following as their spiritual leader a man in the middle of a breakdown. These novels put under pressure the questions of what is objectively real, and of how far immaterial realities can be trusted. They blur Scull's suggestion that there is a 'common-sense reality'. There is a continuity of form between *The Benefactor* and *Mr. Apollo* in their use of debate and oppositions to reveal the inherent subjectivities of various rationales. The effect, as Gasiorek suggests,[3] is both to disrupt polarities of opinion and to present life as having natural lacunae and bias. *Mr. Apollo* exposes how characters facing uncomfortable propositions defend against them by constructing stories they prefer, by making narrative sense of their world. This suggestion that people do not see objectively, but through the filter of their own mind, is heightened in *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, where even Sorrell doubts the experiences which feel intensely real to him. The shifting sands of his perceptions offer an insight into how imagination and madness, both of which involve losing touch with reality, might feel similar. Sorrell's story, like that of Apollo, would attract scepticism. He, however, is not a fearless god but an ordinary man who knows the risk he would take in insisting on the validity of things he cannot prove. Thus, individual experiences and choices are shown to be contained and constrained by those of other people, and by social narratives. The idea that some stories either cannot or should not be told is brought to a peak in *Parade's End.*

What emerges clearly in Ford's Edwardian era writing is the sense of madness as relational. The notion of it as located within an individual is more muted, and the question of whether people help or hinder those they see as out of step with material realities comes to the fore. For instance, it is unclear whether Sorrell benefitted from the radical surgery he underwent, or indeed if he has fully recovered. In contrast, Bransdon in *The Simple Life Limited* is unequivocal about how his recovery

[3] Gasiorek, 'In the Mirror of the Arts', pp. 204-05, discussed in Chapter 1.

from breakdown was impeded by the actions of others. Whilst no-one in these novels succumbs fully to the fate of Brede, there is a sense in which Sorrell has been silenced, and Bransdon's depression has been overlooked or minimised, carrying echoes of how Ford felt he had been failed during his own breakdown. The 'Just Possible' novels are woven through with questions about the difficulties and risks for imaginative people in a society which privileges rationalism. The very fine membrane between what is considered imaginative and healthy, and what is delusional and problematic, shaped Ford's ongoing inquiry into madness at least until the war.

There are biographical reasons which may have influenced his ongoing preoccupation with madness, discussed shortly, but these do not outweigh the literary ones. Whilst his personal concern may have been with, as Freud found, 'how faint the line of demarcation was between the normal and the neurotic person', it was also an issue intimately connected to the nature of fiction, the role of imagination and Ford's concept of the artist.[4] This introduces another element to the constructionist approach in that whilst Ford's characters clearly frame madness according to societal norms, they prove to be just as bounded by narrative.

One way in which Ford explores this is through the stories his characters create for themselves. It is a feature present in *A Call*, which lacks the overtly provocative propositions of *Mr. Apollo*, but still requires readers to accept decisions and behaviours which appear irrational or implausible: that Grimshaw would marry off the woman he loved to a friend; that Katya would resist marriage to Grimshaw for an obscure principle; or that Leicester was cured by faith healing. Any of these everyday actions might be considered madnesses but go unchallenged. The discussion of *A Call* highlights how, denied a key fact, Leicester's imagination takes over and creates its own story, but the

[4] A. A. Brill, 'Introduction' to Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), p. v.

same observation can be made of Grimshaw who makes up what happened between Leicester and Etta. Some stories appear to make people mad. Others do not.

Ford's depiction of how people might story their lives reaches its apogee in *The Good Soldier*. Dowell is Ford's best illustration of how stories are not just created, independently, in someone's mind, but are part of the cultural milieu in which people exist. His allusions to other novels, and to characters behaving as if they were part of those novels, are a way of showing how one person's madness can also be everyone's madness. The madness of requiring people to suppress emotion, to maintain decorous pretences, to settle for less than they want in life, is how Ford illustrates that some forms of madness are socially sanctioned. The obvious casualties of this are Florence, Edward and Nancy but Dowell is too, not only because he illustrates the danger to mental health when illusions are stripped away but because, ultimately, he cannot write a different story than that which society will support. That is why there was no other ending for his characters. His story is one which co-joins readers. *The Good Soldier* is Ford's most powerful exploration of madness precisely because it offers vicarious experience. Simply to read it is to experience reality as evasive and, as critics have attested,[5] to analyse it is to feel destabilised. It is a novel which almost defies readers to retain the view that madness is something reserved for particular individuals or circumstances.

As *The Good Soldier* was the last novel Ford expected to write, it is interesting to take stock of what his legacy might have been had his inquiry into madness ended with its publication. By this point in his oeuvre Ford has shown that madness might be hard-wired into some people, that interpersonal factors are deeply relevant, and that societal strictures present more challenges for some people than for others. Though there is a trajectory to the ideas, they are increasingly presented in tandem. Keeping all three types of explanation in play captures the confused and contested state of medicine

[5] Colombino, for example, as discussed in the Introduction, section 1.5.

at the start of the twentieth century. It is also a form of refusal, an unwillingness to have human experience reduced to categories. This reflects Ford's claims that literature better captures the 'savour' of life than history with its claims to be factual and objective.[6] For 'history' read 'medicine' and it becomes clear that the literary undertone which underpins Ford's depictions of madness is purposeful. For instance, the focus on storying is to suggest that making up alternative realities is not mad, nor limited to authors, but a natural human tendency. This is important because many of the nested stories which permeate his plots are shown to be protective, but also dangerous. That danger increases when stories are shared and validated, something Sorrell, a publisher, instinctively understood but Dowell, whose writing confirmed the shattering of his world, did not. If Ford's inquiry up to this point ended on a question, it might have been whether it was always useful to put the contents of the mind into words, spoken or written.

Ford's 1916 experience of war, shell shock and consequent memory loss might have given sharper focus to the question, but it had emerged before the war. However, his first opportunity to give it expression was in his immediate post war novels. It is an idea integral to *Parade's End* which spans the time before and after the war, with the war itself given minimal and opaque exposure. There is minimal visible fighting on a battlefield, and instead, battles of words which bring people to the edge of their own rationality, and sometimes beyond, predominate. Precisely because very different types of character unearth less palatable parts of their psyche and lose control of their emotions, it is difficult to reject the idea that anyone, in certain circumstances, could find that out-of-control, delusional, mad part of themselves. As the central consciousness for much of the novel, Tietjens' mind is the testing ground for the effects of front-line war experience. The trenches are a crucible in which his mind, unleashed from his usual control, rearranges reality and illusion. Even as he knows his thoughts are irrational, he clings to them, but silently. Unlike McKechnie, who talks himself into an

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[6] Stang, Introduction to *A History of Our Own Times*, p. xx, discussed in Chapter 1.

asylum, Tietjens walks away from war and his pre-war life, but not unscathed. Like all the other characters in the novel whose minds have been destabilised by conflicts, personal or public, he is diminished by it. Indeed, by the end of the series, everyone is less than they were.

More definitively than in his pre-war novels Ford shows that mental suffering, like war, does not simply end but is carried with people. By leaving virtually no-one untouched, Ford suggests an endemic madness which lives on in society. It is no longer reserved to people who might be predisposed, or ill-advised in their friendships, but is pervasive and more systemic. Moreover, the unimaginable had happened, a war so terrible that had it been anticipated in a novel, it would have been dismissed as implausible. The comfortable wall between illusion and reality had been breached, and with it, past convictions about who or what was mad. Consider, for instance, the concept core to Scull's outline of how madness has been understood, that there is a common-sense reality which the mad do not share. If in wartime people come to accept as real things which were previously unthinkable, perhaps beyond the realm of reason, then the notion of some sound judgement which underpins 'common-sense' is destabilised. Two consequences follow: the issue resurfaces, of who decides where the line falls between sanity and madness; and the notion that madness is something other, reserved to specific individuals rather than being part of normal human existence, is undermined.

This is important because, as the late novels show, each period of human existence presents new challenges which can destabilise ordinary men and women. The 1930s offered Ford the lingering traces of war damage, the effects of the Great Depression, and the hard commerciality of the United States as contexts with which to work. The novels discussed in Chapter 7 show remarkable continuities with Ford's earlier treatment of madness. They act as a condensation of Ford's inquiry into madness, reflecting on and reprising the trajectory from personal to interpersonal to systemic explanations for why someone might be labelled mad. They better illustrate what might be termed

macro madnesses, in which whole populations collude to normalise destructive behaviours: alcoholism, killing, deception, and self-interested pragmatism. In doing so, they surface useful challenges to the notion that things existing only in the mind are not real, an idea core to the literary nature of Ford's theme of madness.

8.3 Main themes

Ford's devotion to his theme persisted for over forty years. It would be perverse to argue that biographical factors did not play a part in this. His 1904 breakdown appears never to have really left him. Saunders observes that Ford lived with the fear of recurrence and found the prospect of 'reliving' one of his breakdowns as 'appalling as the breakdown itself'.[7] His fear of recurrences was not misplaced. In early 1909 he 'approached the edge of a second breakdown',[8] and later that year Violet Hunt records that he 'talked of suicide' intermittently.[9] His war experiences led to successive breakdowns in July and September 1916 which left him doubting his sanity.[10] However 'appalling' it might have been to relive his breakdown, Ford could not have written the harrowing depictions in his fiction without his own experiences being conjured up, and he was still writing about his 1904 experiences in the 1930s. As discussed in Chapter 1, some critics, notably Moser, have argued for Ford's constant rewriting of madness as a form of therapy. It was also an act of courage, as Saunders underlines when he observes that *Return to Yesterday* was a 'demanding and dangerous book to write' because it summoned up 'spectres of despair and breakdown'.[11] Given the emotional effort involved, Ford must have had reason, beyond feeling compelled to ruminate on his life, to continually

[7] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 126.
[8] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 253.
[9] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume I*, p. 285.
[10] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 32.
[11] Saunders, *A Dual Life Volume II*, p. 382.

write about madness. The premise of this thesis is that the persistence of the theme of madness in Ford's novels is not fully explained by any cathartic or palliative advantages it may have afforded. It is communicative. As the discussion above illustrates, Ford's subjective sense of what it was important to put under the spotlight at different times creates ebbs and flows in that communication. However, three overarching themes are discernible: the connection between language and madness; the porousness between madness and, if not sanity, normality; and the unknowability of the mind. Together, they crystallise what Ford's novels have to say about madness.

Ford's language of madness was carefully chosen to capture the zeitgeist and to communicate to readers the society in which they participated. On this level, it acted as a form of code with contemporary readers, supporting the sense of familiarity created by recognizable characters. Therefore, when his novels show how language is used to make people mad, it implicates readers. It is an approach which hints to people of their culpability in labelling someone problematic, but also of their own vulnerability. Even the language they use to think about themselves could do damage. One key effect of Ford's approach to representing madness is to make language matter. It encourages a sensitivity to how some people become marginalised by it. Even twenty first century readers would find in the novels examples of carelessly used, damaging language which resonates uncomfortably with things they might have said, or thought, or heard. At a time when public figures are increasingly challenged about the language they use or refuse, and risk being 'cancelled', Ford's representations have currency.

This connects to the issue of talk and silence. It is notable that many of the 'mad' are observed to talk too much, or too excitedly, or make up stories about their existence. Attempts to communicate their distress are often avoided or used as part of the case against them. Once they are made mad their voices are suppressed or removed from the narrative. In effect, they are erased from the conversation. Characters as disparate as Edith in *The Shifting of the Fire*, Leicester in *A Call*, Sylvia in

Parade's End and Notterdam in *When the Wicked Man* suffer their dreads in silence, largely unsupported. Professional helpers, such as doctors, specialists and other therapists are generally presented at best as harmless but ineffective, and at worst as damaging. Where people are rescued from their madness it is generally by the love of an individual, such as Hollebone in *The Shifting of the Fire*, or Valentine in *Parade's End*. One effect of this is to suggest the deep loneliness of those experiencing mental distress, which itself magnifies their problems. This is the point of Tietjens telling Mrs. Wannop that he has a 'desperate need' to talk after two years of repressing the war incidents which had so disturbed him.[12] Again, in today's society, where bringing mental health issues out into the open is a dominant discourse, Ford's insightful analysis strikes a chord. His depictions can be read as call for compassion but, if this is so, it is complicated by the second of the sub-themes.

The reason this thesis is titled 'making up madness' is not because Ford denies it as a reality, but to capture the way his novels expose how madness is as much constructed by and with people, as it is an objective category. In Ford's unapologetically subjective approach to his subject, the line between fiction and life becomes inherently porous, and the line between what is real and illusory questionable. Many of his novels actively unsettle distinctions, for instance, between passion and irrationality, imaginative thinking and delusion, resistance to societal norms and living outside 'common-sense' realities. At the heart of this is the question Ford asked himself: whether a life writing fiction is one lived on the edge of insanity. When Mark Tietjens in *Parade's End* observes that making up stories can send someone a little 'dotty', he makes it a risk not only for a professional author like Ford, but for anyone who creates 'gossip'. Gossip, untrue tales masquerading as fact, equates to fiction. As shown, Ford's novels are riddled with stories made up by different characters. Some are shown to be protective, some dangerous, and others untellable. Ford's point seems to be that everyone tells stories, to themselves and to each other, consciously or otherwise. If believing

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[12] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up-*, p. 199.

things which are not real is mad, then everyone is potentially mad. The effect of Ford's destabilisation of what madness is, and who might be mad, is to dissolve the protective barrier which comes from seeing the mad as 'other' than the self. In this analysis, compassion from the sane to the struggling is less than straightforward.

Ford seems to both accept the fact that madness marginalises and places people apart, and to challenge the validity of this. This tension is not resolved but is at least illuminated by the final strand which runs through all his representations of madness. The sense that some things are unknowable is a motif in Ford's novels. It is not only Dowell who doesn't know. Clarges in *Mr. Apollo* is derided for wanting to know rather than holding an open mind. The doctor in the same novel admits to knowing absolutely nothing. Leicester knew nothing of the attitudes or complexities of the people around him. Tietjens, in contrast, knew everything, but must let go of the certainties of concrete knowledge to save his sanity. This relates, of course, to Ford's defence of the imagination against pure fact. However, it also connects to the way in which minds are made unknowable or inaccessible. Duchemin, Brede, Leicester, McKechnie, for the reasons previously discussed, become mentally inaccessible. Dowell's catatonic experience is only accessible through his retrospective account. Tietjens, constantly monitoring his mental functions, is forced to acknowledge that his mind works independently of him, in some mysterious 'subliminal' space. That mind space, unbidden, calculates the probability of being hit by a missile, suggests irrational protective forces, turns objects into people and vice versa, torments him with visions of O Nine Morgan and nightmares, but refuses to conjure up images of Valentine. This idea that the mind is less amenable to being understood and managed than was assumed is not war specific. It is woven through depictions of people deceiving themselves and overt instances of delusional reasoning such as that of Notterdam in *When the Wicked Man*. Against this is a society which reveres the rational and self-control, and a medical culture insistent on categorising and labelling states of mind. In Ford's representations of madness, losing control of one's thoughts is presented as intrinsic to the human experience. Whether it is

valuable or risky depends on degree. Tietjens' advice to McKechnie to avoid letting himself go to the point where he could not find his way back captures Ford's sense of madness as a slippery slope rather than a sharp edge. His representations of it reflect this, conveying a sense of it as more complex and ungraspable than people might be willing to admit.

This might imply that engaging with Ford's world of madness offers the same kind of confrontation with the self that it took for him to write it. Indeed, Philip Davis argues that 'anyone who really admires Ford primarily does so because he or she has been or is in serious mental trouble' and inner confusion.[13] It is undoubtedly true of some readers, but this does not mean that those who have not felt at their own edge cannot identify with Ford's version of madness. He depicts madness as so varied and so ordinary as to normalise it. Ultimately, this is what Ford shows: a world where madness is woven into the fabric of life, and that everyone is susceptible to it, something better understood today than in his lifetime. The resonances between his sense of madness in 'his' times with public discourse in 'our' times, supports Ford's claim that his methods can help readers to see 'such truths as are universal'.[14] The context changes, understanding of the factors involved changes, but the ability of madness to strike individuals, groups or whole populations remains, as does its essential unknowability.

8.4 Reflections and Further Research

This thesis carries its own subjectivity, shaped by its focus on reading the novels primarily through the lens of madness. What it offers, for the first time, is a coherent argument about the development of

[13] Philip Davies, 'Ford's Anaesthetic', in *Ford Madox Ford: Special Double Issue Including Two Hitherto Unpublished Pieces: 'Pure Literature' and 'In the Sick Room'*, Agenda, Vol. 27 No. 4/Vol. 28 No. 1 (London: Agenda and Editions Charitable Trust, 1989/90), p. 35.
[14] Ibid.

the theme and what it signifies across the oeuvre. It provides a benchmark of readings, chronologically organised, against which other works by Ford could be calibrated. For instance, *An English Girl* (1907) lends itself to comparison with *The Benefactor* for its treatment of heritable madness, or with *The Rash Act* and *Henry for Hugh* for their treatments of different national psychologies. Similarly, the readings of novels could be used in comparative studies with Ford's peers. The thesis has been necessarily selective, so limitations arise from the questions not considered. For instance, do Ford's historical novels treat madness in the same way? Are they, or can they be, as true to the period and its conceptions of madness as his contemporary novels? The issue of intersectionality with other themes in Ford's work is only lightly treated. For example, would the readings of specific novels or periods change if class factors were introduced? There are also opportunities. For instance, the thesis only briefly considers Ford's depictions of doctors, specialists and other healers but there is sufficient material to make a case for a more detailed study either from a Literature or a Medical Humanities perspective. Such questions illustrate that madness is a rich vein in Ford's novels. This thesis may only have tapped into its possibilities, but it opens out a different way of approaching the theme and provides a framework which can scaffold future research.

9 APPENDIX: ANALYSIS OF WORD USAGE IN FORD'S NOVELS

This was a very early piece of research conducted, somewhat optimistically, in the hope that it would not only surface Ford's habitual word usage in relation to madness but suggest novels which would repay close reading. As discussed in the thesis Introduction, the more interesting outcome was that it revealed intriguing patterns of word usage which signalled broader issues worth attention. This appendix is an excerpt from that analysis designed to show the data underpinning the summary given in the Introduction to the thesis. However, it has been left largely as it was when first written to illustrate how quantitative analysis primed some of the questions and thinking which emerged as close readings of specific novels progressed.

An initial search focused on the words 'mad, 'madness', 'insane' and 'insanity'.[1] The results are shown in Table 1 below.

[1] This was done using the software programme *Antconc* <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/>, and the *Delphi Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford* (2013, Version 2).

Table 1: References to madness and insanity in Ford Madox Ford's Novels

Number of occurrences of words found in the Delphi Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford (2013, Version 2)

Novel	Year	madness	mad	insane/ insanity
THE SHIFTING OF THE FIRE	1892	2	12	-
THE INHERITORS	1901	7	8	-
ROMANCE	1904	8	24	3
THE BENEFACTOR	1905	1	10	1
THE FIFTH QUEEN	1906	2	13	2
THE PRIVY SEAL	1907	9	11	-
AN ENGLISH GIRL	1907	1	5	-
THE FIFTH QUEEN CROWNED	1908	3	7	-
MR. APOLLO	1908	-	4	1
THE NATURE OF A CRIME	1909	2	8	1
A CALL	1910	3	17	2
THE PORTRAIT	1910	2	7	1
THE 'HALF MOON'	1911	6	37	-
THE SIMPLE LIFE LIMITED	1911	-	11	1
LADIES WHOSE BRIGHT EYES	1911	3	9	-
THE PANEL	1912	1	8	-
THE NEW HUMPTY-DUMPTY	1912	3	21	-
MR. FLEIGHT	1913	1	7	3
THE YOUNG LOVELL	1913	1	1	-
THE GOOD SOLDIER	1915	14	17	1
THE MARSDEN CASE	1923	2	21	-
SOME DO NOT…	1924	3	3	2
NO MORE PARADES	1925	5	18	-
A MAN COULD STAND UP	1926	2	44	-
LAST POST	1928	3	13	2
A LITTLE LESS THAN GODS	1928	2	12	3
NO ENEMY	1929	2	4	-
WHEN THE WICKED MAN	1931	7	16	-
THE RASH ACT	1933	5	14	-
HENRY FOR HUGH	1934	2	12	5
VIVE LE ROY	1935	2	18	2

The table illustrates how pervasive the use of this terminology is across Ford's novels.[2] No novel omits a reference to 'madness' or 'mad' and usually they include both. Exceptions are *Mr. Apollo* and *The Simple Life Limited*, where only 'mad' is used, but both use it multiple times. Fifteen novels include the use of the word 'insane / insanity', but of these, six use it only once and there are no instances of a novel which uses the word 'insanity' but not 'madness' suggesting that Ford may have seen the first as a subset of the second.

However, as there are many synonyms for 'mad' and 'insane', further analysis might reveal the results in Table 1 to be an underestimate. Accordingly, the second step was to identify as many synonyms as possible. An initial online search provided a first list.[3] This was supplemented by a search on contemporary thesauri.[4.] In parallel, a sample of nine novels selected across the span of Ford's career were reviewed for language characteristic of him. From these combined lists, a composite list of words was created. It became apparent that, in addition to colloquial synonyms, that Ford used language which was either more precise, or reflected the ways in which madness had historically been framed. A set of clusters of associated words emerged, so the composite set was collated into five categories: synonyms, conditions and states, psychotherapy, cures, and supernatural. Closer examination of these reveals patterns and shifts in language use. A summary of these findings is discussed below. In order to make the analysis manageable, the summary comments mainly on words which occur 10 or more times.

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[2] Children's novels have been excluded from this overview because they address a different audience, but it is interesting to note that both *The Brown Owl* and *The Queen Who Flew* reference the term 'mad', though in the latter case only once.

[3] The search was conducted on <www.thesaurus.com/browse/mad> [accessed 3 November 2016].

[4] Roget P. M. and Roget J. L., *Roget's Thesaurus* (London: Longman Green and Co, 1894); C. O. Sylvester Mawson and P. M. Roget, *Roget's Thesaurus* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell, 1911); and C. O. Sylvester Mawson and P. M. Roget, *Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language in dictionary form* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936) – all accessed via archive.org on 17 September 2018. Some words from the thesaurus search were omitted because they could be used in a wide range of circumstances. Examples include distracted, imprudent, frenetic and illogical. Other words from the thesaurus, such as 'mental', were broken into finer categories reflecting Ford's own language. For instance, mental affliction, mental aberration and mental pressure.

9.1 Synonyms for madness

Ford regularly used a wide range of words and phrases which substitute for 'mad'. They are used with different frequencies and sometimes in different periods of time.

The most commonly used term is 'lunatic' with 55 occurrences. Initially used in *Romance (1904)* and *The Benefactor (1905)*, it does not reappear until *The Simple Life Limited (1911).* From 1923 it features in every novel except *No Enemy* but with the greatest concentration in *Parade's End*. Of the 55 instances, 10 are references to lunatic asylums and occur across 6 novels from 1911 to 1931. Of these, several are similes which liken someone's situation to being in an asylum. Of the others, the majority refer to two characters in *Parade's End* who are admitted to asylums.

The next highest scoring phrase was 'out of his/her mind' which is used 38 times and has a different pattern of usage. It is more often used in relation to men, with 24 references, and occurs from *The Shifting of the Fire* onwards but with more consistent use from *The Good Soldier* in 1915. However, the phrase is most frequently used in the *Parade's End* tetralogy with all four novels using it and both *Some Do Not* and *No More Parades* having three references each. In the former the references are female and in the latter male. A sustained usage within a novel or novel series is perhaps a cue to read with it in mind. It raises the question of how Ford depicts mental states and different kinds of mind in *Parade's End.*

Sometimes attention is attracted by words appearing unexpectedly, such as 'imbecility'. It is unexpected from a writer renowned for sensitivity if read with today's pejorative connotations. Imbecility is used 28 times, from *Romance (1905)* onwards, consistently between *Mr. Apollo (1908)* and *No More Parades (1925),* and later from *When the Wicked Man (1931)* onwards. It is questionable whether the word would have been used in the same way, or carried consistent associations, over a period spanning thirty years. Similarly, some words highlight the need to uncover

the social context in which they were used. Words such as 'dotty' tend to have clusters of usage suggesting perhaps that they were in vogue for a time.[5] It was used once, for the first time, in *The Panel (1912)* and then all other occurrences are within the *Parade's End* series; two in *No More Parades,* eleven in *A Man Could Stand Up-* and three in *Last Post.* Quantitative analysis thus functions as an alert to examine the usage of a word over time and to uncover its meaning in context.

This commentary is based on examining synonyms which occurred on more than ten occasions, but it is worth noting that some less frequently scoring words are used intensively within specific novels. The word 'moron' is first used in 1933 in *The Rash Act* where it occurs nine times and then recurs five times in the following two novels. This again supports the notion of fashion in word usage, but indicates the importance of considering words within, not only across, novels. Other synonyms which did not achieve the minimum number of 10 occurrences are worth noting as an illustration of the richness of Ford's language of madness. People are referred to as 'broken down', 'at the end of his/her tether', 'over the edge', or said to have 'lost his or her reason, or head'. They might be deranged, demented, cuckoo, unsound, barmy, unhinged, loony or cracky.

Where usage of words and phrases is low, they might be less significant prompts for further exploration, but a difference picture emerges when a commonly recurring word is shown in combination with less used ones. The best example of this is 'mental'. People in Ford's novels are described as 'mentally injured', in 'mental agony', or suffering from 'mental deterioration', 'mental weakness' or 'mental strain'. They are 'mentally afflicted', 'mentally dimmed', 'mentally impotent' or simply 'mentally affected'. People have 'mental oppressions', are 'mentally shaken', have 'mental worries' or 'mental distress' and many have 'mental troubles'. If any single phrase is taken, the

[5] 'Dotty' was not a word listed in any of the contemporary thesauri. It may have been an American import, or, more likely, a word Ford acquired from another writer. For instance, Vol 4, No. 15 of the English Review, published in February 1910 contains a one act play called *The Love Child* in which a character says 'You're gone dotty, ain't 'y?'

occurrence of usage is often no more than 5, but for the set as a whole there are 58 instances. They occur in 17 of the 31 novels, and from Ford's first to his last adult novel. They occur most frequently in *The Marsden Case, Parade's End, The Rash Act* and *Vive Le Roy.* This consistent language use hints that Ford sought precision and differentiation in his representations.

Whilst Ford's use of synonyms shows the breadth of his engagement with the theme of madness, his use of more precise language shows the depth. The following section illustrates this.

9.2 Conditions and States of Madness

Ford frequently uses language about madness which can loosely be considered diagnostic or medical, in that it focuses on conditions or states. For instance, there are references to nerves, depression, mania, and defective brains.

It is remarkable how many of Ford's characters are afflicted with 'nerves'. From *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) onwards, there are 92 references to 'nerves'. They are referenced through the whole period and most novels have more than one. Only 6 novels include no reference: *The Fifth Queen, The Privy Seal, The Nature of a Crime, The 'Half Moon', The Simple Life Limited* and *The Young Lovell.* However, if the closely related word 'anxiety' is searched, then the picture changes slightly. Only *The Privy Seal, The Nature of a Crime and The Young Lovell* refer to neither. In total, there are 77 references to anxiety across the span of novels, with the highest count in Ford's final novel, *Vive Le Roy.*

Equally notable is the fact that although many people seem to suffer with nerves, the number who succumb to a breakdown is quite small. There are only 13 references to 'nervous breakdown' and half of these fall within the *Parade's End* tetralogy. There are three references in *No More Parades,* two in *A Man Could Stand Up-* and one in *Last Post.* Of the others, a further three are in *The Marsden Case*

(1923), though the earliest reference is in *The Benefactor (1905)* and both *The Call (1910)* and *Mr. Fleight* (1913) include instances. Notably, after *Parade's End,* there is only one further reference in *The Rash Act* (1933).

Although Ford never uses the word 'neurosis', people are referred to as 'neurotic' four times. The word is used twice in *The Benefactor* (1905) and once each in *The Call* (1910) and *Mr. Fleight* (1913). Other, more specific terms seem to cluster later. So, for instance, the term 'neurasthenia' is used only three times, in *The Marsden Case* (1923) and *Some Do Not…* (1924).

Though not as pervasive as nervous ailments, 'mania' is another condition referred to frequently. There are 43 references, from *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) onwards. There are occurrences of it in 16 novels but it is most often used in the period from 1912 in *The New Humpty Dumpty,* to 1926 with *A Man Could Stand Up-*. *The Marsden Case* contains seven references and *A Man Could Stand Up-* has five.

Again, Ford sharpens his representations by referencing specific forms of mania. 'Monomania' is used five times, initially in *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) and *Romance* in 1904 but then not again until *Mr Fleight* (1913) and finally in *A Man Could Stand Up-* (1926). It is sparingly used but with some longevity. 'Dipsomania', on the other hand, does not occur until 1923 when there are three occurrences in *The Marsden Case.* There are two further mentions in *A Man Could Stand Up-* and it is used for the final time in *Henry for Hugh* (1934). However, Ford uses the term 'delirium tremens' as early as in 1911, in *The Simple Life Limited.* Though the term 'dipsomania' had been in use since 1819, the issue of whether or not heavy drinking was a disease or simply reflected lack of control, was a

contested one.[6] Ford's shift to the medically recognised term appears indicative of growing acceptance, especially as *The Marsden Case* was written at the time of prohibition in the USA.

Surprisingly, 'hysteria' is used much less frequently with only three occurrences, two before 1913 in *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) and *Mr. Fleight* (1913) and then not until *Vive Le Roy* in 1935. There are also five instances of 'histrionic' showing a similar pattern. It is used both in *The Shifting of the Fire* and in *The Portrait* (1910) and then not until *When the Wicked Man* (1931) and *Vive Le Roy* (1935). As Elaine Showalter has shown, hysteria was a diagnosis largely applied to women.[7] The analysis has already revealed that Ford more often referred to men than to women as being 'out of their minds'. At a surface level, these combined findings suggested a need to pay attention to whether women are overlooked in Ford's representations of madness. The value of the numbers is in raising, rather than answering questions.

If manias represent heightened or intense mental and emotional states, then at the other end of the continuum lies depression or melancholy.[8] Ford's characters seem to experience forms of both. Depression is mentioned 38 times, initially in *The Inheritors* (1901) and as late as *Henry for Hugh* in 1934. Novels published between 1906 and 1909 do not contain a reference to depression, but two have references to melancholy. Though most of the thirteen novels which include the term depression have between one and three references, some have a notably higher number. For instance, *The New Humpty Dumpty* (1912) contains eight, *When the Wicked Man* (1931) has six*, No More Parades* (1925) has five and *The Marsden Case* (1923) four. The word 'melancholy' is also

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[6] The term dipsomania was first used in 1819, and was sometimes in use in the late nineteenth century by Freud (1897) and other psychoanalysts. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/psychology/psychology-and-psychiatry/dipsomania> [accessed 9 October 2018]. Delerium tremens, a physical effect of withdrawal from heavy drinking, was a condition described since the 1700s but only in 1813 was it first called by this name <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/delirium-tremens> [accessed 9 October 2018].

[7] Showalter, *The Female Malady.*

[8] Andrew Scull in *Madness in Civilization,* p. 94, traces this opposition back to *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Oxford academic and divine Robert Burton, in which he distinguishes it from the 'other major form of madness' mania.

mentioned 38 times but is spread thinly across nineteen novels with only two having significant numbers: *The 'Half Moon'* (1911) has seven and *Romance* (1904) has four*. The Shifting of the Fire* (1892) and *The Portrait* (1910) both contain references to the 'vapours', often associated with low spirits. It might be that Ford used the terms interchangeably.

Those novels which contain a reference to neither depression or melancholy are *Mr. Apollo (1908), The Nature of a Crime* (1909), *The Good Soldier* (1915), *No Enemy* (1929) *and Last Post* (1928). On this basis, *The Good Soldier* might be deemed a poor option for further analysis, yet it contains harrowing representations of characters in different states of depression. This highlights a key limitation of the quantitative approach. Just as thematic approaches risk missing patterns which emerge from numbers, so numerical counts risk missing representations which require a reading into rather than a literal reading of words.

Another limitation applies to the use of language taken from specialist discourse. Just as everyday language shifts in meaning over time, so do specific terms. A good example might be the word 'degeneracy', which carried specific meanings in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[9] It feels significant, therefore, that the word 'degenerate' occurs frequently in Ford's work. There are 22 occurrences from *The Inheritors* (1901) onwards, across 12 novels, with a key cluster from 1911 to 1912. In the first cluster, *The Simple Life Limited* (1911) has three instances*, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911) four*, The Panel* (1912) has four and *The New Humpty Dumpty* (1912) has one. Both *The Marsden Case* (1923) and parts of the *Parade's End* Tetralogy mention it, and Ford continues to use it as late as the 1930s in *The Rash Act* (1933) *and Vive Le Roy* (1935). As degeneracy was often connected to theories about brain deficiency,[10] Ford's references to brain lesions, though minimal are

[9] Bénédict-Augustin Morel's *Treatise on the Intellectual, Moral and Physical Degeneracy of the Human Race* (1857) spread through Europe and North America. Key to his ideology was that madness was a product of degeneration and decay, and so mad people were biologically inferior.
[10] Scull, *Madness in Civilization,* p. 244.

worthy of note. They are referenced just before the 1911/2 period, specifically in *The Call* (1910) and then later in both *No More Parades* (1925) and *Last Post* (1928).

Other, minimally used words, hint at the knowledge Ford had of his topic and the ways in which madness might manifest. For instance, there are nine references to 'epileptic' episodes, three uses of 'dyspepsia' and the same number of 'demented'. The term 'shell shock' is used ten times, always in the *Parade's End* tetralogy which deals directly with the First World War, when the term originated.[11]

In adopting these specific kinds of language Ford does two things. Firstly, he moves from layman's synonyms and general categories like 'nerves' to words which are less easy to read as commonplace. Secondly, he draws attention to the fact that he is not representing madness in a monolithic or simple way. The suggested pattern here might be that Ford's use of certain terms reflects the point at which new theories came into public discourse.

9.3 Ford and the language of psychotherapy

There is some evidence to suggest that this was the case with terms which appear to reflect psychotherapeutic approaches. These approaches represented a shift from the belief that mental diseases were physically located, and from the brain to the mind.[12] As with other medical approaches this was a contested area with a range of theories circulating, of which Freud's psychoanalytic approach was one.[13] By searching for words commonly associated with the theory and practice of psychotherapy, it was possible to uncover some interesting patterns in Ford's novels.

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[11] Elaine Showalter, in *The Female Malady,* p. 68, cites a 1915 article by Dr Charles Myers in *The Lancet* first used the term 'shell-shock' to describe soldiers who suffered mental breakdown after explosions.
[12] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain*, p. xiv.
[13] Kuhn locates discussion of Freud's theories in the British Medical Journal as early as 1905, and suggests some parts were in practice by 1908, alongside theories and practice of other bodies such as The London Psychotherapeutic Clinic and The Society for Psychical Research.

The word 'psychotherapeutic' itself is used only once, in *The Marsden Case* (1923) and indeed it is this novel which makes most consistent use of related concepts. More widely explored is the concept of the mind. The use of the 'conscious mind' is used eight times across six novels between 1915, in *The Good Soldier* and 1933 in *The Rash Act.*

A range of other terms including 'subconscious self', 'under self', 'unconscious self', 'under mind' and 'under self' all appear to be distinctions which could fit with psychotherapeutic distinctions, but equally might reflect earlier theories, such as those of Frederick Myers, a leading figure in The Society for Psychical Research with which Ford had some connections. These words do not occur in high numbers and only after 1915. *The Good Soldier* (1915) is the first novel to use ideas of a conscious mind and an unconscious self.[14] *The Marsden Case,* eight years later, adds to these 'subconscious self' and 'under self' and in *Some Do Not…* (1924) the word 'under mind' is used.

Words more directly related to psychoanalytic thinking, such as 'phobia' and 'repressed', occur in *The Marsden Case* (1923). Phobias are also mentioned in *Some Do Not…* (1924) and people are said to be repressed in *Some Do Not…* and *No More Parades* (1925). Repressed, in fact, is one word which does appear in Ford's earlier writing, in both *Romance* and *The English Girl* but this does not mean that it necessarily carries the same resonance. Peculiar to *The Marsden Case* is the use of 'auto-suggestion', a form of therapeutic intervention. Of the 17 uses of the word 'complexes', ten are found in *The Marsden Case.* The others occur in two other specific novel sequences. There is a reference to it in the first book of the *Parades End* series, *Some Do Not…* (1924) and four more in *No More Parades* (1925). There is also one reference in *the Rash Act* (1933) and in its sequel, *Henry for Hugh* (1934).

[14] One biography of Freud states that 'In 1909, he was invited to give a series of lectures in the United States. It was after these visits and the publication of his 1916 book, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, that his fame grew exponentially'. <http://www.biography.com/people/sigmund-freud-9302400#lasting-legacy> [accessed 6 March 2017]. This seems to coincide roughly with Ford's take up of the ideas.

Freud is specifically referenced in *The Marsden Case,* (1923) in *Some Do Not…* (1924) and in *Vive Le Roy* (1935). However, there are other potential sources on which Ford may have drawn. For example, Ford uses 'telepathic' three times: in *A Call* (1910), in *The Marsden Case* (1923) and in *A Little Less Than Gods* (1928). Philip Kuhn identifies an extract from an 1892 paper by Frederick Myers describing his investigations into clairvoyance, telepathy and hypnotism.[15] Kuhn suggests that this work led Myers to conclude that there was a consciousness below the surface of the 'ordinary working life' which he called 'subliminal'. Support for the idea that Ford drew on these ideas lies in his use of the term 'subliminal self', in both *The Marsden Case* and *Some Do Not…*

Of course, whether Ford was engaging with the precise ideas of any author as written is very uncertain. What this analysis suggests, however, is that he was accessing and using new ideas as they came into discussion. Psychotherapeutic approaches, of course, were not only theoretical concepts but the basis for treatments. Ford's reference to 'auto suggestion' in *The Marsden Case* hints at this. It was not his only reference to what might be termed a 'cure' for madness.

9.4 'Cures' for madness

Given the high volume of references to problems with 'nerves', it is telling that there are only two references specifically to a 'nerve cure'. These occur in *A Call* (1910) and in *The Marsden Case* (1923), both novels which also feature characters promoting psychotherapeutic techniques. *The Call* also contains the only mention of a 'hydropathic' cure and *The Marsden Case* the only reference to a 'cold water cure'.[16]

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[15] Kuhn, *Psychoanalysis in Britain,* p. 17.
[16] Ford had himself been treated in hydropathic establishments in Germany after his 1904 breakdown. His account of these, in *Return to Yesterday*, makes clear he found the treatments ineffective and refers to one establishment as 'the most horrible of all the monstrous institutions that had tortured me' (p. 203).

There are 17 references to people being 'trepanned'.[17] It is a term first used in *The Inheritors* in 1901, and as late as *Vive le Roy* (1935) which has four references, and it occurs in both *The Marsden Case* (1923) and *Some Do Not…* (1924). However, even a cursory glance suggests that the term is being used to suggest that someone was forced to an action or position. The only book in which it used to clearly describe actual treatment is *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911) which includes three references.

Much more frequently mentioned as a treatment is the use of 'bromides' which occurs 13 times. It first appears in *An English Girl* in 1907 and occurs last in *The Rash Act* in 1933. It is most often used, however, in the *Parade's End* series with both *A Man Could Stand Up*-(1926) and *Last Post* (1928) including three occurrences each.

The range of 'cures' on offer and the much slighter volume of references compared to the number of ailments is notable in itself. When the highest scoring word in use is 'asylum', with 26 references, it is striking. There are two mentions in *The Inheritors* in 1901 and four in *The Benefactor* in 1905 and then the word is not used again until *The Simple Life Limited* (1911) which contains five references. After that, it is frequently used, with the final reference falling in *The Rash Act* in 1933. It features in each of the *Parade's End* novels except *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926). It does not appear at all in *The Good Soldier* (1915). However, as previously stated, few characters are admitted to asylums. The light touch use of words indicating cures appears to hint at limitations in medical responses to madness.

Ford's language sometimes also hints at a very different view of madness, one which is not necessarily problematic. He also makes extensive use of language which suggests a connection between madness and the supernatural, potentially removing madness from the realms of illness.

[17] Trepanning is the boring of a hole into the scull. Its use can be traced back to prehistoric terms. It 'has been used to treat health problems associated with intracranial diseases, epileptic seizures, migraines and mental disorders by relieving pressure'. <http://www.ancient.eu/Trephination/> [accessed 7 March 2017].

9.5 Supernatural language

There are 104 references to people being 'possessed', across 27 novels, from the first to the last, although many of these uses are casual rather than denoting the supernatural. The four which do not use the word are *The Inheritors, The Privy Seal, The Fifth Queen Crowned* and *The Nature of the Crime.* Only close reading would confirm which references relate to spiritual possession. However, combinations of words suggest that some might be such references. For instance, there are 22 references to 'demons' and 31 to 'Satan' or 'Satanic'. In *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes,* which uses 'possessed' seven times, there is a reference to 'Satan'. Conversely, *The 'Half Moon'* has only one reference to 'possessed' but three to Satan and seven to demons. The volume of word usage, therefore, may be less indicative than the combinations of words.

Overall, there are 86 references to witches or witchcraft, and 10 to being 'bewitched'. Some, of course, would believe witches to be the handmaidens of Satan, so the two concepts might be linked. *The 'Half Moon'* certainly seems to conform to this idea, with 28 references to witches and three to 'bewitched'. It also contains nine references to 'spells' and eight to 'sorcery' but mentions 'god' only three times. *The Young Lovell,* on the other hand, presents a more balanced use of words. It contains the highest number of references to witches, at 41, refers to 'sorcery' 21 times and to Satan nine times and 'demons' six times. However, it also refers to 'god' nine times and 'goddess' ten times.

There is clearly a theme of the supernatural within Ford's choice of language across the novels, because 'magic' appears 39 times, and 'sorcery' 32, with 'spells' and the' black arts' also referenced. There are 95 references to Gods, in 21 novels, including Ford's first and final novels. There are 16 references to 'visions', 14 to 'prophecy' and eight to 'visitations'. Again, these are not contained to specific books but are spread across a range of different genres and at different times. It is not unusual to find references to both in the same novel.

The prevalence of these types of references in novels such as *The 'Half Moon'*, *The Young Lovell, Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* and *Mr Apollo* suggest that they might need to be considered as a cluster to examine whether there is thematic relevance.

The analysis illustrates that the theme of madness in Ford's novels is highly prevalent but not straightforward. Only through further thematic analysis and/or close reading is it possible to uncover the meaning of the patterns.

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