

The Politics of Cultural Nostalgia: History and Tradition in Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End

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T. S. Eliot remarks in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933) that he and Pound 'believed that [they] were affirming forgotten standards, rather than setting up new idols.'¹ For Eliot, writing which appears to be new may seem so only because it establishes continuities with literary traditions that have fallen into desuetude and are no longer known. Paradoxically, then, the new is the old recast; it is revolutionary in the precise sense that it returns to and reaffirms once superseded values. Certainly, neither Pound nor Eliot fetishised originality. Pound wrote in a 1908 manifesto that '[u]tter originality is of course out of the question', while Eliot claimed in *After Strange Gods* that 'what is objectionable ... is not only novelty or originality in themselves, but their glorification for their own sake.'² These remarks suggest that for Eliot and Pound literary innovation was not a goal in itself but was part of a wider project: the substantiation of their belief that the literary and cultural traditions to which they gave allegiance were, when translated and revised, of importance to the period in which they themselves were living and writing.³ Surely, Eliot asks, 'the great poet is, among other things, one who not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but one who in his poetry re-twines as many straying strands of tradition as possible.'⁴ Stan Smith, discussing this complex set of negotiations in Eliot's work, suggests that 'the two moments of revolt and of restoration, always coexisted in dynamic instability in the fabric of Modernism.'⁵

The apparent contradiction in modernism between aesthetic innovation and political conservatism is something of an old chestnut. The uneasy co-existence (Smith's 'dynamic instability') of such impulses as revolt and

restoration in many foundational modernist artefacts raises a variety of questions about their ambivalent attitude to the past. To make one obvious point, modernism's penchant for unexpected links and fragmented forms (via techniques of juxtaposition, collage, spatial form, montage, bricolage etc) produces often surprising alignments between narrative modes and socio-political ideas. Such alignments need to be studied in detail and case by case if we are to avoid blanket generalisations about the putative tension within modernist texts between formal experimentation and cultural reaction. This essay focuses on Ford Madox Ford's powerful tetralogy *Parade's End* – which comprises the four novels *Some Do Not ...* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926), and *The Last Post* (1928) – in order to argue that its dissection of Georgian society, its depiction of World War One, and its account of the post-war settlement are inseparable from its simultaneous questioning of the relevance to modern England of the very 'forgotten standards' that in certain respects it seems to uphold.⁶ In his defence of literary tradition Eliot links the aesthetic values he promotes to his politics; his horror at the loss of 'accepted rules or opinions as to the limitations of the literary job', his concern that writers are lauded for their 'deviations from the inherited wisdom of the race', and his mistrust of emotionalism inform his openly illiberal political views and his fear that in the absence of a racially shared tradition a decadent individualism has come to pass.⁷ It is against these wider social tendencies that he pits his aesthetics. *Parade's End*, I want to argue, is best understood in the light of this search for viable solutions to the problems of modernity in the traditions of the past. But whereas Eliot's account of what a contemporary Christian society might look like draws primarily on religious and literary models taken from the past, Ford's analysis of the pre-war years, the war itself, and its aftermath is explicitly political – it represents the writer's attempt to explore the genealogy of an established (though superseded) political tradition and to question its relevance to the post-war settlement. In this sense, Ford's modernism, as displayed in *Parade's End*, is in dialogue with that of writers such as Eliot and Pound because it asks searching questions both about the nature of 'tradition' and about the viability of resurrecting its withered elements in the context of a transformed modernity.

Parade's End dramatises Ford's struggle with and scrutiny of the cultural and political beliefs he himself espoused, and it does so by questioning the legitimacy of the very tradition in which those beliefs were formed and articulated. The result is a deeply ambivalent text, which criticises the pre- and post-war 'condition of England' but also portrays the search for social renewal through a return to the politics of a long-dead Toryism as a utopian fantasy. It might look (and to many critics has looked) as though Ford is in this text pitting the 'organic' stability of pre-modern society against the fragmentary chaos of an unstable 'modernity'; on this view, *Parade's End* is seen to uphold and reaffirm the values of a feudalism that by the end of *The Last*

Post has, in a much favoured metaphor, temporarily gone below ground to await a future resurrection. In contrast to this reading, I want to argue that *Parade's End* is a more uneasy novel, which questions the feudal myth (itself part of a spurious nineteenth-century medievalist revival); disputes the viability of any return to pre-modern modes of social life, however imaginatively attractive pre-industrial agrarianism might appear to be; and reveals that neither the historical past nor the Tory tradition that can be excavated from it provides the modern critic of society with firm ground on which to stand.

Any discussion of *Parade's End* is bound sooner or later to run into the difficulty of coming to terms with Ford's own politics and of trying to understand his attitude to Tietjens, the novel's most important character. The politics of the novel are not easy to disentangle largely because it is hard to ascertain with any certainty how far its central protagonist's views are being upheld and how far they are being ironised. How critics read this text depends to a great extent on the answer they give to this question. Most of them have tended to read Tietjens, the honourable landowning Tory squire who stoutly supports a feudal model of society, as Ford's spokesman. On this view, Tietjens becomes the more or less straightforward exemplar of Ford's own social and political convictions. Author and character come close to being conflated here and this has produced two influential kinds of reading of *Parade's End*. The first suggests that through Tietjens the novel offers a critique of England in the name of feudal values, argues that he remains Ford's ethical and political touchstone throughout, and concludes that *The Last Post's* pastoralism indicates a gathering of forces and an imminent return to a renewed feudalism; the second reading is similar, but it sees a greater distance between Ford and Tietjens, admits that the latter is criticised and is forced to change, and acknowledges that although the text displays a nostalgia for the feudal ethos, this ethos is shown to be in need of reform. What interests me about these two approaches to *Parade's End* is that they are linked by an underlying similarity. What unites both readings is their inability (or refusal) to consider that feudalism and Toryism may be under investigation in this text; that in the wake of his shattering wartime experiences Ford may be subjecting an entire tradition of political thought – one with which it is clear he has a good deal of sympathy – to a trenchant critique. To look at the novel in this way is to raise issues that cannot be articulated within the framework of readings that are themselves in thrall to a historical nostalgia of a quite determinate kind, for it opens up the possibility that tradition, feudalism, Toryism, even nostalgia itself may be being undermined.

It is striking how little self-reflexivity there is in many critical accounts of the tetralogy. Those who contend that the novel never wavers in its commitment to feudalism seem never to waver in their own support for the same cause; it is as though the hold exercised by mythical accounts of the Middle Ages had never been loosened. John A. Meixner argues that after the war 'the values Ford and Christopher stand for no longer have the air of

mere nostalgic ineffectuality, but instead take on a striking attractiveness, and a persuasive power'; Richard A. Cassell claims that Tietjens changes during the novel but concludes that Tietjens's values have not been overturned, as 'the best of them still offer the necessary basis for personal survival in a fragmented, meaningless society'; E. V. Walter writes that feudalism 'survives underground with Tietjens' who 'discloses his intransigent conviction that after a long, dark night of the collective soul, aristocracy (meaning true nobility, which is based on virtue) may be reborn'.⁸ Unlike Ford, the critics who see in the novel a lament for a superseded political system explore neither its historical provenance and subsequent trajectory nor its flaws. Whereas *Parade's End* is historically specific, many of its critics are happy to utilise the vaguest terminology. Elliott B. Ghose Jr refers to the novel's depiction of 'the collapse of traditional values'; Joseph Firebaugh argues that it concludes with 'a new integration' through which 'Tradition, and England, is to be saved'; Meixner sees it as an 'elegiac lament ... for the decay of a once coherent civilization and for the beleaguered state of traditional values'.⁹ Such writing invokes concepts such as 'tradition' without defining them or analysing what they mean in particular contexts. The result in the case of a text like *Parade's End* is not only that the specificity of its politics is occluded but also that 'tradition' is presented as a monolithic entity rather than as the historical site of contest and debate. There is a puzzling lack of curiosity here over the novel's deployment of terms such as 'feudalism' and 'toryism' and over their relevance to early twentieth-century English politics. Definitions are of paramount importance here, for political terminology is notoriously slippery; to assume that linguistic counters such as 'tory', 'feudal', or 'tradition' are self-explanatory is highly misleading. As John Derry rightly remarks: 'Attempts to trace a clear line of descent for Toryism from the Civil War to Disraeli are as exaggerated and as misleading as Victorian attempts to discern the foundations of democracy in the forests of ancient Germany ... Political genealogies are characterised by illegitimacy and mixed marriages, by mongrel strains rather than pure descent.'¹⁰

Ford's commitment to Toryism did not waver throughout his life, but his conception of Toryism is highly specific and needs to be outlined with care if we are to have any chance of making sense of *Parade's End*. Consider the following statements, made over the course of his life. In 1907, he observes in *England and the English* that the Revolution of 1688 'did away with the true Toryism which is Socialism, and rendered possible Individualism'; in 1908 he describes himself as 'by temperament an obstinate, sentimental and old-fashioned Tory'; fifteen years later, he announces in the opening editorial to the *Transatlantic Review* that its 'politics will be those of its editor who has no party leanings save towards those of a Tory kind so fantastically old-fashioned as to see no salvation save in the feudal system as practised in the fourteenth century – or in such Communism as may prevail a thousand years hence'; in *Return to Yesterday*, published seven years before his death, he

notes that his 'predilections have always been toward the Right', maintaining that 'when the world was a matter of small communities each under an arbitrary but responsible head the world was at its best' and suggesting that 'you cannot better the Feudal System'.¹¹ These pronouncements are revealing in a number of ways. Ford explicitly links his brand of Toryism with socialism, portrays it as a form of feudalism that has long since disappeared from English social life, and, wistfully describing his beliefs as archaic, admits that although they may be realizable in a utopian future, they are irrelevant to the political present.¹² Elsewhere, Ford makes clear his opposition to utilitarianism, his hatred of materialism and militarism, his mistrust of modern society's emphasis on specialisation, organisation, standardisation, and efficiency; he is also an 'embittered anti-Imperialist', a passionate advocate of women's suffrage, and a committed supporter of Irish Home Rule.¹³ It is because of the Conservative Party's refusal to grant Ireland its independence, he claims, that he 'never voted or wrote for that Party'; his Tory beliefs, furthermore, depend on every workman being assured of 'four hundred a year'.¹⁴ It is not surprising, then, to find him writing to Stella Bowen from the trenches that in 'the matter of Capital & Labour I am for Labour every time – as I always shd. be for the physical worker against the administrator – for the Infantry Orfcer agst. The B——y Staff & so on.'¹⁵

Ford's most astute critics have a good understanding of the complex nature of his politics. Max Saunders, his most recent biographer, describes him as 'exactly Madox Brown's type of romantic Tory revolutionary', noting that his "Toryism" precisely cuts across party lines, posing feudalism ... as an ideal form of collective life.¹⁶ This is broadly right, but I would suggest that it is more accurate to see Ford's views in relation to a quite specific tradition – that of Tory Radicalism – than to see him as a 'Tory revolutionary'. The paradox that Saunders identifies in Ford's position (namely, his attempt to combine socialism with toryism) is explicable when this position is seen as indebted to Tory Radical thought.¹⁷

Tory Radicalism draws on a variety of sources, not all of which are mutually compatible. As John Burrow points out, it embraces figures such as Chesterton, Tawney, Belloc, Morris, Ruskin, Carlyle, Disraeli, Pugin, Cobbett, and Southey, and it produces an analysis in which 'the past, constantly called on for the conception of a medieval utopia, notoriously form[s] the basis of a radical critique of capitalism and a repudiation of Whiggish complacency about the national history.'¹⁸ Although the word 'radical' is normally, in John W. Derry's words, 'used to describe a preference for going to the roots of political problems', H. W. J. Edwards points out that there were two main types of radicalism in the early nineteenth century: philosophical radicalism associated with the Benthamites and philanthropic radicalism associated with Cobbett, Hunt, and Burdett.¹⁹ This latter group emphasised the importance of land, the values of antiquity, the need for artisanship and crafts, and the maintenance of small-holdings and self-sufficiency. Edwards

argues that the reforms they urged were taken over from early Tory proposals and that 'the basis of philanthropic Radicalism was not very different from a neglected humanist Toryism.'²⁰ Toryism and radicalism briefly came together in their shared hostility to industrialism and its socio-economic effects, a hostility that made for a number of strange bedfellows. Robert Stewart describes Tory Radicalism as a protest against disruptions to established ways of living by the combined forces of industrial and agricultural revolutions, by a growing political adherence to *laissez-faire* policies, and by population increase. Tory Radicals defended paternalism; upheld landed society; tried to protect the poor; urged the moral economy of the 'just price'; supported local self-government and small, hierarchically run, communities.²¹ To these concerns John Burrow adds hostility to commercialism, 'paper' money, and plutocracy; an attack on the unfair distribution and abuse of wealth; and a nostalgic belief in a lost 'social and constitutional idyll located somewhere in the Saxon or medieval past.'²² Most of these ideas also informed the short-lived Young England movement, which, defending a nostalgic version of feudalism, emphasised duties over rights, the pre-eminence of crown and church, and the need for the aristocracy to take the lead in regenerating national life.²³ In sum, Tory Radicalism was humanitarian, anti-capitalist, anti-centralist, and anti-bourgeois; hostile to industrialism and the emerging middle class alike, its proponents based their campaigns on the view that 'the landed gentry were the natural allies of the working man against the factory owner and against the central state.'²⁴ For all its imaginative appeal and powerful rhetoric, Tory Radicalism was largely ineffectual. According to Stewart, it did not 'rest on a coherent political or social philosophy able to meet the requirements of contemporary society', was already exhausted by 1841, and thus made but an 'effete' appearance in the Young England movement.²⁵

Ford's Toryism belongs to the Tory Radical tradition. Like the Tory Radicals, Ford conjures up a feudal idyll in which all-powerful but benevolent aristocrats take the lead in public life, assaults the commercial spirit produced by the individualist economics of *laissez faire*, posits the protection of the worker (via a guaranteed minimum wage) as the cornerstone of his politics, and refuses to drive a wedge between this version of Toryism and socialism. (It is worth noting here that Herbert Spencer, alluding to this tradition, described socialism as the new Toryism, and that in his book *Conservatism* (1912) Lord Hugh Cecil cites this remark of Spencer's approvingly, arguing that Toryism supports 'the activity and authority of the State' and that it may be differentiated from the Whig focus on the preservation of liberty and on the dangers of state interference.)²⁶ Unlike the Tory Radicals of the nineteenth century, however, Ford seems to recognise that this tradition is not viable in the context of early twentieth-century society, as is revealed by his only slightly exaggerated claims that his Toryism is 'sentimental' and 'fantastically old-fashioned'.²⁷ But it is important to note that

Ford's political views were not in fact as unusual as he made out, for in the early years of the twentieth century there was a battle not just over the future of the Conservative Party (as an electoral machine) but over the future of conservative thought, and Ford's views are easily recognisable in this political context.²⁸

During this period, seen by E. H. H. Green in terms of a 'crisis of conservatism', the Conservative Party continued the process of modernising itself begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century. This was in part a matter of internal organisation, the party gradually becoming more meritocratic, professional, and modern, and in part a matter of policy, as it embraced tariff reform and opted to woo business and industry rather than to concentrate primarily on defending the interests of agriculture and the landed gentry.²⁹ But because such developments were seen by many older conservatives – and there is evidence to suggest the split in the party was a generational one – as a betrayal of its basic principles and values they called forth a variety of forms of counter-reaction.³⁰ Some of these, such as the radical right groups associated with figures like Willoughby de Broke and Leo Maxse (editor of the *National Review*) or Henry Page Croft and the *Reveille* group, sought to recast conservative thought by combining old-fashioned nostrums with a new commitment to imperialism and race regeneration.³¹ Others, however, perhaps most notably Lords Hugh and Robert Cecil, sought a return to the traditions of Salisbury and Liverpool. The Cecils lamented the shift of power from a landed aristocracy to a commercial plutocracy, despised the age for its alleged materialism, rejected tariff reform and protectionism as incompatible with long-standing Tory ideology and policy, resented the rise of the professional (often middle-class) politician, attacked political corruption, which they saw in part as a result of the professionalisation of politics, and, in Geoffrey Searle's words, argued for a return to political life of the disinterested 'English gentleman'.³²

Like the earlier Tory Radicals with which their politics had key affinities, the Cecils' desire to turn back the clock to an earlier period was doomed to fail because it did not take adequate account of how fundamental was the transformation of the social, economic, and political landscape.³³ This transformation meant that the Cecils' heartfelt defence of a once hegemonic Toryism no longer had any purchase on socio-political realities. Thus Martin Pugh, countering Dangerfield's notorious claim that the period witnessed the 'strange death' of Liberal England, argues that in fact 'it was traditional Conservative England that had expired'.³⁴ It is precisely this gradual, lingering 'death' that Ford's *Parade's End* documents. For while Tietjens upholds the now anachronistic values of aristocratic conservatives such as the Cecils, Ford critically dissects them. Ford, of course, is himself sympathetic to these values, as his political pronouncements make clear, but this does not mean that he is unable to stand back from them and, especially in the aftermath of World War One, subject them to a searching critique. Max Saunders comes

closest to articulating the viewpoint I am urging when he argues that Ford 'puts Tietjens, an exaggerated Tory, into extreme situations in order to test the values of Toryism.'³⁵ I would suggest, however, that Tietjens is not so much 'an exaggerated Tory' as one who belongs to a determinate and identifiable tradition, which in the shape of figures like the Cecils lived on into the early twentieth century, and that the values being tested are Ford's own.³⁶ Tietjens, like the Cecils, looks back to a superseded Tory tradition that has a long heritage: he is a paternalist who defends the right use of authority, arguing that the government (or the landed aristocracy) should look after the lower classes and guarantee them a basic standard of living; he believes that the nation cannot be saved by political or economic means alone but must undergo a moral and spiritual regeneration, which is why he himself yearns for Anglican sainthood; he is suspicious of the professional, time-serving politician or civil servant (Macmaster) and sees the embourgeoisement of political life as intimately linked to its increasing corruption; above all, he believes that the landed aristocracy's function is to rule by example and that only if it does so, responsibly and disinterestedly, may the nation be saved.³⁷ Such views, which go back at least as far as the early eighteenth century (where they are articulated most clearly by Bolingbroke), would be entirely typical of a member of Tietjens's class in the 1840s, say, but are more unusual in the 1910s, which is why the Cecils (and the fictional Tietjens) are anomalous figures.³⁸ Writing of the mid-nineteenth century, Robert Stewart sums up the older viewpoint concisely: 'The protectionist inheritors of the Conservative party represented a narrow class, but they did not look upon politics as the arena of class conflict. They defended the wealth of the agricultural class because they wished to perpetuate a closed society ... Landed estates were not so much commercial ventures for the making of profits as trusts to be passed on intact from generation to generation ... The land was not simply a form of capital; it was the basis of social stability, the natural environment of traditional values. Landed society was a world ruled by gentlemen, who expected politics to be a gentlemen's pursuit.'³⁹

Christopher Tietjens is an impassioned exponent of and spokesman for precisely this viewpoint. Like his creator, Tietjens is apt to describe himself as a 'sentimentalist' and to present his politics as anachronistic.⁴⁰ That Ford based Tietjens in part on the character and appearance of his friend Arthur Marwood – a polymathic Yorkshire squire whose own Toryism is identified by Ford as belonging to the eighteenth century – and that in writing *Parade's End* he tried to imagine how World War One would have looked from the perspective of Marwood's defunct ethico-political code are facts too well known to require much discussion.⁴¹ There are, furthermore, many parallels between Tietjens's life and Ford's own, which suggests a degree of closeness between author and character that cannot easily be ignored.⁴² But Ford explicitly distanced himself from Tietjens in a prefatory letter to *No More Parades*, noting in exasperation that 'the opinions of a novelist's characters

as stated in any novel are not of necessity the opinions of the novelist' and claiming that there is 'not one word in [the novel] which records any opinions or words of mine as being my words or opinions.'⁴³ Even without this warning, it would be naive to assume that Tietjens is in some straightforward sense the novelist's spokesman; still, Ford's disclaimer cannot conceal the fact that his own political views are remarkably close to those of his central character. This means that a great deal hangs on how we read the text's portrayal of Tietjens. In contrast to those critics who read this portrayal as positive and affirmative, I want to argue that it distances Ford from his main protagonist, offers an empathic but searching critique of his character, and suggests that his politics offer no solution to the problems of post-war society. Tietjens's defence of a historically locatable Toryism links radicalism with reaction – the assertion of this particular brand of conservative humanism ensures that in this context 'tradition' serves the politics of protest.⁴⁴ Yet this attempt to revolt against the deplorable present by restoring an idealised past is, like the Tory Radicalism to which it is indebted, shown to be doomed.⁴⁵ Ford's analysis of Tietjens's desire to hold on to the ethics and politics that character and creator largely share thus functions as a reflexive form of auto-critique. The proximity between their political views suggests that *Parade's End* employs the distanced figure of Tietjens to probe its author's own beliefs at a time of far-reaching social crisis and change.

Parade's End adopts a historicist perspective to the question of politics. It sets out to understand socio-economic change and the traumas of war by placing them in a historical frame. More specifically, it traces the aetiology of Tietjens's brand of Toryism back to the birth of the modern nation state in the seventeenth century. In doing so, it discloses how deeply this view of Toryism is connected to a pre-industrial economy. In one sense, the novel mourns the passing of this economy and of the hierarchical society predicated on it, contrasting both with the chaos of an unstable modernity, but in another sense, the text reveals the impossibility of establishing continuities with that society and questions its premises. In exploring these issues I want to consider three areas: Toryism, masculinity, and pastoral.

Christopher Tietjens is one of England's highest born aristocrats; the youngest son of a proud landowning Yorkshire family, he is an old-fashioned Tory whose political convictions can be traced back to seventeenth century conflicts. He believes in a hierarchical, organic, and stable society based on the old feudal estates, in which benevolent paternalism is the order of the day; in reciprocal duties rather than individual rights; in the centrality to personal and national life of the Anglican religion; and in the insuperable distinction between 'gentlemen' and all other classes. He is mistrustful, in turn, of industrialisation, urbanisation, democracy, and modern mass society, identifying them as the key factors in the disintegration of the social order that provided his caste with its *raison d'être*. Consider the following passage:

Tietjens had walked ... thinking ... about the Almighty as, on a colossal scale, a great English Landowner, benevolently awful, a colossal duke who never left his study and was thus invisible, but knowing all about the estate down to the last hind at the home farm and the last oak; Christ, an almost too benevolent Land-Steward, son of the Owner, knowing all about the estate down to the last child at the porter's lodge, apt to be got round by the more detrimental tenants; the Third Person of the Trinity, the spirit of the estate ... the atmosphere of the estate, that of the interior of Winchester Cathedral just after a Handel anthem has been finished, a perpetual Sunday, with, probably, a little cricket for the young men. (365–66)

Although this is self-mocking and playful, it nonetheless expresses Tietjens's beliefs and reveals that he considers his ideal society to be divinely sanctioned and thus part of a natural order. It also discloses that Tietjens's feudalism belongs to a recognizable medievalist tradition, which romanticised the Middle Ages, producing mythic accounts of it as a Golden Age. J. S. Critchley and J. G. A. Pocock point out that the terms 'feudalism' (Critchley) or 'feudal system' (Pocock) come into common use in the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ For Pocock, eighteenth-century accounts of feudalism represent attempts to overcome the loss of a sense of organic connection with the past; Critchley, emphasising the constructed nature of such accounts, maintains that the 'history of "feudalism" begins, not with what happened in the European Middle Ages, but with what was believed to have happened in the Middle Ages by the political commentators of a later period.'⁴⁷ By the nineteenth century such commentary had passed into the realms of fantasy in the hands of the medieval revivalists. Alice Chandler, noting that in the Victorian period the Middle Ages were seen as 'a corrective to the evils of the present', describes this revival as follows: 'The Middle Ages were idealized as a period of faith, order, joy, munificence, and creativity. Feudalism was seen as fatherhood, and the medieval world – to adopt Carlyle's phrase – was thought to be "godlike and my Father's." The Middle Ages became a metaphor both for a specific social order and, somewhat more vaguely, for a metaphysically harmonious world view.'⁴⁸ Tietjens's view of 'feudalism' may be seen as the product of this influential tradition.

Within this tradition Toryism is grafted onto feudalism. Toryism of this kind goes back at least as far as the seventeenth-century Royalist defence of the triumvirate of church, king, and land; pre-dating the earliest public use of the designation 'Tory' to describe the post-1688 Jacobite faction, it should not be confused with this pro-Catholic tendency. It is based on the political conceptions that Keith Feiling argues are central to early conservatism: 'the divinity of the State, the natural sanctity of order, the organic unity of sovereign and people, and the indisputable authority attaching to the work of time.'⁴⁹ For Tietjens, the 'only satisfactory age in England' (566) was the seventeenth century, and its most perfect embodiment was George Herbert,

on whose saintly Anglicanism he tries to model his behaviour throughout the text.⁵⁰ Tietjens's fidelity to such beliefs signals his desire not only to maintain continuity with the values of a superseded social order but also to distance himself from early twentieth-century conservatism. He ironically describes himself as a dinosaur, observing that he has "no politics that did not disappear in the eighteenth century" (489) and telling General Campion that if Sylvia has mistakenly taken him to be a socialist her misapprehension is understandable, since he is "a Tory of such an extinct type that she might take me for anything. The last megatherium. She's absolutely to be excused" (490). The link between this version of Toryism and welfare socialism (a connection that Sylvia, like most of the novel's other characters, is unable to grasp) has been made explicit earlier in the text in a discussion between Tietjens and a Liberal minister of state: 'And over their port they agreed on two fundamental legislative ideals: every working man to have a minimum of four hundred a year and every beastly manufacturer who wanted to pay less to be hung. That, it appeared, was the High Toryism of Tietjens as it was the extreme Radicalism of the extreme Left of the Left' (79).

Tietjens's admission that his politics are defunct helps to clarify the rhetorical function of the text's pointed references to the eighteenth century, which witnessed the defeat of the very Toryism he tries to uphold. It was already in retreat after the Revolution of 1688, when it became increasingly associated with the Jacobites, and it received a crushing blow in 1714.⁵¹ Christopher Hill argues that 'Toryism in the generation after 1715 was a sentimental pose, a nostalgia; with the new Toryism of the later eighteenth century it had only the name in common.'⁵² On this view, the attempted revival of Tory ideals by the Augustans was a last-ditch defence against irreversible social, economic, and political changes. When Tietjens wistfully muses about the First World War that he 'could have fought with a clean heart for a civilisation: if you like for the eighteenth century against the twentieth' (236) and then goes on to criticise Walpole's corrupt practices (a staple topic of political debate in that period) it is clear that the tag 'eighteenth century' is being used to refer to a Tory ethos articulated in the work of the Augustan poets and pamphleteers. The political figure who best exemplifies this tradition is probably Bolingbroke, and there are strong affinities between his most central beliefs and those of Tietjens. For Bolingbroke, the exercise of government was to be based on the ideal of disinterestedness. The ruling class was to be motivated by duty, not by the desire for pecuniary gain; was to regard politics as a public service for the good of the commonwealth, not as the means to gain preferment or power; was to be able to rise above sectarian party concerns because of its understanding that authority is exercised in order to safeguard the national interest, not the parochial interests of particular social groups. Noble birth and ownership of estates lay at the heart of this ideology; they ostensibly guaranteed the breeding that good rule required and encouraged disinterestedness, because those who governed had

a tangible stake in the country in which they were by origin and land firmly rooted. Yet Bolingbroke was articulating these precepts precisely at a time in which they were passing out of public life. The ideology he desperately sought to defend was under threat from the socio-economic changes wrought by the creation of the Bank of England, the growth of joint-stock companies, the transition to a more urban, centralised, and commercial order, and the Whig policy of promoting early capitalism, which carried political and financial corruption in its wake.⁵³ For Bolingbroke, these changes were most embodied in the shift in power from land and aristocracy to 'paper money' and financiers, since the latter, he argued, had no direct stake in the country as a whole and sought power only to further their business interests.⁵⁴ It is significant, in this context, that for Tietjens it is a cardinal principle that '[g]entlemen don't earn money' and that because of this 'the world is made better and brighter' and 'political life can be kept clean!' (589).

Echoes of Bolingbroke's charges continue to be heard in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not least in the Tory Radical tradition. One hears them in Southey, Cobbett, Disraeli, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris. Almost always, in a familiar strategy, a golden age is projected back into the past, and the ills of the present are judged against it; the present is usually depicted as giving the dastardly *coup de grace* to an organic society built on virtuous principles, reciprocal duties, and natural attachments, while it oversees the birth of a meretricious age based on rank materialism, political corruption, and arbitrary relations. Trollope's despairing *The Way We Live Now* (1875) offers a good late Victorian example of this kind of critique, and there are similarities between his virtuous squire, Roger Carbury, and Tietjens.⁵⁵ For Tietjens, there are clear parallels between Walpole's Whig administrations and Lloyd George's coalition government; his criticisms of the latter merely echo Bolingbroke's attacks on the former. Several ironies abound here, since Ford knows full well that Bolingbroke was defeated and that his Tory politics could not withstand the onset of Whig hegemony. By portraying paternalistic Toryism as the bedrock of Tietjens's politics, *Parade's End* slyly suggests that he is standing on shifting sands. Tietjens's imaginative return to the Augustans mimics the Augustans' own return to Renaissance humanism and to classical ideals, but in the realm of real-life politics these traditions proved impotent. As Isaac Kramnick observes, Bolingbroke's 'humanist solution' was 'futile before the inexorable economic and political developments that he himself had so ably described.'⁵⁶ The same was true of the Young England Movement in the mid-nineteenth century and of the Cecils' programme in the early twentieth, which David Cannadine describes as 'a self-conscious attempt to revive the notion of patrician disinterestedness as a major force in politics.'⁵⁷ Tietjens's affirmation of the ethical values and political beliefs of this tradition is no less futile, as he himself eventually comes to realise: 'But to-day the world

changed. Feudalism was finished; its last vestiges gone. It held no place for him' (668).⁵⁸

There are further ironies in Tietjens's attempt to seek a reliable foundation for the present in the past. For one thing, his family, as their name suggests, is of Dutch origin. The first Tietjens was a soldier in William of Orange's army and was ennobled after the Glorious Revolution; Groby, the Yorkshire family estate, was forcibly confiscated from a long-established Catholic family, and a curse is said to hang over it as a result. Tietjens's disdain for the values of Macmaster – the cynical social climber who symbolises the embourgeoisement of political life and the erosion of its ostensibly aristocratic standards – is potentially embarrassing, since his own history discloses that he is descended from parvenus and foreigners. This unseemly fact undermines his patrician Toryism, for it reveals not only that a supposedly high-born family is nothing of the sort but also that its birth as an *English* ruling family depends on an originary act of violence and despoliation. Hence the pointed significance of Beaverbrook's retort to those who opposed his ennoblement: 'I am descended from eight or ten generations of agricultural labourers. Therefore I feel quite equal to the Cecil family, with this difference, that none of my ancestors stole church funds.'⁵⁹ G. K. Chesterton summarises the issue at stake here when he observes that the English gentleman's 'honour stood rooted in dishonour' as his 'father had not come over with William the Conqueror, but only assisted, in a somewhat shuffling manner, at the coming over of William of Orange.' There is, Chesterton wryly notes, 'an uncomfortable paradox in the tale of his pedigree', namely that 'the typical aristocrat was the typical upstart.'⁶⁰ Of course, this way of putting it turns the first William into a mythical and idealised figure, but the point is still well taken. In Tietjens's case, however, there is a further paradox. The seventeenth-century Toryism he upholds is inseparable from the Royalist faction that was effectively defeated in 1688; as Alice Chandler has pointed out, whereas for the Whigs 1688 preserved 'the antiquity of British freedom', for the Royalists and their ideological heirs it was interpreted in terms of 'a Tory regret for the rejected feudal past.'⁶¹ Tietjens combines this form of regret together with the maintenance of a privileged position based on the legitimacy of a constitution he should by rights question. Tietjens's family, in fact, as W. H. Auden points out, owes its power and wealth to the Whigs, not the Tories.⁶² And there is a final, dark irony in the fact that Tietjens identifies with a pastoral vision of England that is deeply hostile to industrialism, but that at a time in which the great estates are being crushed by an agricultural depression and high land taxes his family is able to survive because it owns coalfields.⁶³

The paradoxes I have thus far identified in Tietjens's politics emerge gradually as *Parade's End* unfolds. The novel provides a more overt critique of Tietjens's position through the characters of Sylvia, his estranged wife, and Valentine, his beloved. This critique focuses on masculinity; it discloses how sharply questions of national politics intersect with those of gender politics.

The two women could not be more different, but they share similar views about the products of the public school system, regarding them as immature and emotionally retarded. Although both regard Tietjens as of a different calibre altogether, he too is a product of this class, and their criticisms of him are strikingly congruent.⁶⁴ In criticising Tietjens – the epitome of the aristocratic ideal, described by Valentine as ‘The English Country Gentleman *pur sang*’ (527) – they implicitly attack one of the *best* representatives of a particular social order. Sylvia and Valentine see Tietjens as emotionally repressed, reliant on rigid social conventions without which he is lost, and almost tragically naïve. For Valentine, he is in his own affairs ‘so simple as to be almost a baby’ (236). The novel links these observations to wider social concerns. It exposes through Valentine the connection between Tietjens’s Toryism and his debilitating patriarchalism; it mounts through Sylvia an attack on masculinity as predicated on a developmental retardation, which she relates, in turn, to the prosecution of the war.

Valentine ridicules Tietjens’s sexual chauvinism, which she considers typical of the “‘English country male!’” (112). Recognising that Tietjens aspires to be the typical feudal landlord, she confronts him with an impassioned defence of women’s suffrage.⁶⁵ That patriarchal values are at stake here has already been revealed by Tietjens’s earlier admission that when a neighbour was cuckolded the Tietjens family “‘felt [that] Groby and the neighbourhood were unsafe’” (11). Groby, a metonym for the feudal order, is of course threatened by a cuckolding because it strikes at the heart of primogeniture, a touchy issue for Tietjens, since there is doubt as to the paternity of his own son. To the suffragette, Tietjens’s views are risible. Tietjens, she claims, works “‘everything into absurd principles’” and tries to recreate an antediluvian political ethos out of them: “‘it’s the way your mind works ... It picks up useless facts as silver after you’ve polished it picks up sulphur vapour; and tarnishes. It arranges the useless facts in obsolescent patterns and makes Toryism out of them ... I’ve never met a Cambridge Tory man before. I thought they were all in museums and you work them up again out of bones’” (135). Sylvia, in turn, challenges Tietjens’s inability to break free from the masculine values of his caste, finding it shocking that someone of his sceptical intelligence (who sees through the war from the outset) can volunteer for the front because not to do so would be seen as an act of betrayal. She views this *esprit de corp* as a form of retardation, a diagnosis that Tietjens confirms to General Campion: “‘it is not good to have taken one’s public school’s system seriously. I am really, sir, the English public schoolboy ... Other men get over their schooling. I never have. I remain adolescent. These things are obsessions with me. Complexes, sir’” (490). For Sylvia, Tietjens colludes in the ethos of an infantile conception of masculinity; he is, during the war, ‘playing a schoolboy’s game of make-believe’, is participating in ‘the silly pomp of a schoolboy-man’s game’ (437). Indeed, for Sylvia, the entire conflict is to be read in psycho-sexual terms as the embodiment of a male desire for lust and violence:

These horrors, these infinities of pain, this atrocious condition of the world had been brought about in order that men should indulge themselves in orgies of promiscuity. That in the end was at the bottom of male honour, of male virtue, observance of treaties, upholding of the flag ... An immense warlock's carnival of appetites, lusts, ebreities ... And once set in motion there was no stopping it. This state of things would never cease ... Because once they had tasted of the joy – the blood – of this game, who would let it end? These men talked of these things that occupied them there with the lust of men telling dirty stories in smoking-rooms ... That was the only parallel. (438–439)

Tietjens cannot escape a measure of responsibility for this bloodbath not only because his class, the ruling class, is responsible for it but also because his own ethos gives him no possibility of doing anything other than volunteering and thus participating in the resultant carnage. The code Tietjens upholds is shown to depend on a rigid, hierarchical model of class and gender relations; the ethico-political code and the social relations predicated on it are inseparable from devastating consequences in both public and private domains. Auden's comment on this aspect of the novel is apposite: '[Ford] makes it quite clear that World War 1 was a retribution visited upon Western Europe for the sins and omissions of its ruling class, for which not only they, but also the innocent conscripted millions on both sides must suffer.'⁶⁶

Tietjens himself, although he refuses not to serve, is equally horrified at the war and maintains that once it is over and the madness has died down those who have participated in it will be stigmatised: "Everyone who has served in this war will be a marked man for a long time after it is over. That's proper enough. *We're* having our fun now" (490).⁶⁷ Tietjens tries to cope with the experience of the trenches by dreaming of the England he loves, blotting out the mud and the strafes and the shelling in a doomed attempt to retain sanity and peace of mind. This England is always evoked in pastoral terms; it is of rural landscapes – of hills and trees, fields and hedges – that he typically thinks.⁶⁸ Pastoral imagery undeniably runs right through the tetralogy, from the moonlit drive taken by Tietjens and Valentine to the closing scenes of *The Last Post*. Several critics have read *Parade's End* – and especially *The Last Post* – as celebrations of pastoral.⁶⁹ Ann Barr Snitow perhaps best represents this tendency; describing Tietjens as 'the ideal hero ... whose end is true love and pastoral peace', she contends that the final novel of the sequence 'is informed in every line with a note of hope' and that the 'feudal system is not really dead at all but only sleeping.'⁷⁰ In contrast to these readings, I want to argue that both pastoral and the nostalgic longing for it are ironised in *The Last Post*, which does not show feudalism in hibernation but as a shattered ideology and does not show rural life as an idyllic solution to post-war problems but as a form of quietist despair.⁷¹

To see why this is so it is necessary to look in some detail at Ford's rhetorical presentation of Tietjens's evocations of England. Consider two passages that occur in the first volume, *Some Do Not*:

"God's England!" Tietjens exclaimed to himself in high good humour. "Land of Hope and Glory!" – F natural descending to tonic, C major: chord of 6–4, suspension over dominant seventh to common chord of C major ... All absolutely correct! Double basses, 'cellos, all violins, all woodwind, all brass. Full grand organ, all stops, special *vox humana* and key-bugle effect ... Across the counties came the sound of bugles that his father knew ... (106)

The invocation of 'Land of Hope and Glory', played by a full orchestra working as a unified entity, conjures up a vision of national unity, and the reference to 'God's England' anticipates the later passage – which I cited above – in which 'the Almighty' is seen as 'a great English Landowner' (365). But it is significant, I think, that Tietjens's 'high good humour' leads him to express these emotions in a self-mocking, jocular way. It as though Ford, through Tietjens, is parodying the kind of sentiments that a patriotic Englishman of rather lower intelligence than Tietjens himself might be expected to feel. The irony becomes clearer in a passage that occurs over a hundred pages later but that refers back to the earlier one:

"I love every inch of its fields and every plant in the hedgerows: comfrey, mullein, paigles, long red purples, that liberal shepherds give a grosser name ... and all the rest of the rubbish – you remember the field between the Duchemins and your mother's – and we have always been boodlers and robbers and reivers and pirates and cattle thieves, and so we've built up the great tradition that we love ... But, for the moment, it's painful. Our present crowd is not more corrupt than Walpole's. But one's too near them. One sees of Walpole that he consolidated the nation by building up the National Debt, one doesn't see his methods ... My son, or his son, will only see the glory of the boodle we make out of this show. Or rather out of the next. He won't know about the methods. They'll teach him at school that across the counties went the sound of bugles that his father knew ... Though that was another discreditable affair ..." (238)

This is an extraordinarily self-reflexive passage.⁷² The comparison between Lloyd George's administration and Walpole's – both routinely accused by their contemporaries of political corruption and of debasing public life – once again discloses the historicising cast of Tietjens's mind. The parallel is pointed, for if his progeny are to benefit from the profits of war then history is repeating itself, since the Tietjens's benefited in the same way from the equally deplorable Whigs. Furthermore, Tietjens's assertion that Walpole's corrupt practices (like those of the present government) are hidden from

sight because his achievements have passed into national myth is undermined by his own knowledge of them. This knowledge is in this passage pressed into the service of a critique of the way such national myths are created, which reveals not only that “the great tradition” is founded on theft, violence, and despoliation but also that these facts will be elided from the teaching of patriotic history. It is no accident that the flow of images with which Tietjens embarks on this peroration is interrupted by the exclamation “and all the rest of the rubbish”, for the pastoral idiom cannot be sustained when one is all too aware of the murky truths it exists to obscure.

When the novel’s concluding scenes are seen in this context they cannot so easily be read as exemplifications of pastoral. To do so, furthermore, is to ignore the heavy pall of defeat that hangs over *The Last Post*. Tietjens’s brother has resigned from the government on hearing that the allies will not pursue the retreating Germans and has vowed never to speak again; Tietjens lives in extreme poverty with Valentine and scrapes a living as a small-scale antiques dealer, selling English heritage to colonising Americans and being swindled by his unscrupulous partner; the family estate – symbol of Tietjens’s beloved feudal system – has been rented to one such American family, and when they cut down the cedar planted by the first Tietjens they destroy half the house; the novel’s last image of Tietjens is when, ashen-faced, he informs his brother Mark of the disaster and departs ‘like a dejected bulldog’ (835).⁷³ At the conclusion of *Parade’s End* the feudal system lies in ruins and both brothers have abandoned public life, choosing to live on the margins of post-war society. Mark concludes that political life has ‘become so discreditable an affair that the only remedy was for the real governing classes to retire altogether from public pursuits’ (745), while Tietjens maintains that ‘if a ruling class loses the capacity to rule – or the desire! – it should abdicate from its privileges and get underground’ (818). That he himself does just this is suggested by his admission that he has ‘outgrown alike the mentality and the traditions of his own family and his own race’ (752). Saunders’s remark that ‘it would be rash to accuse Ford of reactionary nostalgia’ seems apposite in this context.⁷⁴

The Tietjens articulate a sense of social breakdown, loss of sustaining traditions, and alienation from both the ideals and the practices of governance that brands them as representatives of an aristocracy in decline. Ford is in this respect once again historically accurate, for the First World War marked the death-knell of the aristocracy as an active ruling class and the Fourth Reform Act severed the last remaining link between land and political power.⁷⁵ The effect of this was huge, for in diminishing the aristocracy’s power it took away their own justification for their existence as a class; no longer could they think of themselves as the nation’s natural (even divinely ordained) rulers. Cannadine, describing the consequences, could be speaking about the Tietjens when he writes that in ‘the face of these new social and political forces, the once dominant landowners began their inexorable

retreat – from politics, from power, and from government itself.⁷⁶ The shift in the balance of power and the selling or breaking up of so many estates, was seen as so far-reaching that, as Robert Green points out, the phrase ‘England’s changing hands’ was common currency.⁷⁷ Thus although his words are patently hyperbolic, we should not be surprised to find C. F. G. Masterman, in a chapter called ‘The Passing of Feudalism’, arguing in his book *England After the War* that ‘the whole feudal system as it extended practically but little changed from 1066 to 1914’ is being destroyed.⁷⁸

A Tory belief in feudal paternalism and in the aristocracy’s obligation to govern represents only one half of Tietjens’s personal belief system; the other, equally present throughout the novel, lies in the direction of renunciation and mysticism. Modelling himself on Herbert, Tietjens admits that his ‘private ambition had always been for saintliness: he must be able to touch pitch and not be defiled’ (187). Yet Tietjens cannot but see that this goal is anachronistic, for ‘what chance had quiet fields, Anglican sainthood, accuracy of thought, heavy-leaved, timbered hedge-rows, slowly creeping plough-lands moving up the slopes?. ... Still, the land remains ...’ (566). Linked once again to pastoral images of England, it is already clear to Tietjens that this vision of saintliness is impotent in the face of war. By the end of the novel this dream has been transferred to the as yet unborn child that Tietjens and Valentine are expecting and which they assume will be a boy; both fantasise that the child will be ‘a contemplative parson farming his own tythe-fields and with a Greek testament in folio under his arm’ (812). Valentine, like Tietjens, believes that the land will ‘go on breeding George Herberts’ (814) with trusty peasants to look after them (815); how unlikely this is may be inferred from the fact that whereas Herbert went from being a courtier to a country parson, Tietjens, one of the most gifted men of his generation, has gone from civil servant to furniture dealer.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Valentine’s and Tietjens’s pastoral vision depends on a model of social relations that is in *The Last Post* shown to offer no solution to the problems of post-war life that Tietjens himself identifies and that Ford so acutely analyses. David Trotter is thus right, I believe, to argue that Ford ‘knew that rural ways of life were dying out’ but ‘didn’t think that they could be preserved, or that their preservation would regenerate the race.’⁸⁰ Alun Howkins maintains that in the context of the First World War the pastoral vision offered ‘a model of society – an organic and natural society of ranks, and of inequality in an economic and social sense, but one based on trust, obligation and even love – the relationship between the “good squire” and the “honest peasant.”’⁸¹ Here, pastoral grafts national identity and social structure onto one another so that a particular version of Englishness gets chained to a particular kind of society. To succumb to it is either to collude in or to advocate a conservative conception of the nation state.⁸² *Parade’s End*, I would argue, calls this conception into question by undermining the pastoral idiom employed by its central characters and suggesting that their dreams of order express a nostalgic pining for a world that has passed away.⁸³

Wyndham Lewis described the First World War as a bridge that divided two realities from each other, 'as if the stream spanned by the bridge separated a tropic from a polar landscape', so that to cross it was to go 'from one world into another'.⁸⁴ But the immediate post-war world seemed to many writers to be a travesty of the civilisation that had been defended at such enormous, nigh incalculable cost. Pound wrote bitterly in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' of men who 'walked eye-deep in hell / believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving / came home, home to a lie / home to many deceits / home to old lies and new infamy / usury age-old and age-thick / and liars in public places'.⁸⁵ Ford, writing of the war in 1930, noted that morality had 'been pretty well blotted out as a national or international factor by the avalanche that in 1914 began to overwhelm alike classical culture and revealed religion', concluding that in the aftermath '[w]e have scrapped an entire culture'.⁸⁶ For Ford, it was the task of the novel – an investigative, exploratory genre admirably suited to the uncertainty of the times – to fill the gap.⁸⁷

In this post-war context Pound's injunction to 'make it new' was treated by many writers as a call to re-establish some connection with a literary tradition and a social order that seemed to have unravelled entirely. For such writers, it was not just a question of finding ways to re-stitch the fabric into a new whole, but rather of asking whether anything could be salvaged from Pound's 'botched civilization' or whether there were, in Eliot's terms, any fragments left to shore up against that civilization's ruins.⁸⁸ That Eliot grasped the nature of this problem can hardly be doubted when one considers his obsessive attempts to define and articulate the meaning and function of tradition. *After Strange Gods*, in which he sets out to reformulate the conception of tradition first outlined in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', is revealing in this respect. It shows his deep commitment to a backward-looking myth of a 'native culture' that is agrarian, non-metropolitan, racially homogeneous, rooted to a particular place, communal, and largely unconscious, but it also reveals his uneasy awareness that traditions are always mobile, always shifting their ground, hence his attempt to bring them under the control of 'orthodoxy'.⁸⁹ Not all modernists shared this concern with the past. Lewis mocked it and distanced himself from what he saw as an aesthetic project debilitated by its thralldom to 'culture' and veering into pastiche.⁹⁰ He resisted Pound's 'exploitation of the very picturesque local-colour of the *past*', arguing that the 'snobbish baubles' Pound dragged up from 'the ocean bed of time' were 'as tiresome a *bric-a-brac* as the iron-filings and scrap-iron of the fake factory school'.⁹¹

Parade's End addresses similar issues but finds its place, I would suggest, somewhere between these two poles. And this explains the novel's ambivalence. On the one hand, it offers a critique of Tietjens's Toryism, disclosing its dubious origins, parodying its appeals to historical precedent, and showing it to be impotent and anachronistic in the modern world, but on the other hand, it reveals a genuine, heartfelt sympathy for Tietjens's political views

(many of which Ford himself espoused) and depicts the collapse of English society in a way that seems to invite the reader to identify with Tietjens's indictment of it. *Parade's End* appears to make use of a form of parodic nostalgia by combining a powerful desire to return to a superseded past with a wry awareness not only that such a return is impossible but also that the imagined past was not quite so hallowed as the myth-making mind would wish.⁹² Ford depicts Tietjens as an 'extinct' figure precisely in order to show that the bridge between two worlds described by Lewis could only be crossed in one direction – no return was possible. Ford knew Tietjens's political tradition belonged to a social order that had been swept away, as his dedication to *No More Parades* makes abundantly clear. He is explicit that the entire book was conceived to be presented via the 'eyes of X [Marwood] ... – already dead, along with all English Tories', claiming that this version of Toryism had 'expired' in his youth because it had 'gone beyond the region of any practising political party.'⁹³ This last remark is crucial to an understanding of the novel. Tietjens is not anachronistic because no other early twentieth-century conservatives thought like him – many, the Cecils being the most notable, still did – but because this way of thinking belonged to an entirely different socio-economic system and could gain no grip on the practical problems of the post-war period. *Parade's End* thus provides us with a doubled vision of the political ethos its central protagonist upholds. It laments the passing of a tradition that has proved incapable of warding off the nightmare of contemporary history but ironises its self-delusions and follies. Unable to break through this impasse, the novel concludes on a note of quietist despair.

Notes

1 T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (London, 1980), p. 71.

2 Ezra Pound quoted in Peter Jones, (ed.), *Imagist Poetry* (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 16; T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London, 1934), p. 23.

3 It is revealing that he writes of Jonson: 'His third requisite in a poet pleases me especially: "The third requisite in our poet, or maker, is *Imitation*, to be able to convert the substances, or riches of another poet, to his own use.'" Eliot, *Use of Poetry*, pp. 54–55.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

5 Stan Smith, *The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound, Yeats and the Rhetorics of Renewal* (Hemel Hempstead, 1994), p. 11.

6 Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End* (Harmondsworth, 1982). All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition. Page numbers will follow in brackets.

7 Eliot, *After Strange Gods*, pp. 32, 33, 55, and 48. For Eliot's hostility to liberalism, see pp. 13 and 48.

8 John A. Meixner, *Ford Madox Ford's Novels: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis, 1962), p. 205; Richard A. Cassell, *Ford Madox Ford: A Study of his Novels* (Baltimore, 1961), p. 247; E. V. Walter, 'The Political Sense of Ford Madox Ford', *The New Republic* (March 26 1956), 17–19, pp. 18 and 19.

9 Elliott B. Ghose, Jr., 'Reality to Romance: A Study of Ford's *Parade's End*', *College English* 17: 8 (May 1956), 445–450, p. 446; Joseph J. Firebaugh, 'Tietjens and the Tradition', *The Pacific Spectator*, 6: 1 (Winter 1952), 23–32, p. 25; John A. Meixner, *Ford's Novels*, p. 220.

10 John W. Derry, *The Radical Tradition: Tom Paine to Lloyd George* (London, 1967), p. viii.

11 Ford Madox Hueffer, *England and the English: An Interpretation* (New York, 1907), p. 291; Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life. Vol. 1: The World Before the War* (Oxford, 1996), p. 250; Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle* (London, 1943), p. 145; Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894–1914* (London, 1931), p. 76.

12 Max Saunders describes 'the medieval "Christian Commonwealth" Ford opposes to the modern state' as close 'to a socialist ideal'. See Max Saunders, *Ford*, p. 216. He goes on to note Ford's disagreements with 'the Tory party line' (250) over Home Rule for Ireland, votes for women, and industrial unrest, concluding that Ford's Toryism 'aspires to a form of paternalistic socialism rather than *laissez-faire* capitalism' (251). Saunders is right that Ford is hostile to the politics of *laissez-faire* and that his views do not sit easily with key tenets of early twentieth-century Conservative Party doctrine, but he doesn't discuss in detail the important affinities between Tory ameliorative paternalism and socialist collectivism.

13 For his hostility to utilitarianism, see Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Critical Attitude* (London, 1911), pp. 134–35. For specialisation, standardisation, and efficiency, see Hueffer, *Critical*, pp. 114–15 and p. 127; Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections: Being the Memories of a Young Man* (London, 1911), pp. 269–70 and p. 289; and Ford Madox Ford, *When Blood is their Argument: An Analysis of Prussian Culture* (London, 1915), pp. vii, xi, and 290. For his hatred of imperialism, see Ford Madox Ford, *Return*, pp. 50–51. For his support for women's suffrage, see Ford Madox Ford, *Return*, pp. 188–89, 378 and 427. For his belief in Home Rule see Ford Madox Ford, *Return*, pp. 76 and 435.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

15 Sondra J. Stang and Karen Cochran (eds), *The Correspondence of Ford Madox Ford and Stella Bowen* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1992), p. 36. Note also how close this claim is to the views Ford attributes to Arthur Marwood (on whom Tietjens is partly modelled): 'as a Tory of the land-owning class he had a special distrust of all employers of labour and a special affection for Labour as individual – if not for the working classes in the mass.' Hueffer, *Return*, p. 396.

16 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life. Vol 2: The After-War World* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 205 and 206.

17 Saunders writes of Ford's 'paradoxical politics' in *Ford Vol 2*, p. 205. This paradox lies at the heart of Tory Radicalism. When Saunders argues that Madox Brown and Ford combined Toryism with anarchical socialism in order to suggest that 'the way to progress beyond industrialized alienation was to reassert the values of pre-industrial society' he underplays the extent to which the Toryism Ford upheld had strong ameliorative, even collectivist, tendencies. See Saunders, *Ford Vol 1*, p. 29. The point is that the combination of (some) socialist ideas with (some) Tory ideas is central to Tory Radicalism. See, for a brief but useful discussion of this linkage, R. L. Hill, *Toryism and the People, 1832–1846* (London, 1929), pp. 4–6.

18 John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 241.

19 John W. Derry, *Radical Tradition*, p. vii; H. W. J. Edwards (ed.), *The Radical Tory: Disraeli's Political Development Illustrated from his Original Writings and*

Speeches (London, 1937), pp. 21–22.

20 H. W. J. Edwards, *Radical Tory*, p. 22.

21 Robert Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830–1867* (London, 1978), p. 170.

22 John Burrow, *Liberal Descent*, pp. 77, 240, and 22.

23 Richard Faber, *Young England* (London, 1987).

24 Robert Stewart, *Foundation*, p. 170.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

26 Lord Hugh Cecil, *Conservatism* (London, 1912), p. 169. Alice Chandler also foregrounds this link between Toryism and welfare socialism in the deployment of the medieval revival: 'Modified by necessity, the social ideals of medievalism culminated in Tory paternalism, on the one hand, and the semisocialist welfare state on the other.' Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London, 1971), p. 233. Ford writes: 'True Toryism and true Socialism have been pointed out to amount in the end to the same thing. Both aim at the establishment of a strong State made up of efficient individuals.' Hueffer, *Critical*, pp. 18–19.

27 Max Saunders, *Ford Vol 1*, p. 250; Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge*, p. 145.

28 E. H. H. Green writes that the debate over Tariff Reform was 'part of a broader controversy over what the Conservative party stood for, to whom it should appeal and on what grounds. In short, the tariff debate and the Edwardian Conservative party's more general convulsions were the product of an argument over the nature of Conservatism itself.' See E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London, 1996), p. 311.

29 See Matthew Fforde, *Conservatism and Collectivism, 1886–1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 17; E. H. H. Green, *Crisis*, p. 15; Larry L. Witherell, *Rebel on the Right: Henry Page Croft and the Crisis of British Conservatism, 1903–1914* (London, 1997), p. 18.

30 Larry L. Witherell, *Rebel*, p. 18.

31 For de Broke's belief in the need for a unifying party that would cohere around Tariff Reform, the Union with Ireland, imperialism, patriotism, and race regeneration see his article 'National Toryism', *National Review*, LIX (1912): 413–27. De Broke argues on the one hand in favour of eugenics, claiming that the science of 'good breeding ... affirms a Tory principle laid down by Disraeli that the health of the nation should be the first consideration of the statesman' (420), but on the other hand, in true radical right fashion, argues for social unity on the grounds that 'the main doctrine of Feudalism based on responsibility' is that the rich should 'serve' the poor so that 'both might serve the State' (422). See also de Broke's defence of imperialism and of a non-hereditary aristocracy based on the 'performance of duty' in his 'Introduction' to Arthur Boutwood's *National Revival: A Re-Statement of Tory Principles* (London, 1913), p. x. For Henry Page Croft, see Larry Witherell, *Rebel*. For a general discussion of these issues, see Alan Sykes, 'The Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism Before the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 26: 3 (1983), 661–76.

32 Geoffrey Searle, *Corruption in British Politics, 1895–1930* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 344–345.

33 Searle claims that Robert Cecil's post-war 'manifesto' had 'little impact' and that, as Kenneth Morgan argued, it should be seen as 'an anachronistic attempt to revive Bentinck's Young England Movement.' Geoffrey Searle, *Corruption*, p. 347.

34 Martin Pugh, '1886–1905' in Anthony Seldon (ed.), *How Tory Governments Fall: The Tory Party in Power Since 1783* (London, 1996): 189–228, p. 226.

35 Max Saunders, *Ford Vol 2*, p. 208.

36 The novel is in this sense a form of self-conscious auto-critique.

37 Ford, *Parade's*, pp. 115–16, 187–88, 79, 60–63, 589, and 634–35. Robert Cecil argued that there was no essential connection between *laissez-faire* capitalism and conservatism and claimed that if people 'are to be free they must in the main be governed by spiritual and not by material forces.' See Lord Robert Cecil, 'Letter to Colonel Heaton-Ellis', *The Times* (April 22 1922), 18.

38 T. F. Lindsay and Michael Harrington identify the beginnings of the break between 'Toryism' and 'conservatism' at around the time of Peel's Tamworth Manifesto (1835) and his subsequent administration of 1841–46. Peel, they suggest, presided over the shift from Liverpool's pre-modern Toryism to a modern conservatism. They argue that the key difference centres on attitudes to industry; whereas Liverpool's politics were 'the product of an essentially pre-industrial, rural society', were based on the pre-eminence of land, the Church of England, and the Crown, and knew little of industry (in which they were not interested), Peel sought to confront the Industrial Revolution (via factory legislation, the shift to free trade, the repeal of the Corn Laws) and in doing so broke 'the political ascendancy of the country over the town.' It is this shift in the balance of power that they identify as marking the real difference 'between the old Tories and the new Conservatives'. See T. F. Lindsay and Michael Harrington (eds), *The Conservative Party: 1918–1970* (London, 1974), p. 2. For the claim that this tradition goes back to Bolingbroke, see John Burrow, *Liberal Descent*, p. 249 and pp. 282–83, and H. W. J. Edwards, *Radical Tory*, p. 22.

39 Robert Stewart, *Foundation*, p. 368. This belief in the public role of the well-born was explicitly expressed by Palmerston, who claimed that men 'in high aristocratic positions, should take part in the administration of public affairs, and should not leave the working of our political machine to classes whose pursuits and interests are of a different kind.' Quoted in David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London, 1992), p. 234. Carlyle defends precisely this view of the landholder's responsibilities in *Past and Present* (1843).

40 Ford, *Parade's*, pp. 129 and 489–90.

41 Ford himself discusses this at length in *Return*, pp. 373–76.

42 Many of these similarities are relatively trivial, although they still reveal how much Ford drew on his own experience in delineating Marwood: both admire White of Selborne, lose their memories as a result of shell-shock, claim to be able to write a sonnet in under two minutes, speak French with strong English accents, and are involved in quarrels with ex-partners over allegedly stolen bed-linen. More significant, of course, are the similarities between their respective political convictions.

43 Ford Madox Ford, *No More Parades* (New York, 1925), pp. v and vi.

44 The phrase is Jeffrey Hart's. Hart argues in his book on Bolingbroke that as the Whigs gradually asserted their hegemony under Walpole, the Augustan values upheld by figures such as Bolingbroke became 'critical' such that 'the traditional conception of society, giving way before the commercial and then the industrial revolutions, became a component of the politics of protest.' Jeffrey Hart, *Viscount Bolingbroke: Tory Humanist* (London, 1965), p. x.

45 Richard Faber writes of the Young Englanders that their 'solution' to the ills of industrialisation and capitalism 'lay in a restoration of stability, order and contentment – not in an advance to some new, liberated world.' Richard Faber, *Young England*, p. 165.

46 J. S. Critchley, *Feudalism* (London, 1978), p. 56; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 249.

47 J. G. A. Pocock, *Ancient Constitution*, p. 245; J. S. Critchley, *Feudalism*, p. 56.

48 Alice Chandler, *A Dream*, p. 1.

49 Keith Feiling, *History of the Tory Party: 1640–1714* (Oxford, 1965), p. 493.

50 See especially Ford, *Parade's*, p. 497. Ford himself greatly admired Herbert, claiming that he and Cranmer 'set themselves the task of re-erecting – of re-establishing by means of quite simple personal piety, quite simple, beautiful and personal words and simple pastoral exhortations, a Church in England. And they did it. It might be too much to say that Herbert's *A Priest to the Temple* healed the Church of England from the wounds, sicknesses and neglects of Mary, Elizabeth and James's successive reigns, but it is not too much if we put it that *A Priest to the Temple* is the expression of, and did almost everything towards, bringing about that half-miracle.' Ford Madox Ford, 'Pure Literature', *Agenda: Ford Madox Ford Double Issue*, 27, 4:28. 1 (Winter 1989/Spring 1990), 5–22, p. 17.

51 Christopher Hill, for example, claims that '1714–15 showed that [the Tories] had failed to evolve a viable political philosophy.' See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution*, (London, 1961), p. 283. H. T. Dickinson concurs, noting that the various Tory factions were unable to agree a coherent strategy to topple Walpole. See H. T. Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (London, 1973), 149.

52 Christopher Hill, *Century*, p. 283.

53 For a good discussion of these issues, see H. T. Dickinson, *Walpole*, Chapter 8.

54 In a typically Tory pronouncement, Bolingbroke wrote: 'The landed men are the true owners of our political vessel; the moneyed men, as such, are no more than passengers in it.' Quoted in Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 37.

55 Carbury describes the financier Melmotte, who has risen to immense authority and influence, as "a miserable imposition, a hollow vulgar fraud from beginning to end – too insignificant for you and me to talk of, were it not that his position is a sign of the degeneracy of the age." Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now* (London, 1992), p. 462. Melmotte stands for parliament "as a man of business ... as a man who understands commercial enterprise" and he boastfully proclaims that he thinks himself "quite as great a man as any Prince" (460).

56 Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke*, p. 167.

57 David Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 336.

58 Douglas Goldring, in his reminiscences about Ford's circle, writes: 'Ford was by temperament and inclination something that he called a "High Tory", but after 1920 there were no "High Tories" left in England, except a few solitary figures like Winston Churchill and Viscount Cecil.' Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge*, p. 210.

59 Quoted in David Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 325.

60 G. K. Chesterton, *A Short History of England* (Sevenoaks, 1994), p. 154.

61 Alice Chandler, *A Dream*, p. 2. John Burrow argues that according to the Whig view of history the Glorious Revolution was seen as the decisive event that did not *restore* an ancient constitutional liberty but rather brought it into being for the first time. See Burrow, *Liberal Descent*, p. 21. For a good discussion of the development of the opposing Tory view, see J. G. A. Pocock, 'Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas', *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (London, 1972): 202–32.

62 Auden writes: 'It is essential to an understanding of their Tory views to remember that the Tietjens are not, really, of English stock, and owe their position to the Whigs.' W. H. Auden, 'Il Faut Payer', *Mid-Century*, 22 (1961), 3–10, p. 6.

63 For a discussion of the pressures on landed estates, see David Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 150 and 189–91.

64 Tietjens is himself uncomfortably aware of this: 'Tietjens winced. The young woman had come a little too near the knuckle of his wife's frequent denunciations of himself.' Ford, *Parade's*, p. 114.

65 Ford, *Parade's*, pp. 112–15.

66 W. H. Auden, 'Il faut', p. 5.

67 Valentine later echoes these sentiments. Ford, *Parade's*, p. 521.

68 It is significant that when Tietjens first realises that war is about to break out his thoughts take the following turn: 'He loved this country for the run of its hills, the shape of its elm trees and the way the heather, running uphill to the skyline, meets the blue of the heavens. War for this country could only mean humiliation, spreading under the sunlight, an almost invisible pall over the elms, the hills, the heather, like the vapour that spread from ... oh, Middlesborough!' Ford, *Parade's*, p. 186.

69 See George Cor, 'Ordered Life and the Abysses of Chaos: *Parade's End*' in Richard A. Cassell (ed.), *Critical Essays on Ford Madox Ford* (Boston, 1987), 92–101, p. 101; John Meixner, *Ford's Novels*, p. 229; Theoharis C. Theoharis, 'No More Virgil', *Antaeus: Ford Madox Ford Issue*, 56 (Spring 1986), 93–106, p. 105.

70 Ann Barr Snitow, *Ford Madox Ford and the Voice of Uncertainty* (Baton Rouge, 1984), pp. 207 and 231.

71 For a similar, but largely undeveloped, view of pastoral in *The Last Post*, see Cornelia Cook, 'Last Post: "The Last of the Tietjens Series"', *Agenda: Special Ford Madox Ford Double Issue* 27, 4:28. 1 (Winter 1989/Spring 1990), 23–30, p. 29.

72 It is interesting to note that almost twenty years earlier Ford had written of 1688 that 'since it led the way for Walpole and the National Debt, it still holds us in its clutches ... it began the process of doing away with the County Interest ...' Hueffer, *England*, p. 290.

73 The image suggests that Tietjens is on the point of collapse, recalling as it does the bulldog that Sylvia had earlier almost whipped to death. Ford, *Parade's*, pp. 416–417.

74 Max Saunders, *Ford Vol 1*, p. 205.

75 See Jamie Camplin, *The Rise of the Plutocrats: Wealth and Power in Edwardian England* (London, 1978), p. 272; David Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 111, 150, and 190–191.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 183.

77 Robert Green, *Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Politics* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 134.

78 C. F. G. Masterman, *England After War: A Study* (London, n.d.), p. 32.

79 Marlene Griffith reaches much the same conclusion: 'The setting may be pastoral, reminiscent of Herbert's parsonage, but we realize that the peace and tranquility which Herbert felt is not for this century.' Marlene Griffith, 'A Double Reading of *Parade's End*' in Richard A. Cassell (ed.), *Ford Madox Ford: Modern Judgements* (London, 1972): 137–151, p. 142.

80 David Trotter, 'Hueffer's Englishness', *Agenda: Special Ford Madox Ford Double Issue* 27, 4:28, 1 (Winter 1989 / Spring 1990): 148–155, p. 151.

81 Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880–1920* (London, 1986), p. 80. For a good post-war example of the kind of pastoral described by Howkins, see H. V. Morton's popular *In Search of England* (London, 1943), which was first published in 1927 and had gone through 29 editions by the early forties.

82 David Gervais, writing of Orwell's critique of such versions of Englishness, observes that 'however "English" rural England may seem, it can only be English in a narrow sense, because it is really only a part of England which has been passed off as the whole ... This England ... is invariably the cue for a veiled conservatism.' David Gervais, *Literary Englands: Versions of 'Englishness' in Modern Writing* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 174.

83 Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase point out that the retreat into private life often signals pessimism about the possibility of public life and that this retreat

provides a breeding ground for nostalgia. Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia' in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, (eds), *Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester, 1989), 1–17. Saunders claims that the war, far from 'causing [Ford] to retreat into a fantasy of the feudal English Tory gentleman ... made him redefine himself as a European, and a writer.' Max Saunders, *Ford Vol 1*, p. 469.

84 Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering: An Autobiography (1914–1926)* (London, 1982), p. 2.

85 Ezra Pound, 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' in *Selected Poems: 1908–1959* (London, 1990), p. 100.

86 Ford Madox Ford, *The English Novel: From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 21 and 18.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

88 Ezra Pound, 'Mauberley', p. 101.

89 Eliot, *After Strange Gods*, pp. 15, 16, 19, 29, and 62. It is here that Eliot makes the infamous anti-semitic claim that 'reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable' (20) in the kind of community he is defending. Stan Smith sees Eliot's concerns with tradition as inseparable from the war and its immediate consequences: 'In 1923, the impact of the Treaty of Versailles in destroying those "organic wholes" from which meaning derived was only too apparent to Eliot. The "common inheritance" was only too obviously fragile.' Smith, *Origins of Modernism*, p. 34.

90 Wyndham Lewis, *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London, 1963), p. 224.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 215. The reference to 'iron-filings' is doubtless a dig at Eliot's scientific metaphor for literary creativity in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'.

92 I am adapting Thomas Mann's view of parody to my account of nostalgia here. Mann referred to his own style as 'a parody, not cynical but affectionate, of tradition'. Thomas Mann, *The Letters of Thomas Mann, 1895–1955* trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 444–45.

93 Ford, *No More Parades*, p. vii.

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