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| **Ford, Ford Madox (1873-1939)** |
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| Ford Madox Ford was a British author of German ancestry (he was born Ford Hermann Hueffer), a novelist, poet, editor, critic, biographer and memoirist. Under his editorship (1908-9) the *English Review* journal was an influential organ of early modernism, although a commercial failure. He is perhaps best known for *The Good Soldier* (1915), a classic tale of unreliable narration and psychological intrigue. Ford served in the Great War, and his masterful *Parade’s End* tetralogy (1924-8) draws on this experience as he develops the modernist techniques and metaphors used in *The Good Soldier* to rethink the conflict. Ford continued to write novels, literary criticism and history, travel literature and memoirs until the end of his life. He died in northern France in 1939. |
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Timeline 1891 1915 1924 1939  First book Publication of Founds and edits Dies in  Published *The Good Soldier* *transatlantic review* northern France  | | | | | | |  1908-9 1915-18 1924-8  Founds and edits Serves in Publication of  *English Review*  The Great War *Parade’s End*  File: Ford1.jpg  Figure 1 Ford Madox Ford  Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/47/Fordmadoxford.jpg  Ford Hermann Hueffer was born near London in late 1873, the son of Franz Hüffer, a German musicologist, and Catherine, the daughter of the painter Ford Madox Brown. Ford grew up among the Pre-Raphaelites and their circle, and lived with Madox Brown after his father’s death. He later took the middle name Madox in appreciation; he was known as Ford Madox Hueffer until 1919, when he became Ford Madox Ford. He was first published at the age of seventeen, and was prolific throughout his life: he wrote nearly eighty books in total. His early career was a treadmill of writing to live, as the disapproving father of his first wife Elsie Martindale feared. They eloped to marry in 1894, and settled on the south coast of England. Ford became friendly with Joseph Conrad and they collaborated on *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1903), but neither was a commercial success.  Ford was increasingly prominent in London’s literary network in the early years of the twentieth century. The trilogies *England and the English* (1905-7), a commentary on national identity, and *The Fifth Queen* (1906-8), about Katharine Howard and Henry VII, helped make his name. He founded and edited the *English Review* in 1908, a journal in which authors such as D.H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis were first published, often alongside older contemporaries such as Conrad and H.G. Wells and established figures such as Henry James and Thomas Hardy. Ford’s carelessness with money soon led to his replacement as editor, but in his brief stewardship the periodical was influential in shaping the developing modernist agenda.  *The Good Soldier* (1915) is an exemplary modernist novel; its first part was published in *Blast!* before the outbreak of war. The unreliable narrator John Dowell unravels the sexual complexities of the two couples at the centre of the novel, and the narrative shifts in time as he pieces together information. The novel is perhaps a response to his own marital travails: he was estranged from Elsie in the previous decade, and was in the nineteen tens living with the novelist Violet Hunt, which arrangement attracted press comment and a resulting libel action from his previous spouse.  Ford joined the army in 1915. He was concussed by a shell blast during the Battle of the Somme, and was posted on his recovery to Ypres, where he again became ill. He returned to the front, but was invalided to home service in 1917. He met on leave Esther ‘Stella’ Bowen, an Australian painter, who supplanted Hunt in his affections and with whom he set up home following the war. They moved to Paris in 1923, where he founded the *transatlantic review* (1924), a new journal which published James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Jean Rhys, with whom Ford had an affair.  File: Ford2.gif  Figure 2 Ford in uniform  Source: http://www.acenturyback.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ford-madox-ford-in-uniform.gif  Ford began his magisterial *Parade’s End* tetralogy in 1922, and the four volumes were published between 1924 and 1928 to some acclaim. The series focuses on the polymath protagonist Christopher Tietjens; it shows the unstable pre-war world which led to the war alongside combatant experience, and individual and collective efforts at recovery. Ford refines his use of modernist techniques, and uses the time shift and multiple streams of consciousness, with his characteristic ellipses, to draw attention to the mental disorientation caused by the war.  Ford’s later life was spent between the US and France with his final partner, the painter Janice Biala. He continued to write novels, and also wrote several volumes of travel writing, reminiscence, and literary criticism. Ford’s financial and physical health declined in his last decade, and he died in Deauville, France, in June 1939. Selected works by Ford *England and the English* (1905-7): *The Soul of London* (1905), *The Heart of the Country* (1906), *The Spirit of the People* (1907)  *The Fifth Queen* (1906-8): *The Fifth Queen* (1906), *Privy Seal* (1907), *The Fifth Queen Crowded* (1908)  *The English Review* (editor, 1908-9)  *The Good Soldier* (1915)  *the transatlantic review* (editor, 1924)  *Parade’s End* (1924-8): *Some Do Not…* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up—* (1926), *Last Post* (1928)  *The Rash Act* (1933) |
| Further reading:  (Mizener)  (Saunders) |