THE GOOD SOLDIER

FORD MADOX FORD

EDITED BY MARTIN STANNARD

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

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Ford Madox Ford
THE GOOD SOLDIER

AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
TEXTUAL APPENDICES
CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS
LITERARY IMPRESSIONISM
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL
COMMENTARY

Edited by

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Preface

When *The Good Soldier* appeared in March 1915, reviews were sparse and mixed. True, the *New York Times Book Review* described it as "a novel which extorts admiration," the *Observer* found it "absorbing," and Rebecca West lauded its "extreme beauty and wisdom." But others, while admiring its artistry, objected on the grounds that it failed the requirements of realism: "Captain Ashburnham . . . is described to us as a typical specimen of the best kind of Englishman. . . . It is therefore inconceivable that he should have behaved as . . . Mr. Hueffer[1] tells us he did behave." Many simply damned the "distorted, sex-morbid atmosphere" as the work of "an unpleasant imagination." It was seen as "long-winded and prosy" with a grossly misconceived title reflecting "the cant of anti-militarism," as of more use to the pathologist than to the decent British reader in search of an account of the "joys and sorrows of normal human life."[2]

Since then critical opinion has shifted radically to establish the book not only as Ford's masterpiece but also as a masterpiece of modernism. Graham Greene's 1962 compilation of selected Ford works was an act of homage to a genius overshadowed by his contemporaries—contemporaries Ford had often actively assisted: Conrad, Lawrence, Frost, Crane, Wyndham Lewis, Pound, H. D., Hemingway. *The Good Soldier*, Greene insisted, is "perhaps one of the finest novels of our century,"[3] and few would now disagree. This Norton Critical Edition is equally an act of homage. It should, I hope, provide everything necessary for careful study: the first properly edited text, detailed footnotes, a note on the text, and sections on manuscript development and textual variants, contemporary reviews, literary impressionism, and biographical and critical commentary.

Manuscript Development and Textual Variants allows the reader to trace each substantive variant through its modifications up to, and

1. Ford was then publishing under his original name: Ford Madox Hueffer.
2. All these reviews—*NYTBR*, *Observer*, *Daily News*, *Outlook*, *Boston Transcript*, *Independent*, *TLS*, *New Witness*, *Bookman*—and more appear in Contemporary Reviews, pp. 217–35 of this edition. *The Good Soldier* was sometimes reviewed alongside Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, which was received with similar bemusement.
3. "Introduction," *The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford*, vol. 1 (London: The Bodley Head, 1962) 7.

including, the first English edition, which I take as copy-text. Readers are alerted to the points at which these variants occur by an asterisk inviting them to cross-refer to the MDATV section. The Note on the Text provides something of a detective story, still ultimately unresolved, about the history of the text and the mystery surrounding the time of the novel's completion. (Central to this is the date August 4, which Ford uses as a structural motif. He always claimed that he had finished the book before the start of World War I, and yet, by an apparently "amazing coincidence," he selects the very date of Germany's marching into Belgium as the spine of the novel's chronology.) Literary Impressionism provides a brief survey of that movement (now largely ignored as a literary category). The reader is first directed to the aesthetics of Literary Impressionism (Gundersteren), then to the Anglo-American movement in which Ford was active (Watt), then to an overview of Ford's impressionist technique (Meixner), then to Conrad's and James's classic statements about, respectively, making the reader "see" and the House of Fiction; finally to Ford's own statements on the subject. The last-named provide exercises in impressionist writing themselves. Ford always delighted in wrecking generic categories and writing criticism and memoirs as fiction. His "critical essays" nevertheless offer a magnificently straightforward explanation of the need to write abstractly. He can be seen, and indeed presents himself, as a cubist novelist, a Futurist, a Vorticist, yet the *dicta* of his "impressionism" are explained as common sense for the writer wishing to render life *as it is actually experienced* rather than as it is mythologized by conventional realism.

Contemporary Reviews and Biographical and Critical Commentary are, I trust, self-explanatory as contextualizing matter. Both are arranged chronologically and, ideally, should be read thus to reveal the development of the novel's reputation. Two essays, however, both by Americans, profoundly affected the history of this criticism. The first, by Mark Schorer (1948), later appeared strategically as the introduction to the third and fourth U.S. editions (1951, 1957). Its then revolutionary approach saw the book as a "comedy of humour," the "humour" being "phlegm." Dowell is seen as inept, passionless, and suffering from the "madness of moral inertia." He is thus regarded as an untrustworthy narrator. Samuel Hynes (1961), in partial reaction to this, addresses the problem directly: "What are we to make of the novel's narrator? Or, to put it more formally, what authority should we allow to the version of events which he narrates?" "In a novel which postulates such severe limits to human knowledge," he states, "—a novel of doubt, that is, in which the narrator's fallibility *is* the norm—the problem of authority cannot be settled directly, because the question which authority answers: 'How can we know what is true?' is itself what the novel is about." He therefore concludes that Schorer's reading is misdirected on two counts: first, that Dowell's failings are the failings of all the characters, and sec-

ond, that his honest doubt and capacity for love are positive moral qualities.

This division between Schorer and Hynes has laid the foundations for most debate since. Is *The Good Soldier* a comedy (Schorer), a tragedy (Meixner, Snitow), or a comi-tragedy (Eggenschwiler)? Is the collapse of conventional categories (literary, psychological, moral, political, social, etc.) precisely its subject? Is Dowell trustworthy (Armstrong) or untrustworthy (Smith)? Is he a hero (Lynn) or the Restoration Comedy cuckold of Schorer's interpretation? Is it a book about epistemological questions (Hynes) or does it go further? Several critics (Kermode, Jacobs) see it as concerning the arbitrary nature of the word itself. Dowell's sign system, the novel of his life, develops its range as it progresses; "knowing" and the capacity for articulation are intimately related. He knows nothing *until* it is written down and composition is not continuous. Can we import external "information" to rationalize this: political circumstances (Green), biographical "facts" (Mizener)? In 1986 Sondra Stang printed a letter from Ford to his publisher describing *The Good Soldier* as a "serious . . . analysis of the polygamous desires that underlie all men."[4] How does this square with deconstructionist readings? The novel is meat and drink to literary theorists precisely because it means so many things to so many readers. What are we to make of Dowell's inconsistencies as to matters of fact (Moser)? His chronology of events doesn't add up (Cheng); he changes his mind about the meaning of events. Is this Fordian irony or simply carelessness about details?

All of which brings us back to the problems of editing this text. To footnote it at all is in some respects to prostitute its spirit. Ford had no respect for academics and less for facts. When arraigned for mistakes in the articles which constituted his book of memoirs, *Ancient Lights* (1911), his only response was to reprint them unchanged. "This book," he noted, ". . . is full of inaccuracies as to facts, but its accuracy as to impressions is absolute." Editing his fiction thus creates a particular difficulty. Are the factual inaccuracies deliberate or accidental? If deliberate, this places an ironical distance between Dowell and the reader. Grover Smith points out what he considers to be one such "gap." Dowell writes "Pennsylvania Duitsch" instead of "Pennsylvania Dutch" or "Deutsch." Ford spoke fluent German. He must, Smith says, have known the difference between "Dutch" and "German" here, and thus Dowell is "marked as ignorant and pretentious."[5] It is possible, and as such I have left the original spelling. But if Dowell spells "Frans Hals" "Frantz," or "Cnossus" "Gnossus," or "Wouwerman" "Woovermans," are we also meant to condemn him as a fool? It seems unlikely—Ford

4. Sondra J. Stang, ed., *The Ford Madox Ford Reader* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986) 477.
5. The correct term for the descendants of German immigrants, and for their (High German) language, is "Pennsylvania Dutch" or "*Deitsch*" (derived from "*Deutsche*"). It means "German," not "Dutch." "*Duits*" is Dutch for "German."

made similar errors throughout his criticism—and in such cases I have corrected matters of fact simply to make the text more comprehensible.

Having done this, should one footnote such items to explain to the reader less well-educated than Ford the identity of all the painters, historical figures, and so on? I hesitated over this. Ford would no doubt have roared with laughter at the idea. Dowell typically remarks "(I am not really interested in these facts but they have a bearing on my story)." It is Florence who is condemned for pretentiously trying to impress people with information. In Ford's ideology, information is the enemy of art. The "bearing" that the facts have on Dowell's story can be construed as the impression of Florence's trying to use them as a weapon of sexual warfare. Nevertheless, there is another way of reading his statement. Although Ford loathed allegory, there is more than a hint that the setting of the scene in which Dowell utters these words (the Marburg Schloss) is integral to the book's meaning.

Ford was a Catholic, albeit an eccentric one. His historical perspective, often reiterated in quiet corners of his journalism, is essentially religious. The Reformation, when "the Church, being split into fragments, gave up adorning the walls of its edifices with the arts and crafts of whole peoples,"[6] marked for him the beginning of the degraded modern world in which humanism overwhelmed feudalism. It is important, therefore, for the reader to realize the significance of the Marburg Colloquy, the relationship between Luther and Philip the Magnanimous, and so on in order to understand that this was a crucial doctrinal debate of the Reformation. As Carol Jacobs ingeniously points out, the debate hinged on the interpretation of the words "This is my body" while Florence is effectively offering her body to Ashburnham. The apparently abstract issue of transubstantiation is, of course, nothing of the sort to the religious reader. It is the point at which the word becomes flesh. And for Ford, the Reformation was also the point at which religious idealism confronted physical passion in humankind's divided nature. The Protestants could countenance divorce. Luther granted Philip a special dispensation bigamously to marry a second wife. Thus Ford's sense of the theme of the book as an analysis of "the polygamous desires that underlie all men" is developed by our understanding of the historical backdrop.

I decided, then, that it was better to footnote in detail rather than not at all or half-heartedly, although I have not included much biographical information. Anyone who knew Ford at this time, however, would have found it difficult to dissociate the life from the fiction. The book grew out of a period of deep depression resulting in part from a scandal which had ruined his social reputation. In 1913 his estranged wife had successfully sued the *Throne* for describing his mistress, Violet Hunt, as "Mrs

6. TS of "Talk Delivered Over W.A.B.C., Saturday Dec. 19, 1936 . . . ," p. 7 (Cornell).

Hueffer." In court it was pretty well established that he had lied to everyone about having secured a divorce under German law. Much of the setting of the novel is in those places he and Hunt visited either when they were trying to pursue this crazy scheme (Marburg, Bad Nauheim), or after the case (Carcasonne, Provence) when they were effectively "on the run," having been spurned by "good people" (including James and Conrad). It was on their return, on his fortieth birthday, that Ford began the novel, and by that time he had already begun to tire of Hunt. The first part of the book was dictated to Brigit Patmore, with whom he was infatuated. Like Dante, he was entering a "dark wood,"[7] which in Ford's case was one of neurasthenia. All that he held dear—his honor as a gentleman, his two beloved daughters, even his art and his passion for life—seemed to have been taken from him by the absurd rituals of polite society.

Reading his journalism of the period, one catches echoes of his agony. Politically he described himself as "an obstinate, sentimental old-fashioned Tory"[8] but he was a defender of women's suffrage and of Home Rule for Ireland, and he found himself living with a new breed of Tory: materialistic, xenophobic, with a particular loathing for Germans. Culturally and intellectually he felt no sympathy for the English "nuvvle." "For me," he wrote, ". . . the novel—broad stream of international culture that it is—began with Richardson and passed over the water to Diderot and the Encyclopaedists. They had for spiritual descendants Chateaubriand, Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant, Tourguenieff [*sic*]; and so that international stream comes back to these islands in the nineties . . . with Mr. Conrad and Mr. Henry James. It continues flowing in the veins of les jeunes."[9] As a Francophile with a German-born father, he found small sympathy for his internationalism in an England preparing for war—except among "les jeunes": Pound, H. D., Wyndham Lewis, toward whom he gravitated as an "uncle." Angry and frustrated, he felt that "what we want most of all in the literature of today is religion, is intolerance, is persecution, and not the mawkish flapdoodle of culture, Fabianism, peace and good will. Real good religion, a violent thing full of hatreds and exclusions . . . I must confess to rather inclining towards [the Futurists]—just because they want to smash things."[1] But that, of course, was not the kind of novel he was writing.

7. See Ford Madox Hueffer, "Literary Portraits—XIX. Gerhart Hauptmann and 'Atlantis,' " *Outlook*, 17 January 1914, 77–79: ". . . whereas England is the very worst place in which to suffer from any form of nervous complaint, Germany is the best of all asylums for the really neurasthenic. . . . And indeed *Atlantis* . . . is the story of adventure in a dark forest. The dark forest is the hero's neurasthenia."
8. "Didymus" [Ford Madox Hueffer], "A Declaration of Faith," *English Review* 4 (February 1910): 543–51, 544.
9. "Literary Portraits—VII. Professor Saintsbury and the English 'Nuvvle,' " *Outlook*, 1 November 1913: 605.
1. "Literary Portraits—XVII. Nineteen-Thirteen and the Futurists," *Outlook*, 3 *January* 1914: 15.

His self-appointed task, as he had stated earlier while still working on *The Good Soldier*, was "to record my own time, my own world, as I see it," to aim at a style "so unobtrusive and so quiet . . . that the reader shall not know he is reading, and be conscious only that he is living in a book."[2] After war was declared, and probably around the time he had put the finishing touches to his novel (September 1914), a note of exhaustion creeps in: ". . . the present period . . . is too much for me. I cannot get the hang of it. . . . I do not know whether I am a hero or just a tired person."[3]

He was both, but it was a decade before he published his next major fiction, *Some Do Not* (1924), the opening volume of the Tietjens tetralogy, which effectively rewrites Ashburnham's history. Sitting in Scotland with the rain pouring down in early August 1914, Ford read proofs of the first and only installment of *The Good Soldier* in *Blast* while Wyndham Lewis painted a Vorticist portrait of their hostess. It was the end of an era. Four days after Germany had invaded Belgium an article appeared which Ford probably wrote during his visit: "And what is the good of writing about literature—the 'edler Beruf,' the noble calling? There will not be a soul that will want to read about literature for years and years. We go out. We writers go out. And, when the world again has leisure to think about letters, the whole world will have changed. . . . What is the good of it all? I don't know. . . . I like the French so much; I like so much the South Germans and the Austrians. Whichever side wins in the end—my own heart is certain to be mangled in either case. . . . But what affects me . . . even more depressingly is the want of chivalry in expressions of nationality."[4] Five months later he reviewed the conduct of the war: ". . . we are fighting to answer the question whether it is right to thank God for the deaths of a million fellow-beings. Is it then right? Is it then wrong? I don't know. I know nothing any more; nobody knows anything. We are down in the mud of the trenches of right and wrong, grappling at each other's throats, gouging out each other's eyes—and amazed, still, to think that we can be doing such things."[5]

Here is the authentic voice of Dowell. And here, perhaps, we see a reflection of *The Good Soldier*'s largest subject: the transference from a culture of intellectual confidence to one of uncertainty. From the point of view of Ford's art, the paradox centered on the earlier materialist base of his impressionism: upon his technique being a heightened form of realism in reaction against romance, and upon his growing, and contra-

2. "Literary Portraits—XXIII. Fydor Dostoievsky and 'The Idiot,' " *Outlook*, 14 February 1914: 206.
3. "Literary Portraits—LII. 'Cedant Togae . . .' " *Outlook*, 5 September 1914: 303.
4. "Literary Portraits—XLVIII. M. Charles-Louis Philippe and 'Le Père Perdrix,' " *Outlook*, 8 August 1914: 174.
5. "Literary Portraits—LXIX. Annus Mirabilis," *Outlook*, 2 January 1915: 15.

dictory, need for an art of visionary experience. "Cubists, Vorticists, and the rest of them are in fact visionaries," he wrote; "Post-Impressionists, Impressionists, Futurists, and the rest of us are materialists. I wish I could be a visionary myself, but I don't know how."[6]

6. "Literary Portraits—XLIV. Signor Marinetti, Mr. Lloyd George, St. Katharine, and Others," *Outlook*, 11 July 1914: 47.

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Abbreviations

For more detailed explanation, see the list of abbreviations at the head of the Manuscript Development and Textual Variants section.

Texts (in chronological order)

MS: the manuscript of *The Good Soldier* [*The Saddest Story*]. 375 pp.

TSB: the ribbon-copy of the first section of **TS** (see below). Scholars have generally assumed that this was the section sent as copy to Wyndham Lewis for publication as the first part of *The Saddest Story* in his magazine *Blast*, 20 June 1914: 87–97. 42 pp.

B: Printed text of the first three-and-a-half chapters of *The Saddest Story* in *Blast* (see **TSB** above).

TS: a complete typescript of the novel, probably printer's copy. 305 pp.

UK: Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Good Soldier. A Tale of Passion* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1915). First UK edition.

US: Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Good Soldier. A Tale of Passion* (New York: John Lane Company, 1915). First US edition, probably published simultaneously with **UK.**

US2: Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier. A Tale of Passion* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1927), including "Dedicatory Letter to Stella Ford."

UK2: Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier. A Tale of Passion* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., [1928]). Second UK, "Week-End Library," edition, published February 24, 1928, including "Dedicatory Letter" (see **US2** above).

General

AMS: Autograph [holograph] manuscript

asp: all subsequent printings in Ford's lifetime

BP: Brigit Patmore: Ford's first amanuensis

COD: *Concise Oxford Dictionary*

Cornell: Department of Rare Books, Karl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Del: Deletion

ED: Editorial decision, indicating the reading selected

FMF: In Ford Madox Ford's hand

Harvey: David Dow Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford 1873–1939. A Bibliography of Works and Criticism* (Princeton UP, 1962, and New York: Gordian Press, 1972)

HD: H. D. [Hilda Doolittle], Ford's second amanuensis

[ink]: Revision made by Ford in ink

MDATV: Manuscript Development and Textual Variants section, pp. 194–216 below

Mizener: Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story. A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971)

Moser: Thomas C. Moser's edition of *The Good Soldier* (Oxford University Press, 1990) in The World's Classics series

[number; number]: "External" page number of **MS** or **TS** followed by "internal" number of same. (See MDATV for definition of "external" and "internal.") Only one number appears in brackets for page reference to **TSB**, first section of **TS**, or any printed text

[pencil]: Revision made by Ford in pencil

Perpetuated mistranscription: Mistranscription by typist which continues through all printed states

RA: Richard Aldington, Ford's third amanuensis

SOED: *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

SPC: Probably a substantive proof correction by Ford or editor

TccMS: Typed carbon copy manuscript

TMS: Typed manuscript, ribbon-copy

[TS]: Revision made in type, usually indicating either composition on the typewriter or the contemporaneous correction of a misreading of the AMS

WL: [Percy] Wyndham Lewis (editor of *Blast*)

*: Signals a MS correction or textual variant. For details, see Manuscript Development and Textual Variants section, pp. 194–216 below

[ ]: Page number lacking

[. . .]: My ellipses, not author's

[ital]: Section italicized and between square brackets deleted

\ /: Section between slashes inserted from above line or superimposed on letters on line

/ \: Section between slashes inserted from below line

|: Word after vertical stroke on a lower line

Example:

MS [37;35]: "chinese"; **TSB** [24]: "chemise"; **B** [92]: "Chinese"; **TS** [24]: "[*c*]\C/h[*emi*]\ine/se": [ink]; **UK** [28] and asp: "Chinese" = In the holograph MS the amanuensis wrote "chinese," mistranscribed in the *Blast* typescript as "chemise"; the printed *Blast* text corrects this to "Chinese" and the typescript of the complete novel makes the same correction, in ink in Ford's hand, by canceling lower-case "c" and superimposing capital, and by canceling "emi" and inserting "ine" above it; the first British edition and all subsequent printings follow this correction.

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